

**THE CENTRALIZATION OF THE WORSHIP OF YAHWEH ACCORDING TO  
THE JEWISH AND SAMARITAN PENTATEUCHS: A TEXTUAL AND  
THEOLOGICAL STUDY**

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**Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work and have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for obtaining any degree.

Signature: .....

Date: December 2017

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**Abstract**

The aim of the present study is, firstly, to understand the theological implications of the phenomenon of centralization of worship in Deuteronomy 12 according to the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs; secondly, to investigate the different wording between the two readings and the possible factors that contributed to their development; and thirdly, given these different sectarian readings, to understand what might be the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the enterprise of Bible translation. To address these objectives, the researcher chose to use an integrated method, which gives him the freedom to bring different approaches, such as historical-scientific, textual/literary, and theological, into conversation. It is through this method that the outcome of this study is outlined as follows: From a historical-scientific viewpoint, it is most likely that the origin of ancient Israel is to be placed in the context of the Mediterranean region in the Iron Age I period. Furthermore, despite their belligerent relations, both Judean and Samaritan populaces are likely to be genetically related and, therefore, from the same ancestral origins. Theologically, the centralization of worship had, to some extent, contributed significantly to the shaping of the ideologies of the Jerusalem temple and Davidic/Israel's election. In response to these ideologies, the Samaritans rejected any tradition related to Jerusalem temple and to Davidic kingship and put an exclusive claim on the Mosaic tradition as the only authoritative script. Addressed from a textual/literary approach, the two Pentateuchs share the same roots – the Mosaic tradition – and the differences between them are mainly due to editorial activities, where editors acted in favour of their respective site of worship. Lastly, with regard to the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the work of Bible translation, it is noted that, despite the different emphases on the place of worship, it has much in common not only with the Jewish Pentateuch but also with other textual witnesses such as the Septuagint and the Dead Seas Scrolls. Moreover, like other textual witnesses, the Samaritan Pentateuch held a significant level of authority over ancient Israeli communities, including Qumran and the early church. If this is the case, then the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the enterprise of Bible Translation needs to be reconsidered.

## Opsomming

Die doel van die huidige studie is om eerstens die teologiese implikasies van die verskynsel van sentralisering van aanbidding in Deuteronomium 12 volgens die Joodse en Samaritaanse Pentateug-weergawes te verstaan; tweedens, om die bewoordinge van die twee verskillende lesings en die moontlike faktore wat tot hul ontwikkeling bygedra het, te ondersoek; en derdens, om in die lig van hierdie verskillende sektariese lesings, te verstaan wat die plek van die Samaritaanse Pentateug in die onderneming van Bybelvertaling kan wees. Om hierdie doelwitte te het die navorser gekies om 'n geïntegreerde navorsingsmetode te gebruik wat hom die vryheid bied om verskillende benaderings, soos histories-wetenskaplike, tekstuele / literêre en teologiese met mekaar in gesprek te bring. Nadat hierdie metode gevolg is, kan die uitkoms van hierdie studie soos volg uiteengesit word: Vanuit 'n histories-wetenskaplike oogpunt is dit heel waarskynlik dat die oorsprong van antieke Israel in die konteks van die Middellandse-Seegebied geplaas word, spesifiek in die Yster I-tydperk. Ten spyte van hul gespanne verhoudinge, is die Judese en Samaritaanse bevolkings geneties verwant aan mekaar en daarom van dieselfde voorvaderlike oorsprong. Teologies het die sentralisering van aanbidding beduidend bygedra tot die vorming van die ideologieë rondom die Jerusalem-tempel en die Dawidiese/Israel se verkiesing. In reaksie op hierdie ideologieë het die Samaritane enige tradisie wat verband hou met die Jerusalem-tempel en Dawidiese koningskap verwerp en 'n eksklusiewe aanspraak gemaak op die Mosaïese tradisie as die enigste gesaghebbende skrif. Gesien vanuit 'n tekstuele / literêre benadering, deel die twee Pentateug-weergawes dieselfde wortels - die Mosaïese tradisie - en die verskille tussen hulle is hoofsaaklik te wyte aan redaksionele aktiwiteite, waar redakteurs in belang van hul onderskeie godsdienstige faksies optree. Ten slotte, ten opsigte van die plek van die Samaritaanse Pentateug in die projek van Bybelvertaling, word opgemerk dat dit ten spyte van die verskillende beklemtonings op die plek van aanbidding, veel gemeen het nie net met die Judese Pentateug nie, maar ook met ander tekstuele getuies soos die Septuagint en die Dooie See-rolle. Daarbenewens het die Samaritaanse Pentateug, soos ander tekstuele getuies, beduidende gesag gehad in gemeenskappe van ou Israel, insluitende die Qumrangemeenskap en die Vroeë Kerk. As dít die geval is, moet die plek van die Samaritaanse Pentateug in die onderneming van Bybelvertaling heroorweeg word.

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Lastly, I want to dedicate this dissertation to the Bibleless language groups in Southern Africa.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

B.C.E. Before Common Era

C.E. Common Era

ca Approximately

cf Confer

Chap Chapter

Chr Chronicles

cs Construct

Deut Deuteronomy

DNA Deoxyribonucleic acid

DSS Dead Sea Scrolls

DtrG Deuteronomist Historian

DtrH Deuteronomist History

DtrN Deuteronomist Nomos

DtrP Deuteronomist Prophet

Exod Exodus

f Feminine

Gen Genesis

GPR Ground-penetration radar

Jer Jeremiah

Josh Joshua

Kgs Kings

LXX Septuagint

m Masculine

Macc Maccabees

MT Masoret

Mt Mountain

Neh Nehemiah

NIV New International Version

OB Old Babylonian

P Priestly

pl Plural

Ps Psalms

Q Qumran

RSV Revised Standard Version

RV Revised Version

Sam Samuel

SB Standard Babylonian

sg Singular

SL Source Language

SP Samaritan Pentateuch

ST Samaritan Targum

TL Target Language

v Verse

vv Verses

YHWH Yahweh

## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Introduction to the Topic

Gary N. Knoppers published a book on ‘Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations’ (2013). The key argument Knoppers makes in the book is that there is much in common between the two communities, yet they act like they are unrelated. He introduced the first chapter with reference to John 4:1-20 – the conversation Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. It would appear as though Knoppers’s intention in the narrative about this conversation was to highlight the fact that until the first century C.E. Jews and Samaritans were in serious conflict: “Jews do not share (things) in common with Samaritans” (v 9). Because of this conflict, at a certain point along the conversation, when the Samaritan woman realized that Jesus was not a mere Jew but a prophet, she introduced another topic – the place of worship. She stated, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem” (v. 20). According to the woman, it was the fathers who started to worship on that mountain (supposedly located in Samaria),<sup>1</sup> and then their descendants until the Hasmonean period, when the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem declared as the only site of worship. Although the woman did not ask a direct question, which required a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, it is quite interesting that Jesus’s reaction to her concern was not direct either. Jesus did not indicate whether he agreed with her or not. Instead, he approached the issue differently. First, he told the woman that the time had come when people would worship Yahweh, his Father, neither on the mountain she referred to nor in Jerusalem (v. 21). Second, the Samaritans worshiped what they did not know (v. 22). But now, why did Jesus not directly answer to the question? Did Jesus find it obvious that Jerusalem was the only place of worship and, therefore, everybody, including the Samaritans, should go and worship there? These two questions created, in the researcher of this study, an interest in the topic of centralization of worship.

The most interesting aspect of this topic is that it involves two communities – the Judean and the Samaritan, which, according to Knoppers (2013:3), have common origins, traditions and customs based on the Torah of Moses. Despite all these commonalities, the two populaces

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<sup>1</sup> According to Knoppers (2013:1), the mountain is located “nearby Mt. Gerizim in central Israel, the site of the Samaritan temple.” After the destruction of the Samaritan Temple in the second century B.C.E. by John Hyrcanus, the Samaritans were forced to go to Jerusalem and worship Yahweh there.

are portrayed as being in constant conflict. Due to those conflicts, each community ended up having her own site of worship, namely Jerusalem for the Judeans and Mt. Gerizim for the Samaritans<sup>2</sup> and two versions of the Torah – the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs. In fact, according to Knoppers (2013:1), the concept of centralization of worship comes from the Torah, as he reckoned, “In line with the demands of the Torah (Deuteronomy 12), both Samaritans and Jews advocate centralization – the firmly held tenet that the God of Israel had to be worshiped only at one location – but differed strongly about where that worship was to be centered (Mt. Gerizim vs. Mt. Zion).” It is on these grounds that the researcher of this study chose this particular topic, and the purpose is to investigate at least three aspects related to the phenomenon of centralization of worship. Firstly, the study aims to investigate the theological implications of the centralization of the Yahweh worship in Deuteronomy 12 according to the two Pentateuchs – the Jewish and Samaritan. Secondly, there will be an attempt to understand the different wording between the two Pentateuchs in Deuteronomy 12. Thirdly, the study will attempt to investigate the implications that the different wording might have in a given project of Bible translation, and what could be the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the enterprise of Bible translation.

In order to attend to these three aspects, this study will be structured as follows: The first chapter will be a general introduction where the researcher will state the field of study and its respective research problem, followed by an outline of the objectives, the research questions, the methodology as well as a preliminary exploration of the centralization of worship. Chapter 2 will be a historical reconstruction of the origins of the Judean and Samaritan communities of ancient Israel and their relationship throughout their lifetime until the parting of the ways. This will be followed by textual and literary analyses of Deuteronomy 12, in chapter 3. This will be an attempt to understand the different wording between the two versions – the Judean and the Samaritan, and how and what factors might have contributed to their development. Chapter 4 will be an overview of the history of religion and worship in ancient Israel until the end of the Persian period, the rise of both Judaism and Samaritanism and the theological implications of the centralization of worship. Following this will be chapter 5 where the researcher will focus on the Samaritan Pentateuch by addressing its translations into other ancient languages, such as Aramaic, Greek and Arabic, its influence in both early church and modern European scholarship and its relationship with other textual

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<sup>2</sup> Knoppers addressed this issue under the sub-heading ‘Location, Location, Location: Different Ways of Reading the Same Book’ (2013:3194-212).

witnesses (the DSS, LXX and the MT). All these discussions will be an attempt to understand the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in biblical studies, in general, and the enterprise of Bible translation, in particular. Lastly, chapter 6 will state the concluding remarks by first revisiting the objectives already stated in the first chapter, then outlining the main results, stating the expected contribution to the field, and it will end with a suggestion for further research. Having stated the structure of this study, the researcher will now move on to further matters of introduction.

## 1.2. Field of Study and Research Problem

One of the outstanding issues in the history and religion of ancient Israel in the time between the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (the beginning of the Persian period<sup>3</sup>) and the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. is the hostile relationship between the Judean and the Samaritan communities.<sup>4</sup> Many factors of this antagonistic relationship are reflected in both biblical and extra-biblical sources. Religious controversy between the two communities is one of the factors. The writings of Ezra 4:1-3, for example, describe the temple in Jerusalem as one of the components which separates the two populations, though it seems like there had been some discord between them even before the time of Ezra. If we were to take a moment and consider the content of this passage, right in the first verse, it says that the two communities were opponents. Those from the north who came to help reconstruct the temple in Jerusalem are portrayed as adversaries of the southern tribes, as it reads, “When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel...” Then the passage concludes with an explicit rejection of the northerners by their counterpart southerners, “You, *people of the land*, have no part with us *returnees* in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for our Lord, the God of Israel” [italics added] (v. 3b)<sup>5</sup>. Purvis (1968:87) summarized this factor well when he wrote, “The people of Samaria were also held in contempt by some Judeans because of their mixed

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<sup>3</sup> See VanderKam (2001:2) and Kessler (2008:120).

<sup>4</sup> As far as one knows, during Jesus’ time, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E., the hostility between the Judeans and Samaritans was a fact. The writer/editor of the Gospel of John 4:1-26, for instance, recorded an incident where Jesus, on his way from Judea to Galilee, went through Samaria and had an encounter with a Samaritan woman. First, the woman pointed out the fact that the two communities (Judeans and Samaritans) did not share anything in common, when she said, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? For the Jews do not associate with Samaritans” (v. 9). Second, the woman was quite sure that the two communities did not worship Yahweh on the same holy mountain, as it reads, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem” (v. 20). See also Deist (1988:99).

<sup>5</sup> All biblical references in this dissertation are taken from the New International Version (NIV). Otherwise, it is immediately indicated.



ethnic background and because of their long history of pagan worship and syncretistic Yahwism in the north.” While this account might reflect a piece of a historical event, it also remains certain that political powers stood as another major catalyst for this unpleasant relationship. From the biblical point of view, it was a contestation of some Israelite tribes against the ruling principles and practices of King Solomon<sup>6</sup> and later his son and successor Rehoboam, which caused the division of the Davidic united monarchy (1 Kgs 12). “The whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labour and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you’” (vv. 3-4). Rehoboam refused to listen to the people and to do according to their request. Instead, he replied, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions” (v.14). The result of Rehoboam’s incomppliance to change the oppressive rules and regulations his father Solomon had instituted over the people was that ten of the twelve tribes of Israel deliberately followed the leadership of Jeroboam and founded the northern kingdom of Israel, while the other two tribes, namely Judah and Benjamin, remained under the ruling of Rehoboam in the south and became known as the kingdom of Judah. Of course this division not only affected the political unity of the people of Israel, but also their religious oneness. Before this separation, Jerusalem was the worship centre for the entire assembly of the children of Israel, as it reads, “Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord” (1 Kgs 8:62). This happened during the dedication of the temple by King Solomon, and it seems like from then on all the people from all over the Davidic – Solomonic United Kingdom went from their various settlements up to the temple in Jerusalem to worship Yahweh and to offer their sacrifices to Him. However, later in chapter 14, it is reported that in order to prevent his subjects from going up to the temple in Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices, King Jeroboam built various shrines on high places of the northern kingdom and appointed his own priests (vv. 31-33). Horn (1999:134) commented, “Jeroboam established these two cult centres because he feared that if his people continued to make regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem, they might eventually renew their allegiance to Rehoboam.”<sup>7</sup>

Besides, with reference to subsequent periods, such as the Persian and Hellenistic dominions, Gerstenberger (2011:87) noted, “Basically, however, the feud between Samaria and Jerusalem was a power struggle within the fifth Persian satrapy.” Though during the

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<sup>6</sup> In fact, Horn (1999:129) commented about Solomon’s ruling principles and said, “Historians assume that part of their concern was the tax burden required to support Solomon’s building projects and to maintain his palace.”

<sup>7</sup> See also Frolov (1995:210) and Merrill (1966:248).

Babylonian dominion both Judean and Samaritan provinces were under the Trans-Euphrates Satrap<sup>8</sup>, it is held that the latter had more political privileges than the former<sup>9</sup> (Hjelm, 2015:192). This is quite understandable from the fact that when the Babylonians invaded Judah, it is believed that they deported the entire political power system, that is, the king and his skilled people (the craftsmen and artisans) were deported into exile in Babylon and thus leaving Judah in the state of what Myers (1965:xx) and Bright (1972:269) consider as a “power vacuum”. Blenkinsopp (1998:29) and Römer (2007:167) are among other scholars who argue that when the Babylonian army destroyed the city of Jerusalem, Mizpah became the administrative centre and the capital of the Babylonian Province of Yehud.<sup>10</sup> MacDonald (1964:25) contended, “The comparative peace and stability throughout the long period from the beginning of the Persian rule until the end of the Roman occupation enabled the Samaritans to become a powerful political force in the area.”

However, these political privileges that the Samaritans gained were not absolute. They were rather on and off, depending on an individual king’s personal agenda and ambitions. In the same period, from the Achaemenid up to the Greek dominion, the political privileges had been slowly and gradually removed from the northerners and transferred to the southerners.<sup>11</sup> First, the Persian ruling policy, characterized by power decentralization and local indigenous empowerment,<sup>12</sup> became one of the strongest reasons for the Judeans, especially those who lived around the temple in Jerusalem, to get rid of any connection and friendship with expatriates, including the northerners. One example is the conflict between the leadership of the returnees and Sanballat of Samaria and Tobiah of Ammon, as recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah’s writings. Second, with all the political and religious benefits granted to the returnees by the Persian kings (again, if Ezra-Nehemiah’s accounts are to be regarded as historically reliable), one of their primary goals was to restore and transfer the administrative

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<sup>8</sup> Kessler (2008:139).

<sup>9</sup> Schur (1989:23) pointed out, “Samaria served as a provincial capital and as a military centre and depot for forces deployed against Egypt.” Samaria was at an advantage against Judah not only politically, but also economically. Grabbe (2004:156) stated, “The geographical area of Samaria was generally better favoured by agricultural resources than Judah.” It is also held that even in the Persian period, Samaria maintained provincial status (Dusek, 2012:65).

<sup>10</sup> See also Berquist (1995:108).

<sup>11</sup> Based on archaeological finds, Lipschits (2011:175) concluded, “Even if a real change in the history of Jerusalem occurred in the middle of the fifth century B.C, with the rebuilding of the fortifications of Jerusalem, with all its dramatic implication on its status...., Jerusalem did not become a real urban centre until the Hellenistic period.”

<sup>12</sup> Stiebing (2003:298). See also Berquist (1995:105) and Lee (2011:10).

and religious centre to Jerusalem, which was located in Mizpah.<sup>13</sup> Third, it has been pointed out that when the Samaritans were found guilty of murder of the Greek Prefect Andromachas, the city of Samaria was destroyed and turned into a Macedonian colony (Knoppers, 2013:160-170). The fourth and most remarkable incident for both the Samaritan and Judean communities is the destruction of the Samaritan Temple by Johanan Hyrcanus in 111-110 B.C.E.<sup>14</sup> (Honigman, 2011:127). The impact of all these political and religious controversies between the two neighbouring communities is what Knoppers (2013:172) pointed out when he wrote, “Such a major shift in the regional power could not help but leave its mark on the course of Samaritan-Judean relations.” This shift of regional power motivated each of these two communities to develop a different reading and interpretation of what remained their common sacred traditions (the Torah of Moses) and today is known as the Jewish Pentateuch for the southerners and Samaritan Pentateuch for the northerners<sup>15</sup> in favour of their individual places for Yahweh worship, namely Mount Zion for the Jews and Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans.

Based on the above-stated kind of relationship, historians and biblical academics who have addressed this topic raised at least three major concerns. One is about the origin of both communities. In this respect, the answer proposed by modern scholars to the question as to whether the Judeans and Samaritans have ever shared the same ancestral origins is yes. Although some biblical and extra-biblical sources which accommodate anti-Samaritan perspectives insist that the northerners had a different ancestral origin from the southerners, it is held that both communities identify themselves as the offspring of Jacob, known with

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<sup>13</sup> Balentine (1996:141) argues that the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem was a great political achievement for the Achaemenid Empire when he wrote, “As an administrative centre, the Jerusalem temple represented an official Persian presence in Yehud.” Mor (2011:181-3) argues that one of the reasons that the Temple of Gerizim should be dated during the Hellenistic period is that the Persian government did not grant the Samaritans permission to build their temple. It is highly possible that Sanballat III and his group took advantage of the political instability of their time in the region to build their temple.

<sup>14</sup> There is no consensus among biblical scholars and historians as to the exact date that Johanan Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple. Some scholars such as Knoppers (2013:173) argue that the Samaritan temple was destroyed in 111-110 B.C.E. Others such as Castel (1985:185) have suggested that the precise year of the Samaritan temple destruction was 128 B.C.E. Whatever may be the date, our aim at this point is to understand the serious implication of this incident with reference to the relationship between these two communities. Purvis (1968:89) commented, “During their time at Shechem the Samaritan temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 BCE; the city of Shechem in 107; relations between the Samaritans and the Jews badly deteriorated.” Other scholars such as Hjelm (2015:189), however, suggest that the Samaritan temple was destroyed in 110 B.C.E.

<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that these two textual representatives (Pentateuchs) were totally different from each other. Instead, one could say that the only major difference between them was the ideology about the place of worship. Tov (2012:75) pointed out, “The SP contains a few ideological elements that form a thin layer added to an otherwise non-sectarian early text.” In fact, Purvis argues that the existence of the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch was a result of the rebuilding of the temple. “The Samaritan produced an edition of the Pentateuch... This was accomplished by deliberate textual manipulation to underscore the sanctity (and necessity) of Shechem/Gerizim as the divinely ordained centre of Israel’s cultic life” (1968:89).

the name of Israel (Gen. 32:28). On the one hand, the southern tribes claimed to be descendants of Judah, and the northern ones, on the other hand, alleged to descend from Ephraim and Manasseh, children of Joseph. Both Judah and Joseph are the offspring of Jacob.<sup>16</sup> The second concern refers to each community's place of Yahweh worship. The question is frequently asked as to how Yahweh chose the place for His name. This question is based on the fact that the Pentateuch, in general, and Deuteronomy,<sup>17</sup> in particular, seems to be subjective or ambiguous about this matter.<sup>18</sup> For example, the book of Deuteronomy, one of the well-known texts with reference to this issue, does not indicate the specific place where His people should worship Him.<sup>19</sup> The question therefore arises, if in the entire Pentateuch "no actual act of 'choosing the place is suggested'" (Japhet, 2001:132), how then did the Judeans, on the one hand, know that Jerusalem was the place the Lord chose for his name (according to 1 Kgs. 8; 14:21; 2 Chr. 6:6 and Ps. 132:13) and, on the other hand, were the Samaritans so sure that Yahweh's chosen place was Shechem while both communities shared the same traditions<sup>20</sup> all along until the last two centuries B.C.E.<sup>21</sup> The third concern among scholars is with regard to the emerging of the two Pentateuchs, and the question is as to what distinguishes the one Pentateuch from the other,<sup>22</sup> in this case the Judeans' Pentateuch from the Samaritans'.

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<sup>16</sup> Although this point will be extensively addressed in chapter two, it is important to mention here that most of the modern biblical scholars such as Knoppers (2013:2-4), Anderson and Giles (2012:9) and Pummer (2007:237) seem not to agree with the biblical and extra-biblical anti-Samaritan perspective. Knoppers, for example, asked this question which has never received enough attention, "If the Samaritans were not Israelites (in Jewish perspective), what happened to the northern Israelites?" (2013:4).

<sup>17</sup> Deuteronomy stands as one of the leading books in the entire Pentateuch with reference to the issue of the centralization of Yahweh worship. For example, in chapter 12 there are six instances where this issue is mentioned (in verses 5, 11, 13, 18, 21 and 26); in chapter 14 there are three verses (23, 24, 25); in chapter 16 there are six verses (2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16). In all these references the verb is applied in the *yiqtol* form יבחר ("He will choose") and not in its *qatal* form, בחר ("He chose or has chosen").

<sup>18</sup> It is important to indicate that the reference to the Pentateuch and Deut. 12 here is in agreement with Knoppers (2013:188), who noted that right from the beginning the Pentateuch had been a common document for both Judeans and Samaritans. He stated, "The Pentateuch has to be regarded as a common patrimony from the time before the relations between the Judeans and the Samaritans became seriously aggravated in the last two centuries B.C.E." See also Schorch (2013:1, 7) and Anderson and Giles (2005:4-5).

<sup>19</sup> Schley (1989:12) commented, "In the law of Deuteronomy 12, a single central place of worship is prescribed for the Israelites. That law, however, never actually designated a site for the sanctuary..."

<sup>20</sup> Nihan (2007:191) proposes that the Pentateuch was intended to be an official document for both the Judean and Samaritan communities: "This suggests in turn that the Torah, though probably compiled in Jerusalem, was nonetheless intended to be adopted by Yahwists in Samaria as well from the very time of its inception." See also Knoppers (2013:178).

<sup>21</sup> Before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. there was no way one could think of the Samaritans as a separate group with their own Pentateuch, as Schorch (2013:1) noted, "Thus, the origins of the SP are not really 'Samaritan,' neither in terms of literary history nor in terms of religious history, and all the more so, since we can speak about 'Samaritans' only from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E." See also Knoppers (2013:188).

<sup>22</sup> In his recognition of the differences between the two readings (Pentateuchs), Knoppers (2013:184) pointed out, "What particularly distinguishes the SP from the Jewish Pentateuch are some limited but highly significant

These three concerns constitute the scope of the present research, and our purpose is to investigate the research problem expressed in the following two related questions: (a) what are the theological implications of the centralization of the Yahweh worship according to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the different manuscripts of the Jewish Pentateuch? and (b) what implications do the different wordings between these two Pentateuchs – as potential witnesses to the text of the Old Testament – have in a Bible translation project where the communication of the content/theology of the writing is central to the aims of the translation?

Before the researcher of this study moves on to address the research methodology and the objectives of the present study, it is important to mention that this research will, firstly, consider textual analysis of the issue of centralization of worship from both Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs by addressing primarily those aspects which make the two readings distinct from each other on the one hand and similar on the other. Secondly, the research will address the theological implications of such differences and similarities. These two assignments will then lead the researcher to draw some guidelines of how the SP can be used as one of the textual witnesses in theological studies as well as the work of Bible translation of these specific texts. This approach will be taken from the assumption that biblical academics, exegetes, and Bible translators should not only attend to textual matters when using the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs as textual witnesses, but should also take the theological differences into account. It is probably from this understanding of the relationship between theology and Bible translation that Carson (1993:51) pointed out, “Though it is surely right to say that theology, to be properly based, must turn on the kind of understanding of the text that is the goal of responsible exegesis and the *sine qua non* for quality translation, we must also say that the theology the translator espouses, consciously or unconsciously, at the moment of translation, is bound to influence him.”

### **1.3. Objectives and Research Questions**

The present study will attempt to investigate how the theological differences with regard to the centralization of Yahweh worship that are represented by the differences in wording of the textual witnesses, in this case the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the different manuscripts of

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sectarian additions in the SP that are unparalleled either in the MT or in the witness to the Pentateuch found among the DSS”. According to Tov (2012:77), the distinction between the two readings was basically religious, namely “the central status of Mount Gerizim.” Tal (1999:301) noted that the remarkable feature of the SP is the focus on the holiness of Mount Gerizim. See also Pearce (2013:8).

the Jewish Pentateuch, can be accommodated in a translation project which seeks to communicate the content/theology of the writing. In this context, the following three aspects will be addressed:

### 1.3.1. The Origin of the Judean and Samaritan communities

The first aspect will be the analysis of the historical development of the relationship between the Judean and Samaritan communities by addressing the question: what could be the most plausible historical assumptions about the origins of these two neighbouring populaces? On the one hand, as it will be discussed in the next chapter, one of the classic and most dominant hypotheses with reference to the origins of the Samaritans is the so-called anti-Samaritan perspective, which is recorded mainly in the biblical texts<sup>23</sup> and in some extra-biblical sources.<sup>24</sup> This perspective has always given the impression that the Samaritans never shared ancestral roots with their southern neighbours and, therefore, the ideologies of the two communities have nothing in common. On the other hand, the biblical text gives a different feeling, allowing the reader to take it for granted and assume that the two communities had come from the same ancestral origin. In 1 Kgs. 12, for example, we read that the Israelites, except the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, rebelled against the rules of Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, and decided to follow Jeroboam son of Nebat as their king. In response to this situation, King Rehoboam summoned his troops and got ready to go and fight against his deserters. Before Rehoboam took off for the actual fight, the Lord spoke to him, "Do not go up to fight עַם־אֶחֱיֶיכֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (against your brothers, the Israelites)" (v 24). Taking into account the semantic potential of the term 'אָח' (brother), one can argue that in this context it may mean either blood-relative or fellow-tribespersion. Indeed, with the use of 'בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל' (the children of Israel or simply the Israelites), it can mean both of the above.<sup>25</sup> However, when coming to the question about the actual situation of the ten tribes that constituted the northern kingdom of Israel – those who left Rehoboam and followed Jeroboam, the answer given by both biblical and extra-biblical sources is summarized as follows: "Many modern interpreters have followed early interpreters in assuming that virtually all northern Israelites

<sup>23</sup> The expression "biblical texts" in this context refers explicitly to 2 Kings 17 and implicitly the writings of Ezra and Nehemiah.

<sup>24</sup> The writings of Josephus are representative of those extra-biblical resources.

<sup>25</sup> Lasine (2000:655) has pointed out that "While Israel is initially a personal name, its future as the name of people, a nation, and a monarchy is announced immediately after God reiterates the name change." Those people who were called Israelites are traditionally known to be of the same ancestral origin, Abraham, Isaac then Jacob. Therefore, the name 'Israel', in this context, stands as a corporative name of the twelve sons of Jacob and their descendants (more in chapter 2).



were killed or were forced to leave their homeland for parts unknown” (Knoppers, 2013:5). It is on these grounds that a sort of historical reconstruction of the period starting in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. will be needed in order to hear what other perspectives, such as that of the Samaritans themselves and the archaeological finds say about this subject.

### **1.3.2. Development of Different Readings**

The second aspect will attempt to understand the different sectarian readings in relation to the phenomenon of the centralization of worship. In other words, the focus will be on how these different readings developed, and the following questions will be addressed:

#### **1.3.2.1. Factors that Influenced the Choosing of Places of Worship**

*What were the various factors that influenced the choosing of such specific places of Yahweh worship? Were they religious, political, socio-economic reasons, or all of the above?* Although some of the issues related to this question will have been addressed in the first aspect, the specific objective here is to point out the fact that the symbolic worlds, to use Johnson’s term,<sup>26</sup> are not to be underestimated when analysing a text which serves as a window for understanding the life of a given group of people, even if a such text is basically religious. In other words, this is an acknowledgement of the fact that we are dealing with a historical text.

#### **1.3.2.2. How the Different Wording Developed**

*How did the wording and the different readings of these textual representatives develop?*

This question will require us to look at the texts<sup>27</sup> and consider the editorial processes behind them. This is, again, to acknowledge the fact that what we have at our disposal are ancient texts, which, according to scholars, have experienced editorial activities throughout their textual history. Tov (2012:181) noted, “It appears that the editorial process that is assumed for most biblical books presupposes previously written texts.” Because of this, Frevel (2011:11-12) and many other modern scholars have stood for not only a diachronic but also a synchronic reading of the ancient texts. While it is true that each biblical ideology has gone through a historical development, it is equally certain that each case has to be addressed from the point of view of its own context. This leads to the third question.

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<sup>26</sup> According to Johnson (1999:11), symbolic worlds are real systems, such as social relationships, economic affairs, political circumstances, religious experiences, etc. These symbols play a great role in shaping at a considerable level the worldview of a given group of people.

<sup>27</sup> By texts, in this particular context, the researcher means the Samaritan and the Jewish Pentateuchs.

### 1.3.2.3. Different Wordings and Readings in Relation to Different Ideologies

*To what extent can these different wordings and readings be attributed to different ideologies?* This search will be approached from the hypothesis that the biblical text is not only ancient and historical,<sup>28</sup> but it is also a theological text. This is what Tate (2009:180) meant when he commented, “The authors were guided in their adaptation, modification, and arrangement of their sources by theological purposes.”<sup>29</sup> Since the central topic is centralization of worship, consider, for a moment, the two written correspondences between the newly crowned King Solomon, king of Israel, and Hiram king of Tyre, in their diplomatic negotiations for the building of the temple in Jerusalem, in 1 Kgs. 5. The most obvious aspect which one will encounter in these two official documents is the highly formulated rhetorical language and the religious richness. It is in this case that the reader may be encouraged to agree with Grabbe (2004:190): “Any statistical data extracted from literary sources are generally suspect.”<sup>30</sup> In short, although the ancient writings reflect some historical memories,<sup>31</sup> they still remain theological texts, which were conceived, developed and finalized in real historical contexts.

### 1.3.3. Textual Relationship of the Two Pentateuchs

The third and last aspect which will be addressed in this study is the textual relationship of the two Pentateuchs, and the following questions will be addressed:

#### 1.3.3.1. The Similarities between the two Textual Representatives

*How much are these two textual representatives similar to one another?* This question will be approached with the assumption that the two textual representatives have originated from the same tradition until a late stage when the parting of ways actually took place, as it is believed that both Samaritans’ and Jews’ traditions and worldviews are based on the “torah

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<sup>28</sup> Deist (1988:200) wrote, “One will also have to grant that there are other possible notions of the entity ‘text’, derived from other philosophical positions (e.g. materialistic or socio-anthropological theories) that are equally valid. One such notion would be that texts are *products* of societies.”

<sup>29</sup> It is from this perspective that Grabbe (2007:142), in connection with the so-called “Chronicle of the kings of Judah” as a source of historical information, noted, “Some of the other sources may sometimes have contained reliable historical data, but most of the data in the text confirmed by external data as reliable could have come from such a chronicle. This means that the bulk of the DtrH’s text is not of great value for historical events, though it can be of use for sociological study and of course for literary, theological and other non-historical disciplines of the Hebrew Bible.” See also Grant (1984:111).

<sup>30</sup> Miller and Hayes (1986:207) reckoned, “The figure provided in this passage must be regarded as editorial exaggerations.”

<sup>31</sup> This is the position taken by centrist scholars such as Finkelstein, Mazar and many others who argue that the Bible should not be read as a historical book, but as a reflexion of some historical memories (Finkelstein and Mazar, 2007:30-31).



of Moses”.<sup>32</sup> Besides, scholars have supported the fact that before Ezra and Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem, both communities (Judah and Samaria) had one religious centre, the Jerusalem temple (Kessler, 2008:144-5). This was probably the outcome of King Josiah’s religious reform (2 Kgs. 23), for he had ordered the destruction of any shrine which could be found in both the southern and the northern kingdoms, including the altars that Jeroboam had built on the high places of Bethel and Dan.<sup>33</sup> If this was the case, the only place of worship that remained was the temple in Jerusalem probably until the Babylonian devastation in 587/6 B.C.E.

### 1.3.3.2. The Differences between the two Textual Representatives

*The second question is how much do these two textual representatives differ from each other?* The point of departure with regard to this question will be to consider the tenth commandment in both Samaritan and Jewish Pentateuch. While the latter ends with one of the most serious characteristics of human sinful nature – coveting, the former concludes this series of commandments with the holiness of the place of Yahweh worship – Mount Gerizim (Hepner, 2006:147). It is on this basis that biblical scholars have argued that the primary ideology which creates a sharp distinction between the two readings is the identification of a central place of worship (Knopper, 2013:184-5). In other words, even though one would identify some other sectarian differences throughout the two textual representatives, the place of worship stands as the major one among all of them. Tov (2012:87) reckoned, “The main ideological change in the Samaritan Pentateuch concerns the central place of worship.”<sup>34</sup> Now, if the above assumptions are plausible in biblical scholarship, in addition to the scholarly consensus that the SP is one of the potential textual witnesses,<sup>35</sup> then the last question arises:

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<sup>32</sup> Although scholars such as Liverani (2003:177-8) argue that the entire section of Josiah’s reform might have been a late addition, Tov (2012:79) pointed out, “It is now assumed that the Samaritan-group reflects a popular textual tradition of the Torah that circulated in ancient Israel in the last centuries BCE.” See also Becking (2011:109).

<sup>33</sup> 1 Kings 12:25-33. It is, however, worth it to mention here that scholars such as Castel (1985:132) have questioned the origin of the book of Deuteronomy, which is said to have been discovered by the priests in the temple in Jerusalem, and suggested that it might have originally come from the northern kingdom of Israel.

<sup>34</sup> Tov went on to state, “In every verse in the Torah in which Jerusalem is alluded to as the central place of worship, the Samaritans have inserted in its stead, sometimes by way of allusion, their own centre, Mount Gerizim.” (2013:x). If, indeed, the assumption is that the MT texts did not experience any single change; it is only the SP, this statement must be carefully said, as one would be wondering how often (if at all) Jerusalem is mentioned in the MT texts of the Pentateuch.

<sup>35</sup> With reference to the SP being a textual witness to the Hebrew Bible, Schorch (2013:1) stated, “The SP is not only foremost among all Samaritan literary texts, but it is also the most significant Hebrew witness to the textual history of the Pentateuch, aside from the MT”. Of course, without underestimating the position of the LXX, Metzger (2001:13) stated, “Whether one considers its general fidelity to the original, its influence over the Jews

### 1.3.3.3. The Role of the Samaritan Pentateuch

*What could be the role of the SP in theological studies and in the enterprise of Bible translation when translating passages relating to the centralization of the Yahweh worship?* This question will be approached with an objective to stimulate the current biblical scholarship's understanding about SP in biblical studies in general and Bible translation in particular, based on two aspects. The first is Tov's assertion. After his extensive analysis of the manuscripts and editions of the Pre-Samaritan texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch, he concluded that the editorial developments visible in the Pre-Samaritan texts and Samaritan Pentateuch turn out to be an important source for the understanding of the growth of the MT and DSS texts as well as the LXX translation (2012:93). The other aspect is from Sacchi who wrote, "At any rate, it should be pointed out that some of the New Testament quotations and readings of the Old Testament are based on the Samaritan text<sup>36</sup> and not on the Jerusalem one... Samaria continued to be a Jewish civilization in Palestine which kept important traditions alive up until Jesus' time, and even beyond" (2000:157). Having articulated our objectives, we move on to state the research methodology.

### 1.4. Research Methodology

Our point of departure in this study is the text, and the four characteristics (cf. 1.7.1) of what we mean by a text (ancient, historical, literary, and theological) will be acknowledged by asking the same question Williams and probably many other biblical scholars throughout the ages have asked, "Why did this particular text have to come into being (assuming that texts are written because they are needed)?" (2006:xvii). A full answer to such a question does not come from a single perspective, but rather by including all aspects of human life, such as historical, anthropological, literary and theological aspects. It is on this basis that biblical scholars such as Tate (2009) and others have consistently argued that for one to do justice to any biblical text, she/he should, by all means available, try to bring these aspects of human life into conversation. In doing so, history will attempt to ask and answer historical questions, while theology, philology and other domains will address issues of their respective fields, yet, at the same time, interconnecting and complementing each other. This is what Tate has

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for whom it was prepared, its relationship to the Greek New Testament, or its place in the Christian church, the Septuagint stands preeminent and in light of it casts on the study of the Scriptures."

<sup>36</sup> This does not ignore the place of the LXX in the formation of the New Testament, as it is rightly stated, "The importance of the Septuagint as a translation is obvious... It was the Bible of the early Christian church, and when the Bible is quoted in the New Testament, it is almost always from the Septuagint revision" (Metzger, 2001:18).

technically called the “integrated method” (2009:5). It is this approach that will guide the present research through four major tasks:

**Historical task:** This will be a literature study, which aims to address issues about the origins and relationships between the Judeans and the Samaritans. This will also include an analysis of the possible factors which might have influenced the development of their differences.

**Textual task:** The focus will be within the texts themselves, and we will examine the textual relationship between the two textual representatives (Pentateuchs) with regard to the issue of centralization of worship. Special attention will be given to the two texts, as mentioned below, Deut. 12 and 1 Kgs. 8. In the first text, one major question will be considered, which has to do with the development of the wording of the two different textual representatives – the Judean and the Samaritan. To address this question, this study will contemplate two analyses: (i) there will be a source analysis which will consider the original sources that lie behind the final text; (ii) there will be also a textual analysis which will examine the changes that the text might have experienced through the redaction work of different editors during its transmission. Then the study will explain the creation of the readings by comparing them with each other. In 1 Kings 8, we will also consider a contextual analysis by examining the sources that lie behind it and their relationship to the former text, in this case, Deuteronomy. 12.

**Theological task:** This task will be based mainly on a reception-historical study and will carry out the theological implications that were reflected in the textual differences by addressing issues such as: (i), the ideologies that shaped the wording of both the Jewish and Samaritan textual representatives (Pentateuchs); and (ii) the manner in which these texts were received and interpreted in the contextual situation of each community.

**Synthetic task:** This task aims to determine how these different methodological approaches to the differences in the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs can be integrated into some guidelines for a responsible use of these textual witnesses in the work of Bible translation. The next task to look at is different translation approaches.

## 1.5. Theories of Bible Translation

Taking into consideration that translation is “an autonomous discipline”,<sup>37</sup> this study does not intend to address it at length, as one would expect. Instead, special attention will be given to an overview of the current theories of Bible translation. Many attempts have been made to define the term translation. Catford (1965:20) stated, “Translation may be defined as follows: the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language”. Following is Bell, who defined translation in the following terms: “Translation is the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another language, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences” (1991:4). Wilt claimed to approach his definition as naïvely as possible and wrote, “Translation may be defined quite simply as the attempt to represent in one language what was said in another” (2002:154). The last definition to be consider here is that of Wendland (2006). Wendland understands translation as “an interpersonal, transformative sharing of the same text between two different systems of language, thought, and culture” (2006:67).

After a close look at these four definitions, one will notice that they all agree in basically three aspects.<sup>38</sup> The first aspect is that translation involves at least two completely different languages— a source language (SL) and a target language (TL). In fact, two languages which are said to be the same are no longer two but one language, as Bell noted, “Languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings.”<sup>39</sup> This then leads us to the second common aspect in the four definitions above – the existence of a text. In translation there must be a text<sup>40</sup>, which has to be shared between the two languages – a text which has to be transferred from one language to another language, that is, from the SL to the TL. The text, however, is not like an empty file or container; it has a message to communicate. Here is the third aspect – “The communication of a message in one language that was first communicated in another language” (Wendland, 2006:1). In other words, it is the message, and not necessarily the words and grammatical codes, which have to be transferred from the SL to the TL. This is the central and ultimate

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<sup>37</sup> Watt (2014:11). However, one can look at translation as an interdisciplinary study.

<sup>38</sup> Beekman and Callow (1974:19).

<sup>39</sup> It is because of this phenomenon – one word may have different meanings in different languages – that Lucas (2002:21) commented, “Words are more than simply labels for things. Most of words have a greater or a lesser range of meaning. This may mean that, although two words in different languages may seem to be equivalent to each other, there may be contexts where the assumption of a simple equivalence results in misunderstanding because of the different ranges of meaning of the words in the two languages.” See also Van der Watt and Kruger (2002:118) and Bell (1991:6).

<sup>40</sup> A definition of a text for this particular study is provided below.

goal of Bible translation.<sup>41</sup> Though there are grammatical codes and rules which have to be seriously recognized and carefully applied, a translation which fails to communicate the intended meaning of the message in the source language to the target audience has no value.<sup>42</sup> To say it differently, “Translation must aim primarily at ‘reproducing the message.’ To do anything else is essentially false to one’s task as a translator” (Nida and Taber, 1969:12). In short, translation is a clear passing of a given message from one language to another (Walsh, 2001:505). Now the question frequently asked by biblical scholars has to do with the different approaches taken by experts in the field of Bible translation to allow the biblical text to communicate its message to the secondary receptor, as clear and concise as it did to its intended/primary audience.

In their attempt to address this question, both biblical scholars and Bible translation practitioners have identified different translation approaches. Watt (2014:17), for instance, summarised it well when he wrote about the western ‘Translators and theoreticians’, and classified them in three major categories, namely the highly literal-based, mediating-based and the highly dynamic-based theories.<sup>43</sup>

### **1.5.1. Formal Equivalence Theory**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832 C.E.) has been identified as one of the most influential translators and theorists of his time as well as a phenomenal advocate of the formal equivalence theory.<sup>44</sup> According to Watt, although Goethe was aware of different approaches, such as highly dynamic or sense-for-sense based, and highly literal or word-for-word based, he “preferred the last category” (2014:15). This, however, does not mean that this approach started with Goethe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Rather, it has been around long before Goethe, and it continues to exist, as Watt (2014:17) stated: “Although Goethe and those who followed him using a literalistic translation approach have probably influenced much of the literalism era, it should be noted that this methodology was clearly evident before his time, in fact, throughout the history of translation.”<sup>45</sup> Nord (1997:4) stated, “Translation proper is

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<sup>41</sup> De Waard and Nida (1986:10) asserted that the ultimate goal of translators when translating a text is to disclose the meaning of the message in the text as clearly understandable to the speakers of the target language as possible. Therefore, “A translation should communicate.”

<sup>42</sup> It needs to be pointed out here that relevance theorists, as indicated below, argue that translation is more than a system of communication (Gutt, 2000:22).

<sup>43</sup> Watt (2014:17).

<sup>44</sup> Robinson (1997:23).

<sup>45</sup> This is the case with other approaches. According to Watt, there is no approach or theory that functioned in isolation for a certain or an entire generation without others. “These varied philosophies are seen in the most influential translation theorists throughout history and in the other influential translation theorists” (2014:17).

frequently associated with word-for-word fidelity to the source, even though the result may not be considered appropriate for the intended purpose.”

In the modern era, when translation became one of the major domains in linguistic studies, the highly literal-based approach came to be known as formal-equivalence theory<sup>46</sup> or “Word-for-word approach to translation.”<sup>47</sup> In his definition of what he calls “Linguistic approach and the prescriptive phase”, Watt (2014:19) noted, “This period of time is dominated by linguistic approaches and an equivalence methodology using prescriptions or guidelines, but it still exerts influence to the present day.” The main focus of this theory is the SL (Catford, 1965:32)<sup>48</sup>. According to Nida (1964:165), there are at least three major elements that describe this theory, namely: a) faithful to source language (SL); b) consistent usage of the source language and; c) formulation of the meaning in terms of the source language. In other words, the primary purpose of formal-equivalence or word-for-word theory is to maintain as much as possible the linguistic features of the source language in the target language. Fee and Strauss (2007:26) stated, “Formal equivalence, also known as ‘literal’ or ‘word-for-word’ translation, seeks to retain the form of the Hebrew or Greek while producing basically understandable English. This goal is pursued for both words and grammar.” In fact, Nida and Taber (1969:1) argued that the translators’ focus was the form that the language demands in order to convey the message. In this case, “translators took particular delight in being able to reproduce stylistic specialities, e.g., rhythms, rhymes, plays of words, chiasmus, parallelism, and unusual grammatical structures.”<sup>49</sup>

At least two ideologies stood behind this approach. One is the concept of ‘a holy language’. Hebrew, Greek and Latin, in particular, have been portrayed, to some extent, as heavenly languages.<sup>50</sup> In fact, a close look at the history of Bible translation shows that some of the translations were destroyed with fire, and their translators were declared heretics and subsequently either excommunicated or sentenced to death, because they had defiled the Holy Word of God by translating it into “vernacular languages, not sacred, maybe even unholy vessels deemed by many to be unfit for divine revelation.”<sup>51</sup> This was not merely a

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<sup>46</sup> Watt stated, “Formal correspondence is a literal approach to translation” (2014:21).

<sup>47</sup> Makutoane and Naudé (2008:2).

<sup>48</sup> See also Nida (1964:159).

<sup>49</sup> In agreement with Nida and Taber, Watt (2014:22) pointed out, “Literal translation is a ST-focused approach where the forms or structures of the SL are closely followed... It often results in wooden-sounding, unnatural texts, and in some cases literalists have attempted to capture the sounds, grammatical structures, or other literary features of the source text.”

<sup>50</sup> Noorda (2002:11).

<sup>51</sup> Noorda (2002:11).

verbalized law, but rather a written statute called *De Heretico Comburendo 1401*, which was published by the synod of the Catholic bishops in coordination with the parliamentary corpus of England and reads:

We resolve therefore and ordain that no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or any other language by way of a book, pamphlet or tract, and that no book, pamphlet or tract of this kind... be read in part or in whole, publicly or privately, under pain of the great excommunication, until the translation shall have been approved by the diocesan of the place, or if needed by a provincial council.<sup>52</sup>

One of the well-known examples of this oppressive behaviour towards some of the Bible translations and translators is that of John Wycliffe. The Religious Tract of Society (1884:95) pointed out that forty-three years after John Wycliffe's death, his remains were disinterred and burnt to ashes, mainly because in his life time he dared to translate the Bible from Latin, the so-called 'God's own language,'<sup>53</sup> into English. Van Steenberg (2011:4) stated, "The political and ecclesiastical resistance against Wycliffe's ideas and translation led to the condemnation of the Wycliffe Bible in 1415. Even Wycliffe's body was to be exhumed and burned." The other ideology which stood behind the formal-equivalence theory was the concept of 'inspiration'. Smith (2007:69) stated, "In fact, belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible had been the main reason formal-equivalence had dominated for so long." The Scriptures are God's inspired word; it was the Spirit of God, and not man, who carefully selected the words and dictated them to the original authors (Nida, 1964:26). Starting with Philo<sup>54</sup>, Augustine based his argument on this inspirational belief in his answer to the question why there were some differences in wording between the Hebrew and the Greek texts of the Old Testament.<sup>55</sup> In fact, it is argued that Augustine did not welcome Jerome's Vulgate, simply because of his translation approach, which is the next topic to be discussed.

### 1.5.2. Dynamic Equivalence Theory

Watt has described this theory as 'the reactionary phase' and, according to him, "during this period of time there is a reaction to prescription and equivalence. The reactionary approaches accentuate other factors such as literary systems and society (2014:18). Watt (2014:17) has referred to Jerome (347-419 C.E.) and Luther (1483-1546 C.E.) as two of the great advocates

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<sup>52</sup> Wilson (2010:23).

<sup>53</sup> Noorda (2002:11).

<sup>54</sup> Metzger (2001:15).

<sup>55</sup> Rogerson (2002:18) wrote, "Augustine held that the translators were so guided by the Spirit of God that if they had omitted anything from the Hebrew or had added anything to it this was in accordance with what the Spirit of God had decided to say."



and practitioners of the dynamic equivalence theory of translation.<sup>56</sup> Jerome's first involvement in translation happened in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries when he made a general revision of the existing variety of Latin translations, in response to the Vatican's concern to create a standardized Latin version.<sup>57</sup> Van Steenberg (2011:2) pointed out:

In the fourth century a wide and somewhat confusing variety of Latin versions of the Bible existed (Vetus Latina). In order to contain the situation and create a standardized and generally recognized biblical text Pope Damasus ordered Jerome to produce a uniform Latin text of the Bible. The intention was not necessarily to create a new translation, but rather to revise the existing array of Latin versions and develop a standard Latin text that was to be used by the Roman church.<sup>58</sup>

However, Jerome did not only uniformise the existing translations, but he also translated. Initially he translated Psalms and later other books from the Hebrew Bible into Latin. That is why there are two versions of the Psalter in the Vulgate: one from the Hebrew script and the other from the LXX translation.<sup>59</sup> In fact, Jinbachian (2007:33) pointed out, "Jerome started to revise, but soon gave up because of the great differences that existed among the manuscripts. He began his own translation, which is known as the *Vulgata*." In reference to Jerome's theory of translation, Burke (2007:89) wrote, "Jerome's evidence of variation between books, some of which tend more toward being literal and others more *ad sensum*."<sup>60</sup> The prophets and Psalms (the earliest done by Jerome) are the more literal, while the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Esther (the last done) are considerably more 'free'.<sup>61</sup> Just like the ancient writers who had never imagined that their writing would, at one stage, turn into a *biblia*, so was Jerome. It is highly possible that Jerome had no idea that the approach he followed consciously or unconsciously in his translation, would, a millennium later, influence the whole concept of Bible translation for decades, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Robinson (1997), on the other hand, noted that Martin Luther, a 16<sup>th</sup> century church reformer and Bible translator, did not move away from Jerome's translation theory. After describing how Luther felt toward Jerome's Vulgate translation, Robinson states Luther's great input in the field of Bible translation as follows, "Luther's most important contribution to translation

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<sup>56</sup> See also Robinson (1997:22).

<sup>57</sup> See also Munday (2016:31-32).

<sup>58</sup> See also Metzger (2001:32).

<sup>59</sup> Metzger (2001:33) pointed out the fact that Jerome indeed translated some books of the Hebrew Bible. "Among the Old Testament books, Jerome turned his attention first to the Psalter. He made two versions of the Old Latin version of the Psalms by comparing it with the Greek Septuagint." See also Burke (2007:89).

<sup>60</sup> See also Nord (1997:4-5).

<sup>61</sup> This is what Nida, four decades before Burke, noted, "He followed well-conceived principles, which he freely proclaimed and defended, and stated quite frankly that he rendered 'sense for sense and not word for word' (1964:13).



theory lies in what might be called his ‘reader-orientation’” (1997:84). As far as translation approach is concerned, Luther was a practitioner of both formal and dynamic approaches. In other words, Luther “held the view that in the Bible there are passages where the translator must produce a literal, word-for-word translation, while in others he was happy to see a free, meaning-based translation” (Jinbanchian, 2007:33).<sup>62</sup>

Following Martin Luther was Nida, a 20<sup>th</sup> century scholar and Bible translator. Stine (2004) substantially describes the great influence of Nida in the field of Bible translation and portrays him as the central figure of his days in the whole concept called dynamic equivalence theory.<sup>63</sup> According to Nida (1964:166), the aim of the dynamic equivalence theory is to reproduce in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language. By equivalent, Nida means that the target text has to be as faithful to the source text as possible. He implies the term natural to mean that the target text has to sound natural to the ears of the receiving audience. Lastly, by closest, Nida means that the two texts, the sending and the receiving of the message, have to identify each other, that is, they should communicate the same message.

Moreover, Nida justifies this theory based firstly on the fact that language is a dynamic phenomenon; it changes constantly from time to time and from place to place.<sup>64</sup> What does all of this mean? Consider, for instance, the Authorized (King James) Version, published in 1611. The language and style employed in this translation will most probably sound unfamiliar to a twenty-first century British person as well as to an American, Australian or an African English speaker. In this case, it becomes mandatory that translators consider producing translations based on current and familiar linguistic forms and style of their contemporary audience. In fact, it is argued that one of the reasons that motivated churches and church leaders to come up with both the Revised Version (RV) in 1885 for the British community and the Revised Standard Version (RSV) in 1952 for the American community was that “the language and style were increasingly felt archaic” (Van Steenberg, 2011:12).

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<sup>62</sup> Nord (1997:4) wrote, “Jerome (348-420) and Luther (1483-1546) held the view that there are passages in the Bible where the translator must reproduce ‘even word-for-word.’”

<sup>63</sup> Stine reckoned, “Nida introduced an approach termed ‘dynamic equivalence’” (2004:40). However, without disregarding Nida’s great influence, other scholars, including Stine, identify this approach with the Bible Society Period (Naudé and Van der Merwe, 2002:2). Again, this does not mean Nida is the founder of this approach.

<sup>64</sup> Nida (1964:161).

Secondly, languages differ from one another in terms of form and style.<sup>65</sup> In other words, two languages never function exactly the same way; each language has its unique grammatical construction such as word order, patterns of phrase order, discourse markers, to mention only three.<sup>66</sup> In communication, these patterns are very essential for the understanding of a given message. The focus in this theory is, therefore, the TL; the meaning of the message has to be clearly communicated to the secondary hearer. Omanson (1990:502) reckoned, “A basic principle of dynamic-equivalence translation is that meaning has priority over form.”<sup>67</sup> In agreement with Omanson, Watt (2014:21) stated, “A meaning-based approach is a more TL-focused approach than a literal approach and the meaning takes precedence over form and style with respect to the TL.” In other words, a complete meaning-based approach carefully considers the linguistic forms and features of the source text, and then seeks to reproduce these in the target language. Thus, form and style are important on both sides of the translation continuum.

### **1.5.3. Functional Theory**

As indicated above, the two theories (formal and dynamic equivalences) put more emphasis on linguistic aspects of the text than on any other aspect. The formal equivalence is generally a source text oriented theory, while the dynamic equivalence focused on the target text. Due to the nature of our contemporary society (a pluralistic society)<sup>68</sup>, scholars such as Sperber and Wilson (1986), Nord (1997) and later on Gutt (2000), motivated by language dynamics and cultural diversities of modern society, started to question the applicability and effectiveness of the functional-equivalence theory in Bible translation. They argued that Bible translation in particular is not only about language, but also includes some cultural elements that need a certain level of consideration. Nord (1997:11), for example, reckoned: “Within the framework of such a comprehensive theory of human communication, translation theory cannot draw on linguistic theory alone, however complex it may be. What is needed is a theory of culture to explain the specificity of communicative situation and the relationship between verbalized and non-verbalized situational elements.” It is on these bases that functional approach came into play in the enterprise of Bible translation. According to

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<sup>65</sup> Nida and Taber (1969:3); Nida (1964:2).

<sup>66</sup> Van der Watt and Kruger (2002:118).

<sup>67</sup> See also Nida and Taber (1969:13).

<sup>68</sup> By pluralism this study means a society made up of readers and listeners from different contexts, which include gender, age, ethnicity, culture, language, ecclesiological and theological traditions, etc.

Snell-Hornby (1988:43-44), functional theory is fundamentally intercultural<sup>69</sup> and not a linguistic transfer; it is towards the function of the target text and not a set of prescriptions to the source text and; it is inclusive to all aspects of human life and not an isolated specimen of language.

Besides, Nord (1997) and Mojola and Wendland (2003) have argued that the major objective of functional theory is to fulfil the *skopos* (purpose)<sup>70</sup> of the translation in its respective target language. “A functional approach to translation has long been promoted as a prominent aspect of the *Skopostheorie* school of translation that was pioneered by Katharina Reiss and Hans Berneer in the early 1980s and has been further developed in the writings of Nord. These writers stress the function (normally referred to only in the singular) that a particular translation is designed to perform for its primary target audience” (Mojola and Wendland, 2003:13). That is, according to functionalists, to translate is objectively and intentionally to disclose the meaning of the message to the contemporary audience in a relevant way by minimising the effort that the audience may need to invest when processing the information and at the same time by increasing the benefits (Gutt, 2000:28). Two cases will be sufficient to illustrate this point. One is found in Makutoane and Naudé’s article ‘Towards the Design for a New Translation in Sesotho’ (2008). In this literary work, these scholars pointed out that two existing Sesotho Bible translations (1909 and 1989 respectively) were still far away from meeting the needs of the Sesotho community, due to the fact that, like the rest of the African continent, most of the Sesotho population was illiterate and, therefore, could not read.<sup>71</sup> Until present days, the major and most common form of communication among Sesotho people is oral. If this is the case, the question they asked is how much these two versions are relevant to these illiterate Sesotho Christians. The answer is that they have less applicability and therefore almost no effect. Alternatively, Makutoane and Naudé proposed another type of Bible translation – oral translation (2008:1). People who cannot read and write are always good story-tellers and listeners. In this case, the written translation remains for the literate ones – those who are able to read and write, while

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<sup>69</sup> Sperber and Wilson have argued that any information merely presented is likely to “alter the cognitive environment of the audience” (1986:61). The reason for this phenomenon is correctly stated by Watt (2014:35) when he said “Translation from one language to another involves a cross-cultural dynamic. Personal ideologies also influence the way that translation is done... everyone has biases and agendas and these influenced the way that the translation is done; one cannot translate neutrally.”

<sup>70</sup> “*Skopos* is the Greek work for ‘aim’ or ‘purpose’ and was introduced into translation theory in the 1970s by Hans J. Vermeer (1930-2010) as a technical term for the purpose of a translation and of the action of translating” (Munday, 2016:126).

<sup>71</sup> Makutoane and Naudé (2008:13) indicated that about 11% of the total number of members in Bloemfontein’s congregation cannot read or write. “It is presumed that the figure would be higher in the rural communities.”

the oral translation targets those who cannot read and write. The other case is in Petersen's article 'Scripture Relevance Dramas' (2014). Petersen relates his personal experience in one of the West African communities in Burkina Faso, where drama performance is one of the most sophisticated and efficient means of communication. After much practical exercise, Petersen came to the conclusion that to perform drama in those communities is more advisable than to translate the Bible into their native languages. He wrote, "Rather than translating foreign scripts that were created with a different culture in mind, we create dramas addressing local questions, worldview, interests and background knowledge" (2014:57). Two points are worthy of notice here. First, according to Petersen, relevance theory aims to communicate the message within the contemporary audience's comfort zone, that is, within the people's everyday life experience. Second, people "learn without pain" (2014:60).<sup>72</sup> The illiterate ones, for example, do not need to experience severe stress trying to learn how to read. Those who do not know the historical cultural context of the source text do not need to go through Bible-based literature to learn about the world of the biblical text. All that is needed is to let the over two thousand years old message be incarnated into the target language with its linguistic and cultural context. It is in these and other cases that relevance theory becomes not only a necessity but urgent in the African continent and other parts of the world where the majority of the people cannot read, "thus empowering translators to predict more effectively whether or not a given rendering will communicate effectively with the target audience" (Naudé and Van der Merwe, 2002:3).

In summary, we have outlined at least three major approaches of Bible translation. First is the formal equivalence, also known as word-for-word approach, which aims to preserve as much of the linguistic features of the SL in the TL as possible. The second is the dynamic equivalence approach which focuses on the TL with all its linguistic and stylistic needs. The third is the functional theory, a further development of the previous one (the dynamic theory), and it focuses not only on the linguistic features, but also on the cultural aspects of the target audience. Besides looking at the cultural aspects, one of the ultimate aims of the functional approach is to fulfil the purpose of that particular translation in the TL. As indicated throughout this heading, this study sides with those scholars who argue that "there is no thing as purely modified literal translation or a purely idiomatic translation" (Brunn, 2013:65). Therefore, "A variety of perspectives and tools can contribute to assessing Scripture needs and desires to diverse audiences and to helping producers of translations

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<sup>72</sup> See also Mojola and Wendland (2003:20-21).

respond to these” (Mojola and Wendland, 2003:25). Consequently, one may have the ideal as his/her translation approach, but in reality the final product ends up integrating different approaches. Having said this, the research now moves on to the definitions of this study.

## **1.6. Case Study**

In line with the research problem already stated above, this study will consider two biblical texts as case studies. One is Deut. 12 where the so-called “Centralization Formula” (Gallagher, 2014:562) is one of the dominant themes. The other text is 1 Kgs. 8 where the central place for Yahweh worship seems to be already identified. This research will try to understand how the two texts are related to each other, as the latter seems to be a fulfilment of the former.

### **1.6.1. Deuteronomy 12 – The Unknown Worship Centre**

With absolute authority, Moses /the Deuteronomist instructs the people of Israel about worship as they are about to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the Promised Land. He makes sure that the people of Israel know that they should worship the Lord their God in the new land. However, worship is not an instinctive phenomenon in the sense that people are born with the knowledge of how to worship. Instead, they learn to worship either through influence from others or through teaching; they are taught or influenced about whom to worship, where to worship, and how to worship. In this text (Deut. 12), both Moses and the people of Israel seem to be very much aware of who is the object of their service of worship. In fact, Exod. 8:1, 20; 9:13; and 10:3 state the reason why God had decided to take the people of Israel away from Egypt to the desert. The main reason was that the people should worship the Lord God, as it reads “This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they worship me’” (8:1b). While it is true that one of the driving motives which let God take His people out of Egypt was to free them from slavery, as it reads, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians...” (Exod 3:7-8), it remains relevant in the context of this study to argue that Yahweh worship was the main purpose for the deliverance of the Israelites. The reality, however, seemed to be the opposite, as scholars such as Miller and Hayes (1986:109) have argued, “Some degree of continuity between the religion and cult of the ‘Israelite’ tribes and that of the general Syro-Palestinian population should be expected, if for no other reason

than that the tribes themselves emerged, at least to some extent, from the indigenous population.”

Now the next two questions are as to how and where the people should worship the Lord their God. With regard to the first question – how, Moses seems to have an answer, “You must not worship the Lord your God in their ways” (Deut. 12:4). In other words, the people of Israel should not try to copy the worship practices of the nations that lived in the land or be influenced by them. Rather, they should worship in the way they were taught by Moses. The people of Israel were to destroy completely all the places of worship, break down all the altars, smash all the sacred stones, burn the Asherah poles, cut down all the idols and wipe out their names from those sacred places, and have only one place for Yahweh’s name (Deut. 12:2-6). Coming to the second question, however, it sounds like Moses did not have an answer. It remained an open question, as it reads, “המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם בו לשכן שמו” (the place which the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name) (Deut. 12:5). This brings up the second text.

### **1.6.2. 1 Kings 8 – The Revealed Worship Centre**

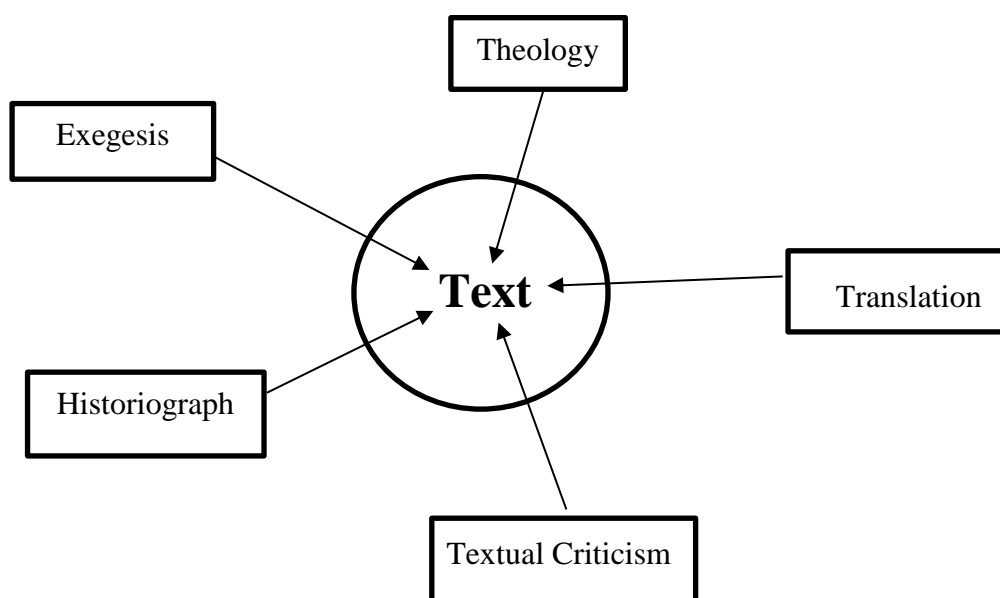
The answer to the “where” question remained unanswered until 1 Kings 8:1-30. Here we get the impression and a clear understanding that “המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם בו לשכן שמו” (the place which the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name) in Deut. 12:5 was referring to the city of Jerusalem. The unknown place is now explicitly identified; it is divinely endorsed (v. 10) and humanly declared as the only Yahweh worship centre for the entire community of the twelve tribes of Israel (vv. 12-13). Now the question remains: how did Gerizim become another worship centre? This question leads us to the next definition – the two centres of Yahweh worship.

## **1.7. Definitions**

### **1.7.1. A Text in the Context of this Study**

The importance of the text, particularly for this study, is shown in the diagram below. The text holds the central position, not that it overrules all other domains or fields of study, but mainly because it is an explicit common object. It would be unrealistic to suggest that a theologian could engage in his/her theological studies, or an exegete in his/her exegetical journey to search for the meaning of a particular biblical word, phrase, sentence, or concept, or a historian could be motivated to start his/her assignment of reconstructing the historical

background of a given biblical event without the respective relevant text. The same can be said about a textual-critical scholar or a Bible translator. How would a textual critic try to trace the originality of a text or a Bible translator get ready to translate without the text? All these practitioners of different fields of study start their assignment from a text. The text is, in this case, one of the common grounds from which almost all the biblical disciplines depart. Now the question remains, what is meant by a text?



The understanding and the definition of a text in this study will be built upon two literary works. One by Nord and Sparrow on ‘Textual Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation’ (2005) and the other by Jonker on ‘Communities of Faith as Texts in the Process of Biblical Interpretation’ (1999). Nord and Sparrow understand a text as “a communicative action which can be realized by a combination of verbal and nonverbal means” (2005:16). Jonker, after having given the etymological definition of the word *texere* (in Latin), which has the connotation of “a web of relationships between signs which stand in need of interpretation” (1999:81), went on to outline different theories from psychological, structuralist, Semiotic, deconstruction and political perspectives. It is not the purpose of this study to discuss those theoretical approaches, but rather to point out the theory which represents the researcher’s point of view, in this case, the Semiotic approach. “Semiotics emphasizes the role of the reader, and holds the view that meaning is manifested in the act of reading the signs of a text. The relationship between the text and the performance of the act of reading constitutes the authority for the meaning” (Jonker, 1999:81-82). These two definitions take us back to what has been said



previously about translation. A text, whether a written, oral or signed form, is a means of communication, and the agencies that determine the effectiveness of such communication are the text and the reader.<sup>73</sup> Lawrie (2005:113) illustrates this point by using the analogy of a STOP sign. Take for instance, a STOP sign is down alongside the road and remains invisible to both drivers and pedestrians. That sign becomes as simple and useless a thing as other objects around. The effectiveness of that STOP sign, however, is when it takes its proper position where drivers and pedestrians are able to read the message engraved in it and be able to do what it says. That is what we mean by text –“A meaning-producing event, be it a book, a film, an advertisement, a phone conversation and so on” (Knapp and Watkins, 2005:13).

In addition, in the context of this study, the text is an ancient, historical, literary and theological<sup>74</sup> meaning-producing event or “a deposit of meaning” (Deist, 1988:200). It is an ancient text in the sense that it goes as far back as two thousand years ago; it is a historical text in the sense that it was produced by real people who lived in a real historical context to respond to real life situations. It is a literary text that is in a written form and observes certain grammatical rules of a particular language; and finally, it is a theological text in that it reflects religious beliefs and the convictions of its community. Having stated what is meant by a text in this study, the next task to address is the issue of the original Hebrew text.

### **1.7.2. An Original Hebrew Text**

Modern biblical scholars and archaeologists have found it difficult to define and identify any biblical manuscripts which can be considered as “the original text” in the real sense of the word.<sup>75</sup> Deist (1988:81) pointed out, “It is very problematic to speak about *an* original text for the Old Testament.” There are basically two reasons behind this phenomenon. First is the definition of the concept “original text”. Deist (1988:198) has outlined at least three schools of thought. One school refers to the “original text” as the manuscripts of the original authors of the Old Testament. Since it has been found to be difficult, even almost impossible, to have access to texts dating as far back as the ninth century B.C.E.,<sup>76</sup> other scholars have suggested

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<sup>73</sup> In addressing the same topic, Deist (1988:200) expressed his understanding of a text being a “deposit” of meaning.

<sup>74</sup> Jonker and Lawrie (2005:236-7).

<sup>75</sup> In addressing the issue of textual witnesses, Tov (2012:3) pointed out, “All these textual witnesses differ from one another to a greater or lesser extent. Since no textual source contains what could be called the biblical text, a serious involvement in biblical studies necessitates the study of all sources, which necessarily involves study of the differences between them.”

<sup>76</sup> With regard to this option, Deist (1988:198) commented, “If we say we have to recover the authographa, textual criticism has to work back towards the time of Hezekiah, and perhaps even further, since the ‘originals’ of what we find in the Old Testament had their origins in the times between the ninth and second century BC.”



a second option – the final redaction of the text.<sup>77</sup> This option has its own limitations as well. After considering the fact that, in the course of its transmission and reception, the same text had been an object of different traditions, such as the Judean for the MT, the Greek for the LXX and the Samaritan tradition for the SP, scholars have frequently asked the question as to “which final form” one should consider as the final, and which criteria should be used in order to determine the tradition to be followed (Deist, 1988:198). This then leads to the third school of thought which refers to the combination of the two options. This assumption claims the importance of acknowledging the existence of both the not yet recovered and the already recovered biblical texts and fragments as one of the highest aims of textual criticism in its endeavour of reconstructing the original text. Like the other two previous options, this one does not offer any better solution after all, as Tov (2012:166) reckoned, “A major complication for any theory is the assumption that the textual transmission was operative before the completion of the final literary stage... These stages were not ‘drafts,’ but each literary stage was considered final and then released, in modern parlance.” For that reason, “Original text and/or final text are terms that are problematic to the extreme” (Deist, 1988:198). Moreover, still aware of the complexity of this matter, Van der Kooij (2008:583) proposes a fourth school of thought when he stated, “Alternatively, one could argue that the earlier text, which might be labelled ‘pre-MT’, should be regarded as the final redaction of the primary text of a given book.” In other words, an original text can refer to the earliest available text based on the existing readings and their respective hypothetical emendations.

The second reason is the concept of ‘multiple authorship’ of the biblical text.<sup>78</sup> When giving a definition of the “original determinative text”, Tov (2012:167) stated, “At the end of the composition process of a biblical book stood a text that was finished at a literary level and subsequently was considered authoritative, even if only by a limited group of people... In this case, the textual evidence does not point to a single ‘original’ text, but a series of subsequent authoritative texts produced by the same or different authors.” In other words, it is reasonable enough to argue that most of the Old Testament writings have gone through different authors and/or editors. Therefore, it becomes difficult to identify an existing version that one can categorically pronounce it as the original text.

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<sup>77</sup> The expression ‘final form’ is used here with a certain level of sensitivity due to the fact that scholars have doubted whether there has ever been any point of time that the biblical text reached its final form.

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### 1.7.3. The Issue of Multiple Readings of the Hebrew Text

The second major phenomenon which makes it difficult and/or impossible to identify and define the original text is the existence of multiple readings.<sup>79</sup> Deist (1988:10-16) is one, among many scholars, who substantially addressed this subject. Deist outlined several theories from both periods, before and after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) in 1947-1956. The presumptions before this remarkable date, as far as the history of the biblical text is concerned, maintained the existence of one proto-text from which all other Hebrew manuscripts were copied. He stated as follows, “The idea of one pristine text of the Old Testament has been with us for centuries and most of the ‘histories’ of the text of the Hebrew Bible had been constructed on the assumption that such a text did in fact exist” (1988:10). In fact, scholars have identified at least two major influential theories with this regard.<sup>80</sup> One is attached to Lagarde who suggests that the different readings in the extent of textual representatives can all be traced back to one original text. The other theory is identified with Kahle who argues that originally there was a variety of different manuscripts which were gradually reduced to only a few (Deist, 1988:12; cf. 5.4 below). However, after the discovery, publication and study of the biblical manuscripts from Qumran, the issue of the multiple reading became evident. The theories after the discovery of the DSS support the hypothesis of the existence of a variety of texts which circulated simultaneously in different communities,<sup>81</sup> as Charlesworth (2013:xv) pointed out, “After the winter of 1947, specialists working on the biblical texts found in the eleven Qumran caves made a startling discovery. They recognized that the earliest known Hebrew and Aramaic biblical manuscripts reserved among the DSS represented diverse text types. Perhaps twelve text types could be identified.”

Carr (2011) is another modern scholar who favours and advocates the theory of the multiplicity of texts. In addressing the topic about ‘Finalization of Scripture in an Increasing Greek World,’ he argued that while it is true that the Hasmonean period was mainly characterized by the existence of different versions of the Hebrew Bible, namely, the

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<sup>79</sup> With reference to this point, Barthélemy (2012:132) stated, “In that era, certain portions of the Joshua-Judges-Samuel-Kings corpus were already transmitted in several distinct textual forms, and these continued to undergo literary innovations of limited extent throughout their transmission in Hebrew.” See also Van der Kooij (2008:582).

<sup>80</sup> Tov (2012:155-157).

<sup>81</sup> Deist pointed out “Instead one should rather think of a *variety* of texts that were in circulation during the four or three centuries before the turn of the eras. That variety, reflected in the Qumran documents, implies that one should forget about the possibility of existence of *one* proto-text” (1988:14). In fact, Brotzman (1994:44) discusses textual standardization and summarises, “The standard text was not a new creation. Rather one text was selected in preference of two other texts forms that also existed at that time.”

Septuagint (LXX), Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) and the DSS, it is equally certain that the proto-Masoretic text had different versions, due to the fact that the postexilic Jewish community was divided into various and different parties. According to Carr, it is highly possible that each group had its own favoured version<sup>82</sup> (2011:153). In fact, De Waard and Nida (1986:12) summarized this phenomenon as follows:

The problem of Old Testament textual analysis involves a very complex history of oral tradition, commitment of writing, compilation of material, and later redactions, especially in the so-called deuteronomic period. What can be recovered of the text by means of textual-critical techniques is likely to be the text of the second century B.C.E. This is essentially the text of New Testament times, despite the fact that there are certain basic diversities, as reflected in various readings of the Septuagint Greek translation.<sup>83</sup>

One aspect which needs to be taken into consideration is that in the course of the Old Testament textual reception, these texts/traditions have been around for an extensive period of time in transmission from one generation to another, first in an oral, and later in written form. Deuteronomy 6 is one of the biblical texts to which we can refer to illustrate this fact. In verses 6-7 it reads, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. **ושננתם לבניך ודברת בם** (impress them on your children and talk about them) when you sit at home and when you walk along the road; when you lie down and when you get up.” In an oral society this is how information is transmitted from the older to the younger generations. There is no specific or designated place, such as class-rooms or libraries, where knowledge is passed from parents to children. People talk about their issues over and over until they are imprinted in the hearts of informants, and such issues become a part of their everyday life style. Following the oral form of transmission was the written one, which also took its own period of time of collection, writing and edition/redaction. We can also illustrate this process by referring to Deut. 6:8-9, which read as follows: “Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **וכתבתם על־מזוזת ביתך ובשעריך**” (write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates). Now it was not merely to talk about those commandments, but they also had to be written. In both oral and written forms of transmission, two effects were probably certain: first, in the course of transmission, such a

<sup>82</sup> This is what Van der Kooij (2008:582) meant when he pointed out, “Scholars have argued, however, that the idea of one original text does not recommend itself. They argue that since there are different readings that are equally valid, one should assume that from the outset different pristine versions of biblical books circulating, which were regarded as of equal status.” See also Tov (2012:179).

<sup>83</sup> Ulrich (1999:83) commented, “I think we must presume that there were several parties (as there were from Hasmonean times on, and still today) in each locality, differing ideological groups or parties, and different texts.” See also Van der Kooij (2008:579) and Carr (2011:34).

tradition/text experienced some changes. To illustrate this point, Carr (2011:40-41) addressed the growth of the Gilgamesh Epic tradition, which resulted in a significant change from what is known to be the Old Babylonian (OB) version to the Standard Babylonian (SB) edition. According to Carr, the Standard Babylonian edition represents an expansion of the Old Babylonian one. The second thing is that the changes that ancient texts/traditions experienced had possibly affected the meaning embedded in them. The same can be said about the Biblical Hebrew texts. The numerous scribal/editorial changes of the biblical writings did significantly affect their content/theology. One clear example is the change of the verb **בחר** (choose) from qatal to yiqtol forms or the other way round (cf. 3.3.6-3.4). Consequently, it becomes hypothetically possible to argue that the different readings which circulated in various communities had accommodated different contents/theologies. Now if this is the dominant hypothesis in our present biblical scholarship, one can argue that it may not be realistic to think of one legitimate original version of the biblical manuscript, as well as one harmonized content and theology in those writings.

As to what would be the purpose behind those editorial changes, which resulted in different textual readings, Tov (2012:240-241) argues that it was due to both unintentional and intentional ‘content’ changes which were made in the early manuscripts by the copyist-scribes and/or editors. According to him, the intentional changes, which he calls ‘Exegetical changes,’ were made deliberately and, therefore, accepted in and by the community.<sup>84</sup> Then he classifies this type of changes into two categories: contextual and theological changes. The contextual changes, on the one hand, were there to accommodate the community’s contextual realities, as he stated, “They probably derived from the context themselves, reflecting the scribes’ wishes to adapt the texts to their own understanding or to an exegetical tradition known to them” (2012:240-241). On the other hand, the theological changes were known to be the norm that the scribes used to adjust the biblical text into their contemporary religious issues and understanding. Brotzman (1994:49) wrote, “There is evidence that certain changes were introduced into the text in order to avoid indelicate expressions and the names of pagan deities.” In other words, though those various texts which circulated in different communities seemed to be mainly of the same tradition, in some cases they differed from one another due to each individual community’s contextual realities and religious understanding. To illustrate

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<sup>84</sup> In addressing the different wording (Ebal in Judean text and Gerizim in Samaritan writings), Sacchi (2000:156) said, “This type of variant cannot be due to a copyist error, but rather must be a deliberate alteration of the text.”

this point, Metzger (2001) has outlined at least two reasons for such different readings. One was “to reconcile the biblical texts with accepted traditions” and the other was “to resolve textual difficulties by interpreting obscure words or simplifying syntax”. According to Metzger some of those texts were offensive in the context of their respective audiences. These texts include Reuben sleeping with his father’s concubine (Gen. 35:22); Judah sleeping with his daughter-in-law (Gen. 38:13ff), to mention only two. Metzger went on to argue that “This modification is accomplished through a variety of devices, including the addition or deletion of the negative particles or the replacement of the original biblical verb with another of opposite meaning” (2001:23). This is exactly what Tov (2012: 144-145) meant when referring to whether God finished the work of creation on the sixth day or on the seventh, according to Genesis 2:2. He commented:

According to the MT, Targums Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti, as well as Vulgate, God completed his work “on the seventh day”, without implying that God actually worked on that day. However, some scribes (and possibly translators) probably found it difficult to imagine that God would have worked on the seventh day and therefore corrected the presumably original reading to an easier one (SP, LXX, Peshitta, Jubilees 2:16 – perhaps independently). [In the source text all the textual witnesses are represented in their respective symbols/signs].

It is, therefore, in this context of no single “original text” and of the existence of multiple reading which can affect the content of the passages that it becomes extremely important that both exegetes and Bible translators know about, understand and deal properly with the differences found in those textual witnesses before the actual translation is realized.

To summarise, it is indicated that while both exegetes and Bible translators attend to textual matters, they should also be concerned about the theological differences. This is due to the fact that first, up to this day discoveries have not revealed any biblical text which can be identified as “the original manuscript in its entirety”. What is available today as the ‘complete text’ is an outcome of an arduous and long term work of both textual critic scholars and archaeologists who analysed the remains and the discovered thousands of fragments, scrolls and copies of copies, and they finally brought them together into what today is called *biblia*. Second, in the course of textual reception, the biblical text has experienced scribal intentional and/or unintentional literary, contextual and theological changes. As a result, there was a multiplicity of readings with different contents/theologies in circulation. Having taken these two important aspects into account, now a theologian can engage in his/her theological studies or an exegete in his/her exegetical journey to search for the meaning of a particular

biblical text, or a historian can be motivated to start his/her assignment of reconstructing the historical background of a given biblical event, a textual critic can try to reconstruct a biblical text, or a Bible translator get ready to translate, bearing in mind that the actual text is unlikely to be considered the ‘original’ and also it has gone through different changes, whether major or minor.

## **1.8. Preliminary Explorations on Centralization of Worship**

### **1.8.1. Jerusalem versus Shechem**

In addressing the issue of Jerusalem versus Shechem, Anderson (1988:23) stated, “The geographical placement of the temple was an obvious source of disagreement between Samaritans and Jews.”<sup>85</sup> This statement makes sense from the fact that, as highlighted above, the biblical text has dealt with this topic subjectively. In other words, neither Jerusalem nor Shechem is explicitly indicated as the only and exclusive place for Yahweh’s name. In his analysis of the pre-monarchical period, for example, Halpern (1983:216) commented, “It is fairly clear that given the diversity of priestly houses in pre-monarchic Israel, there could have been no single central sacred authority.” In response to this ambiguity, scholars have argued that one of the guidelines considered by both groups in their process of choosing the place for Yahweh worship was divine revelation.<sup>86</sup> However, the two communities perceived this guideline differently.

#### **1.8.1.1. Is Jerusalem the Worship Centre?**

The southerners, on the one hand, approached this topic from a human perspective and creativity to a divine revelation, that is, first the community chose the place then God approved it, and not the other way around. The choosing of Jerusalem, in this case, as Yahweh’s dwelling place started when King David conquered the city of Jerusalem and established the capital of his kingdom<sup>87</sup> and pitched the tent for the ark of the Lord (cf. 2 Sam. 6). Later on, Solomon built the Temple for the Lord and transferred the Ark of the Lord from the tabernacle to the temple, according to 1 Kgs. 8. Finally, soon after the Ark was transferred into the temple, God revealed Himself through the presence of the cloud in the temple (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:10-13), which could mean Yahweh’s approval of Jerusalem being,

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<sup>85</sup> Pummer (1987:8), a contemporaneous scholar of Anderson, has the same conviction with regards to Mount Gerizim as the chosen place for Yahweh’s worship: “The belief that Mt. Gerizim is the place which God has chosen is the cardinal tenet that separates Samaritans from Jews.” See also Lourenço (1985:60, 66).

<sup>86</sup> Japhet (2001:132) said, “The manner in which these places were consecrated was divine revelation, which designated the place as holy.”

<sup>87</sup> See Miller and Hayes (1986:151) and Wenham (1971:108).



indeed, His dwelling place. In this case, for the southerners the presence of the temple and the ark of the Lord in Jerusalem implied the sacredness of Jerusalem<sup>88</sup> and the mundaneness of Shiloh, the previous residence of the ark. In fact, from the biblical point of view, the ark was first with Eli, the priest of Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:3); it was captured by the Philistines and kept in Dagon's temple, in Ashdod (1 Sam. 5:1-3). After some time, it was taken back to the Israelites in Beth-shemesh (1 Sam. 6:12). Finally it was taken to Jerusalem and remained there permanently. As biblical scholars struggled to understand the reason why the ark was taken from Shiloh to Jerusalem, on the one hand, scholars such as Bright (1972:196) and Wood (1975:371) have argued that the "ark was not treated properly by the Israelites" most time it was in Kirjath-jearim; it remained "neglected for generations." On the other hand, scholars have argued that this action was taken as David's political and religious strategy to unify both the northern and southern tribes, as Jerusalem seemed to be in a central location (Miller and Hayes, 1986:171), (Bright, 1972:196) and (Lemaire, 1999:103). A third assumption still with regard to the transfer of the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem is that this narrative seems to represent a priestly late addition. Miller and Hayes (1986:127) asserted, "This narrative explains in rather fanciful fashion how the Ark of Yahweh came to be transferred from the Elide priests of Shiloh into the hands of Levites at Beth-shemesh, from there to Gibeah ('the hill') near Kiriath-jearim, and eventually to Jerusalem... Such a view would have been perpetrated, no doubt, by the Jerusalem priests." Approached from the third perspective, it may seem that one of the major purposes of the narrator of the so-called 'ark narrative' was to ensure that his audience was aware that Yahweh had moved His permanent dwelling place through the presence of His ark from Shiloh to Jerusalem. Therefore, the former place had become mundane, turning the latter one into a holy place. Consequently, all the people from the entire united Solomonic kingdom were called to offer their sacrifices and services of worship to Yahweh only in Jerusalem and no longer in Shiloh.

#### **1.8.1.2. Is Shechem the Worship Centre?**

Contrary to their counterpart's approach, the northerners understood God being the initiator of the whole process of choosing a place for His name by first revealing Himself in that particular place. With reference to Shechem, it is held that it was there that, for the first time,

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<sup>88</sup> In addressing how the Judeans determined secular spaces, Anderson (1988:24) pointed out, "The distinction between sacred and profane areas is conveniently defined by the presence of the Temple, convenient because what is outside the temple is no longer sacred and thus permits the utilization of nature for secular ends while some of nature remains sanctified by the temple." This is also what Japhet (2001:134) meant when she spoke about David's 'tactics'. He used the ark to change the city of Jerusalem from being a profane place into a sacred place. She commented, "It was the most important concrete symbol of God's presence amidst his people. By the very presence of the ark in Jerusalem, the city becomes holy and the unifying religious centre of all Israel."

the promise of a nation (both land and people) was given to Abraham (Gen. 12:6-7),<sup>89</sup> followed by the purchasing of the land and building of an altar by Jacob, who was later known by the name of Israel,<sup>90</sup> the father of the twelve tribes (Gen 33:18-20). In fact, Grant (1984:33) argued that “Jacob’s actions seem to reflect traditions relating to the earliest settlements of the central massif.”<sup>91</sup> Even Genesis 37:13 supports the hypothesis that Shechem is directly linked to Jacob’s settlements; it is portrayed as the site Jacob’s sons went to graze their father’s flocks, as it reads, “And Israel said to Joseph, ‘As you know your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.’” Several centuries later, Joseph’s bones were buried in the same land (Josh. 24:32).

Moreover, scholars such as Ross and Toombs (1967:119) have argued that Shechem not only played a great role during the patriarchal period, but it continued to be an important historical place in the era of the united monarchy of Israel. From the biblical point of view, for example, one gets the impression that Shechem was not only a religious sanctuary but also a political centre where kings were crowned. In Judg. 9 it reads that Abimelech went up to Shechem to be crowned as king (vv. 1-6); Jotham went up on the Mount Gerizim and pronounced a metaphor to the people of Shechem about trees anointing their king (vv. 7-15); the people of Shechem were in favour of Goal son of Ebed and wanted to anoint him as their king instead of Abimelech (vv. 26ff). Moreover, when King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam went up to Shechem with the entire community of Israel (the twelve tribes) to be crowned. Considering this historic-political background, the Samaritans were very much convinced that, with or without a temple, Shechem was the place Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, chose for his name. It is also said that soon after the division of the Davidic/Solomonic kingdom Jeroboam established his capital and shrines around Shechem. With regard to this point, Campbell believes that Jeroboam’s move to Shechem should not be

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<sup>89</sup> Castel (1985:132) and McCarter (1999:22). McCarter (1999:23) asserted, “Abraham is represented as the founder of religious sites in the regions of Shechem (Genesis 12:7), Bethel/Ai (Genesis 12:8), Hebron (Genesis 13:18), Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2) and Beersheba (Genesis 21:33).” See also Albertz (1994:532; Pummer, 2016:206).

<sup>90</sup> With regards to the name ‘Israel’ and the place it was attributed to Jacob, Grant (1984: 33-34) commented, “It was probably a local name indigenous to the north-central hill country of Canaan and specially related to the inhabitants of the Shechem area, but soon it became regarded as the alternative name of Jacob, from whom all the tribes were supposed to have been descended, the ‘children of Israel.’” Castel (1985:31) pointed out that the name Israel was also connected to a Canaanite sanctuary in Shechem. He wrote, “Archaeologists have found the ruins of an ancient sanctuary, veritable fortress 60 x 75 feet, oriented toward the rising sun.” See also McCarter (1999:26).

<sup>91</sup> In agreement with Grant, McCarter (1999:25) pointed out, “According to Genesis, the events of Jacob’s birth and childhood take place at Beersheba, Isaac’s home; but after returning from Haran, Jacob lives in the region of Shechem in the central hill of country. He is the founder of the religious site of Bethel... and like Abraham he builds an altar at Shechem... Both sites are in the north.” See also Noth (1981:79-87).



viewed as an idolatrous or syncretistic action, “but probably invoked ancient Israelite tradition, including a legitimate enlistment of priests from among the people” (1998:282). In fact, in his historical reconstruction of the biblical Israel, Schmid (2012:8) analysed Genesis 12 and Joshua 24 and concluded, “Israel’s history in Genesis through Joshua ends where it began.” Consequently, for the northerners, Jerusalem was a wrong place for basically two reasons. First, Yahweh never appeared in Jerusalem before,<sup>92</sup> and second, the temple of Jerusalem was directly connected to political power, as Anderson (1988:30) noted, “The association of the Temple with Monarchy could be the major reason for the Samaritans to challenge the Jerusalem Temple because it gave a political sanction to the south that the Samaritans did not have.” It is perhaps worth noting here that because of this “temple – monarchy” relationship, which was contested by the Samaritans, it is not appropriate to talk about a Samaritan Temple, but rather a Samaritan tabernacle.<sup>93</sup> In fact, whatever the reason might be, with reference to the burning of the Samaritan sanctuary by John Hyrcanus, Charlesworth (2013:xx) preferred to use the term the Samaritan ‘altar’ instead of temple or tabernacle.

Castel (1985:132) is another biblical scholar who questioned the whole concept of Jerusalem being the worship centre. In addressing King Josiah’s religious reform in 2 Kgs. 22-23 and 2 Chr. 34-35, Castel outlined at least three reasons why he thinks Jerusalem is a questionable place for Yahweh’s chosen place of worship. The first reason concerns the original place of the book of Deuteronomy, and he is of the opinion that the book might have originally been from the northern kingdom of Israel. Castel’s argument is based on the fact that Deut. 17 seems to be against the very principles which were followed by most (probably all) of the southern kings, in this case, the acquiring of great wealth and many wives, as it reads, “The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself ... He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold” (vv. 16-17). In fact, Castel is supported by Schley (1989). Schley approached this topic from the Priestly point of view, based particularly on Joshua 22, and reckoned, “Indeed, P’s hallowing of Shiloh, along with the heretical temple at Bethel (Gen. 35:9-15), both northern shrines, and the traditions linking the origins of the Aaronite priesthood, represented by Eleazar and Phineas, to Ephraim, suggest that the priestly traditions of the Hexateuch stem

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<sup>92</sup> Japhet (2001:133) reckoned: “We learn from Genesis that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob roamed through the land, then occupied by the Canaanites, and built altars in the Lord’s honour in the places that God appeared to them. Jerusalem, however, is not included among them.” See also De Moor (1990:176-177) and Tsedaka (2013:xxvii).

<sup>93</sup> Anderson (1988:31; 1991:105).

from northern Israel, and not from the Judah and Jerusalem” (1989:126). The second reason is the mention of Mounts Gerizim and Ebal and the absence of Jerusalem in the Pentateuch narratives.<sup>94</sup> The point here is that if Deuteronomy was conceived in the southern context, as it has been assumed by maximalist scholars, Jerusalem would be an obvious place to be mentioned and not the opposite.<sup>95</sup> Tsedaka (2013:xxvii), one of the advocates of this school of thought, put it in the following terms:

The Scriptures leave no doubt that the “Mount Gerizim tradition” is earlier than the “Jerusalem Temple Mount tradition.” Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Pentateuch, but is first mentioned as an Israelite cult centre at the time of David and Solomon, kings of the united kingdom of Israel (tenth century B.C.E.) three to four hundred years after the exodus from Egypt. By contrast, Shechem and Mount Gerizim are mentioned more than once in the Pentateuch as well as in the books of Joshua and Judges in regard to a Hebrew and Israelite cultic place. Abraham established the first Hebrew altar at the “Place of Shechem,” and the tribes of Israel were commanded to offer blessings on Mount Gerizim. Moreover, Joshua renewed the Sinai covenant in Shechem on the slopes of Mount Gerizim.

Lastly, for Castel, the whole concept of centralization of worship is found in the ministry of the northern prophets. While the prophets from the south seemed not to trouble themselves with this issue – their country people having many places of worship – those from the north found it relevant in their context. The oracles of Amos 4:4-5 and Hosea 4:13-15 are clear examples which illustrate this phenomenon. They were strongly against the existence of many places of worship, such as Bethel, Gilgal, on different mountain tops, hills, under oak trees, to mention only a few.

In short, on the one hand, the choice for Jerusalem by the Judeans as the central place for Yahweh’s worship was determined by the presence of the temple and the ark of the Lord through political influence. On the other hand, the Samaritans chose Shechem as the right place for Yahweh’s name, because it had been a historical museum<sup>96</sup> not for the Samaritans

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<sup>94</sup> In his quest for the origins of Deuteronomy, Hjelm (2015:202) contended, “There is nothing Jerusalemite about the Pentateuch as such and were it not for tradition’s assumption of the biblical Israel with a common past in which Jerusalem always had priority over against other Yahwistic cult centres in Palestine, no one would suggest that Pentateuch had originated in Jerusalem.” See also Thompson (1974:50).

<sup>95</sup> Approaching from the theological viewpoint, Albertz argues that the canonization of the Pentateuch is undoubtedly in advantage of the Samaritans, as far as the issue of centralization of worship is concerned. He stated, “For the separation of this from the Deuteronomistic history at Joshua I and the elevation of only the section from Genesis to Deuteronomy as the foundation history of all those loyal to Yahweh had not decided in a theologically binding way the question of which sanctuary Yahweh had chosen. In accordance with the fiction of the age-old Torah of Moses, the name of Jerusalem had not been mentioned in Deuteronomy, and indeed did not appear in the Pentateuch at all” (1994:531).

<sup>96</sup> Purvis (1968:83) noted, “Of the two surviving branches of the Israelites (i.e., the Samaritans themselves and the Jews), only the Samaritans have remained true to the historic Mosaic faith as set forth in the Torah and as established at Shechem under Joshua.” See also Japhet (2001:136).

only, but for the twelve tribes of Israel, as Ross and Toombs (1967:119) have pointed out, “It appears as the rallying point for the twelve-tribes of Israel confederacy and as the site of a covenant renewal ceremony.” But now, how did each community justify these choices? This is the question for the next paragraphs.

### **1.8.2. Each Community Justifies its Individual Worship Centre**

Anderson and Giles (2005) discussed the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) with respect to literary form and argued that textual witnesses of the Old Testament represented by, e.g. the LXX, DSS, SP and the MT have come from a common tradition.<sup>97</sup> The reason why each witness branched from this common tradition, according to Anderson and Giles, is that “These ‘textual trajectories’ are, as it were, the footprints of social groups that developed their own self-identity and used the respective textual traditions as a means of articulating their identity and legitimacy in the face of competing groups and ideologies”<sup>98</sup> (2005:4-5). One of these ideologies was, of course, the centralization of worship.<sup>99</sup> One example will be sufficient to illustrate this point. The addition in the Samaritan version of the Tenth Commandment in Exodus 20 to accommodate the holiness of Mount Gerizim,<sup>100</sup> as Pummer (1987:6) noted, “Most of the variants in the Samaritan Pentateuch are of little or no consequence for the meaning of the text. Among those that do reflect theological differences are above all the Samaritan Tenth Commandment inserted after Exod. 20:17 MT.” The table below represents the tenth commandment, taken from ‘The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah: First English Translation Compared with the Masoretic Version.’<sup>101</sup>

#### **Israelite Samaritan Text (Exodus 20:14)**

14 You shall not covet your neighbour’s house, and you shall not covet of your

#### **Jewish Masoretic Text (Exodus 20:14)**

14 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house; ....thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s.....wife, and not his

<sup>97</sup> To illustrate this point, Coggins (1975:131-132) noted that almost all the sectarian additions are ‘from a much later period.’ See also Knoppers (2013:178-179), Schorch (2013:7), Nihan (2007:191-192) and Pummer (2007:257).

<sup>98</sup> See also Schorch (2013:4, 7) and Becking (2011:109-110).

<sup>99</sup> With regard to the origins of the SP as a branch from a common tradition with the MT, LXX, and DSS, Anderson and Giles (2005:4) pointed out, “Finally, the traditions behind the 4QExod and the SP went their separate ways, with the addition of major expansions in the SP, such as those found in Exodus 20, intended to make clear the legitimacy of worship on Gerizim.” See also Knoppers (2013:184-185), Purvis (1968:6-7) and Sacchi (2000:156). Deist (1988:104), however, made it clear that these additions should not be viewed as a falsification, but it is rather a parallelism, that is, the scribes moved some parallel passages from one place to another within the Pentateuch. See also Hepner (2006:148, 150).

<sup>100</sup> After listing the four basic beliefs of the Samaritan community namely, one God, Moses, the Pentateuch and the holiness of Mount Gerizim, Schur (1989:57) made a point: “The latter was so fundamental that it was even introduced as the last of the Ten Commandments (the ninth and tenth having been combined).” See also Knoppers (2013:184).

<sup>101</sup> Tsedaka (2013:173-174).

neighbour his field and wife or...his male slave or his female slave.....his bull and his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

14a And when Shehmaa your Eloowwem will bring you to the land of the Kaananee which you are going to inherit it. 14b You shall set yourself up great stones and lime them with lime. And you shall write on them all the words of this law. 14c And when you have passed over the Yaardaan you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, in Aargaarreezem. 14d And there you shall build an altar to Shehmaa your Eloowwem, and altar of stones, you shall lift up no iron on them... 14h That mountain, in the other side of the Yaardaan, beyond the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Kaananee who dwell in the prairie, before the Gaalgaal, beside the Aalone moora, before Ashakem.

male slave, nor his maid-servant, not and his bull, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

These two examples – plus the fact that the Jewish and the Samaritan Pentateuchs are of the same traditions, that the Samaritan Pentateuch is as old as other textual witnesses, namely, the LXX, MT and DSS,<sup>102</sup> and that the Samaritan Pentateuch is one among the last textual witnesses to branch from the main trunk (cf. the diagram by Anderson and Giles [2005:5]) – serve to acknowledge the concern as to why the SP should be considered another potential

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<sup>102</sup> Based on comparison among all the textual witnesses, Tsedaka (2013:xxviii – xxix) concluded, “Thus, the SP presents the earliest known text of the Pentateuch.” This is in accordance with Deist’s (1988:103) claim years ago, when he said that the origins of the SP went as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. However, other scholars as have argued that Septuagint is the oldest of all the textual witness. Harrell, for example, reckoned, “The earliest witness to the entirety of the Old Testament is the Septuagint (LXX), dating to the third through first centuries B.C.E., during the Hellenistic period. This was translated into Greek from an earlier and now largely lost version of the Hebrew Bible” (2011:141). The use of the terms ‘entirely’ and ‘largely’ may, however suggest that Harrell does not base his argument in terms of antiquity, but rather the quantity of the source text, in this case the Hebrew or Aramaic manuscripts.

witness to the text of the Old Testament in both biblical studies and the work of Bible translation. This leads to the next point – the impact of this study.

### **1.9. Potential Impact**

Until recently the value of the SP in both theological studies and enterprise of Bible translation has been, to some extent, underestimated.<sup>103</sup> On the one hand, although the SP is theoretically recognized as one of the Old Testament textual witnesses, it seems like biblical academics have not significantly considered the possibility that it could be a potential source of information for a better understanding of a given biblical text, as indicated above in reference to Tov's good argument (cf. 1.3.3c.). In fact, after comparing the previous and the modern views about the SP, Charlesworth (2013:xx) concluded, "Now, scholars can examine the Samaritan Pentateuch and be able to consider its witness to the history of the evolution of the texts of the Pentateuch." In other words, both historians and theologians have given and continue to give their attention to the Samaritan community and their tradition, in this case the SP, solely for the purpose of reconstructing the history of ancient Israel but with little attention to its textual and theological significances in relation to other textual witnesses, such as the MT, DSS and LXX.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, exegetes and Bible translation experts have not consciously considered the possibility that the SP could play a significant role as a textual witness in the process of establishing a base text for the translation of a given biblical text. For example, when some scholars address the issue of ancient versions of the Old Testament,<sup>105</sup> they normally mention almost all of the textual witnesses, starting from the earliest to the latest possible, except the SP version<sup>106</sup>. In fact, some have gone as far as considering the Samaritan community as a Jewish sect and their Pentateuch as simply a

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<sup>103</sup> This is not to ignore the fact that starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century interest in Samaritan studies has increased significantly, due to basically three factors. First, the Samaritans are now able to relate their own history; second, the discovery of the DSS has given a different perspective to biblical scholars; and third, a new assessment of the anti-Samaritan perspective found in the biblical and extra-biblical writings (Pummer, 1976:39).

<sup>104</sup> In addressing the topic of the Samaritan Origins, Purvis (1968:83) highlighted one of the questions frequently asked by modern biblical scholars with reference to the SP as follows, "What is it and what value does it have for OT historians and textual criticism?" In other words, according to Charlesworth (2013:xvi) "The Samaritan Pentateuch begins to loom in importance. Some scholars warn that it must not be ignored."

<sup>105</sup> According to van der Kooij (2008:579), all the ancient versions (translations) are, in comparison to DSS, indirect textual witnesses, due to the fact that the DSS were written in Biblical language – Hebrew or Aramaic.

<sup>106</sup> Metzger (2001) has committed two full chapters to address the topic on 'Ancient Version of the Old Testament Made for the Use of Jews.' In the first chapter, he addressed the Septuagint and the Jewish Targums. In the second chapter Metzger discussed the Syriac, Latin and the Coptic versions, and he said nothing about the Samaritan version. This is not to suggest that Metzger should have included this version, but rather to point out the fact that in scholarly debates about the Old Testament, the SP is less integrated.

sectarian reading of the Jewish Pentateuch.<sup>107</sup> Whether this approach to the SP does or does not do justice to both Judean and Samaritan communities as well as to the work of Bible translation, the result of this attitude is reflected in the establishment of the base text for Bible translation. It seems like theologians, exegetes as well as Bible translators approach the SP with the spirit of traditionalism<sup>108</sup> and/or anti-Samaritanism. It is on this basis that the present study aims to contribute to integrating theological and text-critical studies within which these textual witnesses were formed.

This approach will not only have an impact on a methodological level, but it will also lead to a more responsible way of using all these textual witnesses in theological studies and in the work of Bible translation. For this end, the researcher of this study will side with biblical scholars such as Tov (2012:93) who believe that the SP is a potential source for an understanding of the OT. In fact, in his literary work about the Samaritans, Pummer (1987:25) concluded, “It is the light that Samaritan tradition sheds on the understanding of the Hebrew Bible and early pre-rabbinic Judaism which makes the study of the Samaritanism especially interesting and important.” Sacchi (2000:157) is another biblical scholar who argues that some of the quotations that are found in the NT have been taken from the SP, and the Samaritan tradition have always played a great role in the Jewish community even during and after Jesus’ time. To illustrate Sacchi’s argument, the final editors/redactors of Luke 10:25-37 seem to recognize the special place the Samaritans’ tradition occupied in the society during the time of Jesus. Here Jesus portrays the Samaritans of having been better and more faithful as far as the observance of their tradition than the Jews. At the end of the parable (vv. 36-37), Jesus challenges one of the Jewish teachers of the law, as He said, “Go and do likewise.”

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<sup>107</sup> Nodet (1997:126) describes this approach as typically rabbinic, for it sees the Samaritans as one among those groups that “claim legitimacy to represent the Israelite tradition.” In this case, according to this school of thought, the Samaritans do not share the same tradition with the Judeans; for some reason, they only pretend to be Israelites, but in reality they are not. This seems to be quite different from what scholars such as Stern (2011) mean by sectarianism. In his analysis of the Qumran community Stern argued, “The principal reason why texts such as the Community Rule and Damascus Rule have been identified as sectarian is perhaps their distinctive call for separation, insularity, and rejection of the outside world, which are commonly regarded as essential features of sectarian religious group.”

<sup>108</sup> Traditionalism here means that both theologians and Bible translators feel comfortable doing things the same way they have been done in the past. In this case there is no sense of innovation by trying to approach the SP differently.

### **1.10. Conclusion**

Centralization of worship is one of the ideologies that sharply draws the distinction between the Judean and Samaritan communities, as reflected in different sectarian readings of the Mosaic writings – the Pentateuch. One clear example is the different hermeneutic understanding about the tenth commandment. Another example is the strong argument presented by the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John 4 about the place of worship. However, though there is a strong sense of anti-Samaritanism in some biblical and extra-biblical sources, the Pentateuch gives an impression that the two communities have come from the same ancestral background and therefore share the same traditions, which are found in the sacred writings of Moses. The long lasting and successive disputes between the Judean and Samaritan communities were basically of two natures, political and religious. In fact, history has proved that in most cases these two forces represent two sides of the same coin. For instance, the political division of the Davidic kingdom affected also the religious unity of the people. Each political power maintained its religious centre. This also became the norm even when external powers held political dominion over the two communities until the schism finally took place, and two places of Yahweh worship – Jerusalem for the Judeans and Gerizim for the Samaritans – emerged. This study, therefore, intends to examine the theological significance of the phenomenon of centralization of Yahweh worship according to the two extant Hebrew textual representatives of the Mosaic traditions – the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs – and the implications the different wording have in the work of Bible translation, bearing in mind that the ultimate purpose of a translation is to communicate the meaning of the text. Now the researcher move on to the next chapter, the purpose being to study the origin of the two communities and the historical development of their relationship until the first half of the first century C.E.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL AND OF THE BIBLICAL SAMARITANS

#### 2.1. Introduction

It is mentioned in the previous chapter that the Samaritan-Jewish antagonism stands as one of the hottest issues in the history and religion of ancient Israel. With no attempt to exaggerate, one could also argue that this belligerent relationship has become one of the most debated topics not only among biblical scholars but also archaeologists, sociologists, historians as well as politicians across the world. One of the well-known major catalysts of this hostile relationship has been the different interpretations of the origin of both communities. On the one hand, it has been argued that because the two populaces seem to share much of their world-view, which includes not only their religious beliefs but also their socio-cultural identity and, in some instances, their genetic formation, they are therefore from the same ancestral origin. On the other hand, it is suggested that, aside from their common worldview and shared genetic properties, the two peoples are completely different from each other. In other words, Jews have been and will always remain Jews, and so the Samaritans are and will always be Samaritans. This chapter will attempt to trace which one of these and/or other approaches seem to be the most historic-scientifically sound by considering at least four major aspects. The first one will be a general overview of the origins of the people of Israel<sup>1</sup> from biblical and extra-biblical points of view. The second will be a historical analysis of the divided monarchy by looking at both northern and southern kingdoms and their internal and external relationships. Following that will be the different perspectives about the origins of the biblical Samaritans. The fourth aspect will focus on the life and relationship between the two communities, from the Persian period to the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E.

Before the researcher moves on to the first inquiry – the origins of the people of Israel – it is important to mention briefly that both biblical scholars and historians have commonly acknowledged the complexity of this subject due to at least three factors. One is the lack of historical data. Very much aware of this phenomenon, Grabbe (2004:3) stated, “We know much less about antiquity because of the much greater limits of sources.” Historians and biblical scholars who have the same viewpoint include: Gottwald (1979:4), Eskenazi

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<sup>1</sup> The term Israel is implied in the general sense, meaning the community of the twelve tribes that comprised the so-called Davidic-Solomonic united monarchy.



(1992:42), Bird (1994:31), VanderKam (2001:186), Becking (2011:8), Schaper (2013:108) and many others. In fact, Bright (1972:74) reckoned, “It is, let it be admitted, impossible in the proper sense to write a history of Israel’s origins, and that because of limitations in evidence both from archaeology and from the Bible itself. Even if we accept the Biblical accounts at face value, it is impossible to reconstruct the history of Israel’s beginnings.”<sup>2</sup> This does not mean one should underestimate the value and great contribution of the existing extra-biblical and scientific<sup>3</sup> resources. Instead, Gerstenberger is among many other scholars who have acknowledged with great esteem the work of the ancient Greek historians such as Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, and Ktesias, to mention only a few. These historians have collected as much data about the history of the ancient Levant as they could, although, as Gerstenberger (2011:87) pointed out, “The Greek reporters convey their opinions on the Persian domestic affairs, coloured, of course, by their own biases.” In other words, these resources seem to accommodate more of the world view of the collectors than of the people in question. However, in his acknowledgment of the existence of reliable extra-biblical resources written by both gentile and Jewish historians, during the Hellenistic period, Niesiolowski-Spanò admits that unlike some “of the writings of the Jewish authors in the Hellenistic era, the work of the Pseudo-Hecataeus and fragment of Hecataeus work, for example, can be considered a very good source” (2009:31). This is to say that different from the biblical writers/narrators whose interest was basically religious,<sup>4</sup> the writers of the extra-biblical material were driven mainly by historical motives<sup>5</sup>. For that reason, Grabbe (2007:142) pointed out, “Some of the other sources may sometimes have contained reliable historical data, but most of the data in the text confirmed by external data as reliable could have come from such a chronicle. This means that the bulk of the DtrH’s texts is not of great value for historical events, though it can be of use for sociological study and of course for

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<sup>2</sup> A decade and half later, scholars such as Gerstenberger were confronted with the same reality, and wrote, “The reconstruction of the historical course of events in Syria-Palestine is made more difficult because we scarcely have reliable data” (2011:37).

<sup>3</sup> Scientific resources include first, the archaeological data, which has become one of the primary resources for the study and understanding of the history of the ancient world, though, like any other field of study, they have their own limitations, as indicated in the following paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> In his analysis of religious policies in the period of the Divided Monarchy, Horn (1999:133) commented, “This literature was given its primary shape by a historian whom scholars describe as Deuteronomistic, because his perspective on the history of Israel is based on religious ideas preserved in the Book of Deuteronomy.” When also looking at the history of the northern kingdom, he reckoned, “The biblical account of the Omride dynasty has been shaped by writers whose primary interest was to express a distinctive religious viewpoint that was suspicious of kingship as an institution.”

<sup>5</sup> This is not to suggest that these extra-biblical writers were completely free of any personal agenda; like any other historian, they had, to some extent, their own biases and ideologies.

literary, theological and other non-historical disciplines of the Hebrew Bible.”<sup>6</sup> Dever is one of the leading archaeologists who talks about a ‘turn away’ from the biblical history and argues that not every biblical text is useful in the reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel. Hence, “Archaeology is now our primary source when writing any history of Ancient Israel” (Dever, 2012:31).

The second factor that contributes to the complexity of this subject is the nature of collection of the very limited available data, be it biblical or archaeological. Modern biblical scholars such as Davies (1997), Lemche (1997), Dever (2012) and many others have argued that unless there is a clear distinction between biblical-theological studies and the history of Israel, the latter will always be overshadowed by the former. When calling for a clear distinction between archaeology and theology, Dever (2012:12) wrote, “In fact I had been saying precisely these same things for decades or more – using the very terms ‘Syro-Palestinian Archaeology’ and ‘independent discipline’”. It is in this context that these scholars have persuasively called for the emancipation of the history of Israel. The history of Israel has to be free from biblical studies and be able to answer and support its own questions necessarily without the intervention of the Bible. Lemche (1997:124) stated, “In a way, this history has to be liberated from biblical studies in very much the same way as the archaeology of Palestine had to be removed from the tyranny of biblical-dominated idiosyncrasies.”

The third factor, very similar to the second one, has to do with the dating, the selection and the interpretation of the available data (Wiseman and Yamauchi, 1979:5). Biblical scholars, historians and archaeologists face ethical challenges when they come to the selection of the right data in their endeavour to reconstruct the history of ancient Israel. Blenkinsopp (2002:178) has correctly pointed out “The problems begin with the presuppositions guiding the selection of data and the privileging of certain kinds of evidence.” After the selection of the data, another challenge arises – the interpretation of such data. To illustrate this point, Lemche has outlined several cases of misinterpretation. First is the biblical understanding of the terms ‘Jews’ and ‘sons of Israel’. What do these and other related terms exactly mean? According to Lemche, these two terms should not be understood as referring to a specific ethnic group, but rather a “religious community” (1997:128). The “Land of Israel” is another

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<sup>6</sup> While supporting the same opinion, Master (2001) admitted the possibility that some of biblical narratives might have reflections of real historical events. In his discussion of the biblical texts of the tenth century, Master wrote, “Through our examination of the biblical texts, I would argue that there are details in some of the texts that demonstrate a genuine awareness of the political events of the tenth century” (2001:122).

problematic expression in this subject. Lemche argues that, unfortunately, this expression has been used mainly for political purposes to justify the myth “land without a people for a people without land” (1997:131). It is in this context that Blenkinsopp (2002:178-179) stated, “Selectivity is essential but inevitably problematic since it tends to dictate interpretation and predetermine conclusions.” In other words, archaeologists, historians, as well as politicians can consciously or unconsciously interpret historical and archaeological data for their personal agenda – according to their political ambitions or religious beliefs or their professional purposes.<sup>7</sup> In short, arriving at the first heading in the next paragraphs, where engaging with different sources, biblical and extra-biblical, one needs to be highly conscious of this phenomenon and, above all, of the fact that “Historical Israel is not the Hebrew Bible. Rather, historical Israel produced biblical Israel” (Halpern, 1983:239).

## 2.2. The Quest for the Origins of Israel

If it is true that the Israelites represented a group of people in the Southern Levant region distinct from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, to mention only a few, then it might be fairly acceptable to introduce a discussion such as this one by pointing out their distinctive features. In search of a personal/group identity, one of the major questions which needs to be answered is “who am I?” or “who are we/you?” The answer to this question may mean more than revealing one’s personal name and/or place of actual residence; it may require information about one’s origin in terms of ancestral lineage and homeland. Without running the risk of falling under the category of the primordialist school of thought,<sup>8</sup> this study will limit its focus to the concept of biblical genealogy,<sup>9</sup> and from there it will consider what scholars have called “discernible features.”<sup>10</sup> Southwood (2012:31-

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<sup>7</sup> See also Finkelstein and Mazar (2007:22-31) and Barstad (1996:51).

<sup>8</sup> While primordialists see identity formation as static, constructivist scholars understand identity as a flexible phenomenon which can change according to historical circumstances (Pitkänen, 2004:167).

<sup>9</sup> The reference to biblical genealogy as our point of departure does not intend to ignore other voices that call for a reconsideration of how the Old Testament has been used to reconstruct the history of ancient Israel, as Lemche (1997:140) affirmed, “It is, however, exactly the acknowledgment that the history of Israel in the Old Testament is by all means a religious story which ensures that simple-minded paraphrases of it will, from a historian’s point of view, never lead to anything but a false understanding of ancient Palestinian society, including also the two historical states of Israel and Judah.” Instead, it is an acknowledgment of the role of the Old Testament in this subject. “The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible can be used in reconstructing history in two ways, primary and secondary” (Davies, 1997:104).

<sup>10</sup> Southwood (2012:31) pointed out, “In contrast to the Barthian approach, which focuses on the dynamics of boundaries between groups, many scholars examine the content of ethnicity within a given group. Wilson questions the sterile dualisms of focusing on boundaries, arguing that ‘the elements of ethnicity are not simply arbitrary’ but ‘are linked to historical meaning’, ‘the cultural staff’.”

32) has outlined six discernible features of which four are significant in this study:<sup>11</sup> (1) common proper name, (2) common ancestry, (3) shared historical memories, and (4) a link with a homeland.<sup>12</sup> Although scholars such as Bloch-Smith (2003:403) have defined group origins in terms of kinship, territory, or selected traditions, it is important to indicate that some of these features are not static, but subject to change due to circumstantial factors. Having said this, the next section will look at the first feature – common name.

### 2.2.1. Common Name

From a biblical viewpoint,<sup>13</sup> the term Israel or children of Israel originated in Genesis 32:22-32 when Jacob wrestled fearlessly with a man in the area of Jabbok throughout the night until daybreak. Having realized that Jacob would not let him go, the man struck the socket of Jacob's hip, and said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with man and have overcome" (v.28). From then on, Jacob was called by the name of Israel, and his descendants became known as Israelites, as the narrator of this episode puts it, "Therefore to this day the Israelites [*Jacob's descendants*] do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon" (v.32, emphasis added). It is probably in this sense that Kessler (2008:57) argued, "If the unity of pre-state Israel is symbolized by the name Israel, it is primarily because in the genealogical system Israel is the name of the oldest common ancestor, from whom the genealogy begins to branch." When God was preparing to bring Jacob's descendants out of Egypt where they had migrated and have been slaves for about four centuries, He said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt...And now the cry of the בני־ישראל (children of Israel or simply Israelites) has reached me..." (Exod. 3:7-9). Furthermore, in addressing the entire community of those who left Egypt during the exodus to the Promised Land, Moses said, "Hear, ישראל (O Israel): The Lord your God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4). In this direct quotation of Yahweh's words, the name ישראל (Israel) is in the

<sup>11</sup> See also Pitkänen (2004:166-7), Ester (2003:414) and Cordell and Wolff (2010:15).

<sup>12</sup> In her article "The Exodus and Identity formation in View of the Yoruba Origin and Migration Narratives", Olojede (2011:352) indicated that these are very important features even for the identity of the Yoruba people. She stated, "The Yorùbá narratives examined above contain certain features which represent factors of identity formation among the people. These peculiar features include, primarily, a common ancestry and ancestral home, a common language and common belief in God."

<sup>13</sup> We start this section by referring to biblical contents because despite of the existence of other literary sources, the Bible still remains a very important literary source from Ancient Israel. Hendel (2001:603) said it well, "For the collective memories of the exodus, the Bible is our primary written source (including its constituent documentary sources)."

singular form, but Yahweh is referring to the whole assembly of Jacob's descendants, totalling "approximately 2,000,000"<sup>14</sup> people.

However, biblical scholars, such as Grant (1984: 33-34) and McCarter (1999:26), as indicated earlier, have approached the origin of the name **ישראל** (Israel) differently. They argue that there might have been a certain group of people somewhere in the northern central hills of Canaan, probably around the area where Jacob had such divine revelation, which was known as Israelites, and later the twelve tribes adopted the name. In fact, Pitkänen (2004:169) based his argument on the archaeological finds of the Merneptah stela (ca. 1210 B.C.E.) and contended "There are very good reasons to conclude that a group which was called Israel and was distinct in an ascriptive sense existed in Canaan during Late Bronze Age – Iron Age I." From a historical point of view, this interpretation makes sense, especially in a culture where both individual and collective names are attached to natural phenomena. In this case, if this account is viewed as a reflection of a past event,<sup>15</sup> one could argue speculatively that this revelation might have happened next to a tree, a mountain, to a hill or a river called "Israel", then Jacob and his progeny adopted that name for themselves. For example, Bright has pointed out that while in Upper Mesopotamia Jacob (Ya'qub'al) was a name of a "Hyksos chief", in Palestine it was a name of a place. It is the same with reference to the name Benjamin. "Of the names of the sons of Jacob, 'Benjamin' appears in the Mari texts as a large confederation of tribes" (Bright, 1972:77). Whether the origin of this name is approached from a biblical or an extra-biblical point of view, the point that needs to be made here is that, initially, "Israel is thus a collective name and is not linked to a well-defined territory" (Na'aman, 1994:248). It was later on, however, that it designated the geographical area where the people called Israel lived, as Lesine (2000:655) stated, "In later books Israel can denote the people, the nation under the United Monarchy, the northern kingdom of Israel during the Divided Monarchy, and, in the post-monarchic period, the exiles in Babylon and the purified community of Yahweh's followers." The next feature is common ancestry.

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<sup>14</sup> Sarna (1999:45) gives an estimate of 2,000,000 of the total number of the people who marched during the exodus and admits that this number reflects a pure 'exaggeration'. Gottwald (1979:51) said, "The present position of the census inventories in the wilderness period is totally unhistorical, being the product of the late narratives of Israel's beginnings." See also Petrovich (2006:101).

<sup>15</sup> This is the approach taken by most of the centrists, as expressed here by Hendel (2001:602) when he said, "Cultural memories tend to be a mixture of historical and fiction, composed of 'authentic' historical details, folklore motifs, ethnic self-fashioning, ideological claims and narrative imagination."

### 2.2.2. Common Ancestry

As mentioned earlier, writing the history of ancient Israel has never been an easy task, due to the fact that the main source of information is the Bible, which was written not for historical purposes but “to defend Israel’s faith in its God, who is here called Elohim, against a confusion with the Canaanite religion”<sup>16</sup> (Castel, 1985:25). Because of this complexity, historians have always asked the question as to who really are the ancestors of the Israelites. Out of many thoughts, this study will highlight only three.

#### 2.2.2.1. Abrahamic

The first school of thought claims that the history of ancient Israel begins with the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), around 2091-1876 B.C.E. (McCarter, 1999:3). In fact, Halpern commented, “It is not uncommon in biblical scholarship for authors to take hold of some so-called ‘patriarchal’ tradition and to use it as a lever with which to pry open the early historical periods. A popular case is the deduction of Israel’s nomadic origins from the story of Abraham’s migration” (1983:24). To some extent, this thought has gained a certain degree of popularity, because historians have claimed that the names of the patriarchs and their customs<sup>17</sup> are found in both Mesopotamia and Palestine geographical settings of the second millennium. Based on archives of cuneiform documents from Mari on the middle Euphrates, Mazar (2007:58) seems to support this hypothesis: “The wanderings of Abraham from Ur to Haran and from there to Canaan have been explained as reflecting the international connections along the Fertile Crescent during the Middle Bronze II period.”<sup>18</sup> This school of thought, however, is problematic in different ways, simply because the biblical narratives are not based on historical data. For example, scholars have wondered why the Pharaohs of Egypt and the people mentioned in patriarchal narratives are not identified by name, and they do not seem to be accessible as ‘historical individuals’.<sup>19</sup> Grabbe (2007:54-55) summarises

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<sup>16</sup> Halpern (1983:30-31) pointed out, “Pentateuch narrative is simply so susceptible to reinterpretation in different contexts, particularly the cultic, that without pinning down the narrative concerns of any given piece, or, say, as Alt has done with Genesis 35, arguing the origin of the tradition itself, the scholar really has no licence to appeal to this body of data as an historical base.”

<sup>17</sup> Grabbe has challenged the claim of similarity between the customs of the patriarchs and those of the Mesopotamian regions. According to him, some scholars have not accepted the fact that there is a certain degree of mismatch between the patriarchal customs and those of the Mesopotamian communities. Grabbe gives an example of the case of Eliezer who was an adopted son of Abraham but could not be Abraham’s heir, when Isaac was born. This “was actually contrary to Nuzi custom” (2007:54).

<sup>18</sup> See Bright (1972:77). Although Grabbe agrees with Bright on the fact that the Patriarchal names paralleled with those in Mesopotamia, he is of the opinion that names should not be a proof to this argument. He stated, “Names cannot be proof, of course, the patriarchal names can all be found in the telephone books of almost any large Western city today; however, it is interesting that a number of the names do not recur in the Israelite tradition until the Greco-Roman period” (2007:54).

<sup>19</sup> McCarter (1999:4) asserted, “On this level, the men and women who appear in Genesis 12-50 are less



the whole issue of cultural similarities as follows, “In the end, none of the alleged customs demonstrating an early-second-millennium background for the patriarchal stories seems to have stood up.” Some of modern biblical scholars and archaeologists have viewed the Patriarchal narratives as a purely artistic work of the Second Temple community. Finkelstein (2007:50), for example, wrote, “The pre-exilic sources of the Patriarchal narratives should therefore be regarded primarily as a literary attempt to redefine the unity of the people of Israel in the late Iron II period rather than as an accurate record of the lives of historical characters living more than a millennium earlier.” Of course, as a centrist scholar, Finkelstein does not leave out the hypothesis that these narratives reflect “old memories, folk tales, myths and aetiological anecdotes” (Finkelstein and Mazar, 2007:55).

#### **2.2.2.2. Mosaic**

The second school points to Moses as the founder of a people and the nation called Israel (Gottwald, 1979:34). In other words, the history of the Israelites starts with the Exodus in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and not with the patriarchs as proposed previously. Dever (2003:7) put it as follows, “The story of the Israelites establishing themselves in the Land of Canaan commences with the Exodus from Egypt. It is the beginning of the history of Israel as a nation...” In this case, the most distinctive place of Moses in the history of Israel as a distinctive people is his role of a religious founder<sup>20</sup>-Yahwism. In his commentary on the book of Deuteronomy, Clements (1989:10) stated, “The fact that Moses is the person who dominates the Old Testament above all other human figures is due in great part to the emphasis Deuteronomy places upon him and his role in Israel’s religious origins.” Having mentioned the exodus event, it is important to note that there are different voices as far as the date is concerned. At first, it was agreed that the Exodus happened no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but now the majority of biblical scholars suggest that it took place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Petrovich (2006:83). Dever (2003:8) wrote, “The specific timeframe for the Exodus is now confirmed as the middle to late 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., not the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. as formally thought.” Another voice is that of Finkelstein. According to his studies, the 13<sup>th</sup>

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accessible as historical individuals than as typological pre-figurations of the later Israelites and their neighbours.” See also Bright (1972:74) and Hendel (2001:604). In reaction to this phenomenon, scholars such as Merrill have argued that the patriarchal narratives in the Hebrew Bible should be approached from an “aetiological” point of view. He stated, “Naturally, one cannot prove the existence of the patriarchs for as yet no archaeological evidence mentioning them has been found, but if we now can establish that the period in which they lived is the same as that which Genesis accurately describes, there is no valid reason for dismissing their historicity” (1966:70-71).

<sup>20</sup> Bright (1972:124) stated, “Though we know nothing of his career save what the Bible tells us, the details of which we have no means of testing, there can be no doubt that he was, as the Bible portrays him, the great founder of Israel’s faith.” See also Gottwald (1979:36) and Castel (1985:44).

century B.C.E. hypothesis does not agree with other elements associated with the actual event, such as the cities and other places and names of people mentioned in the narrative. In this case, Finkelstein proposed another date – not earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. He stated, “Many of the places were not inhabited before the eight or seventh century B.C.E.” (2007:52).

Now, whether the exodus took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the 13<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the question with regard to Moses as a religious leader is where did Yahwism originate to the point that it became exclusively the Israelites’ religion? From a biblical point of view, it is argued that the first mention of Yahweh is in Exod. 3 where God appeared to Moses in the land of the Midianites and identifies himself as Yahweh, God of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). It is in this context that biblical scholars have proposed at least three hypotheses. One is that Yahweh was first known and worshiped by the Midianites, and Jethro, “the priest of Midian” and “Moses’ father-in-law officiated at a cultic celebration of Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt”<sup>21</sup> (Callaway, 1999:87). The other assumption is that the Israelites knew Yahweh in the time of Enoch, long before they got in direct contact with the Midianites. According to Castel, since the name ‘Judah’ means ‘Yahweh be praised’<sup>22</sup> there might have been a good relationship between the Midianites and the Kenites, the descendants of Cain, who “seem to become connected at a very early date with the tribe of Judah”<sup>23</sup> (1973:44). The third hypothesis is based on the fact that Israelites are originally Canaanites, and, therefore, their religion is typically Canaanite (Halpern, 1983:246-247). In short, whether the Israelites became a particular community of Yahwists at a very early stage before the exodus, or they adopted Yahwism at a very late date, through Jethro the Midianite during the exodus, or it is one of the Canaanite religions, traditionally, Moses remains as the highest figure and founder of this religious community.

### **2.2.2.3. Davidic**

The last and third school of thought claims that Israel as a nation did not exist until the Davidic united monarchy in the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.<sup>24</sup> (Coote, 1990:170). Scholars who advocate this approach argue that the biblical narratives recorded from this period on can be

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<sup>21</sup> See also Bright (1972:124-125).

<sup>22</sup> See also Castel (1973:44).

<sup>23</sup> While admitting the hypothesis that Moses might have learned about Yahweh from his father-in-law, the Midianite, Dever (2003:236) suggested that the existence of a deity called Yhw that seemed to be worshiped by the Shasu nomads may indicate a possibility that the Israelites knew and worshiped Yahweh even in Egypt.

<sup>24</sup> This date is debated among biblical scholars and archaeologists. See below in 2.3.2.



counted to be historically more reliable than those before this era.<sup>25</sup> In this case, one could say that the origin of ancient Israel is not completely different from that of other Canaanite populaces. Castel (1985:26) summarises this phenomenon as follows:

As the Amorites advanced, a number of semi-nomadic tribes entered Canaan. They did not all enter at the same time, nor did they settle in the same place. These various clans subsequently united to form a single people; in order to give expression to their unity, the clan leaders were represented as members of a single family of which Abraham was the ancestor.

Now the fact that the three approaches mentioned above seem to be reflected to the biblical narratives, it is reasonable enough to suggest that, as an ethnic group and a nation, Israel claims to be the descendant of the patriarchs, of Moses and David. To put it in Castel's words, "Abraham is the father of the race, Moses is the father of the nation" (1985:43) whose anointed king is David. However, Gottwald has voiced an important point to which Old Testament students are called to consider. He wrote, "The actuality of the full Israelite origins of these historical traces is obscured by their tradition-historical separation from context and their canonical phasing in the cultic-ideological frame of the traditions"<sup>26</sup> (1997:35).

### **2.2.3. Shared Historical Memories**

The third feature in this search is what scholars call "shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events and their commemoration" (Pitkänen, 2004:167). The narratives about slavery in Egypt and the exodus are known as the most important historical memories of the Israelites as a distinctive group of people and nation.<sup>27</sup> As indicated above, the twelve sons of Jacob migrated to Egypt and were slaves to their Egyptian lords for centuries until a divine intervention<sup>28</sup> took place. After a succession of ten miraculous signs, Pharaoh freed the Israelite slaves, and Moses led them to the land that was promised to their forefathers, a journey which took forty years in the

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<sup>25</sup> Kessler (2008:25) stated, "A whole series of events from the royal period onward is attested by extra-biblical sources." See also Thompson (1987:30).

<sup>26</sup> In line with Gottwald, Finkelstein (2007:55) reckoned, "The Patriarchal, Exodus, and conquest, which describe the formative history of the people of Israel, cannot be read as straightforward historical accounts."

<sup>27</sup> In his acknowledgment of the importance of the exodus event in the whole concept of Israel's existence, Matthews (2002:15) commented, "At its heart, the narrative of the exodus event is a national origins story. While the cultural beginning of the Hebrew people is found in the covenant narrative in Genesis 12-50, the story of the creation of a people referred to as Israel is the result of the exodus experience."

<sup>28</sup> Divine intervention is a very important element in the concept of exodus and migration not only in the biblical society but also in other ancient societies. For example, in his article "A Nama 'Exodus'? A Postcolonial Reading of the Diaries of Hendrik Witbooi" Bosman stated, "Hendrik Witbooi is described as a person who 'experienced religious visions as a boy herding livestock' and who received a divine calling on 23 August 1880..." (2011:332).

wilderness (Deut. 29:5).<sup>29</sup> According to biblical sources, this is an experience that should always be remembered and passed on from one generation to the next, as it reads, “In the future, when your son asks you, what is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you? Tell him: ‘we were slaves of pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.’”<sup>30</sup> (Deut. 6:20-21). Now the question frequently asked by modern biblical scholars is, as Grabbe put it, “The idea that the ancestors of Israel were in Egypt for a period, that they were oppressed, that they came out of Egypt ‘with a high hand’ (Exod. 14:8), and that they entered the promised land after a period in wilderness is a major concept in the biblical text. How historical is this?” (2007:84).

In answering this question, scholars have not yet come to a consensus. On the one hand, some have chosen to follow the maximalist school of thought and argued that both the Egyptian slavery and exodus should not be addressed as simply folk traditions but rather historical events.<sup>31</sup> In fact, when addressing the question as to why the exodus event is not recorded in any of the Egyptian annals, Bright commented, “Not only were Pharaohs not accustomed to celebrate reverses, but an affair involving only a party of runaway slaves would have been to them of altogether minor significance” (1972:120). Moreover, maximalists argue that the historicity of the exodus narratives does not depend on archaeological finds, but rather on common sense.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, minimalist students have a completely different approach. They have questioned any possibility that the biblical narrative about both slavery and exodus could be historically reliable.<sup>33</sup> Miller and Hayes (1986:75) reckoned, “The second option, an opposite extreme, is to reject the biblical account as totally useless for

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<sup>29</sup> With regard to the ten plagues, it is very important to mention here that the three distinctive schools of thought – the maximalist, minimalist and centrist – have not attempted to reconcile these narratives with historical events. Merrill (1966:112) explained, “The objection to such circumventions of the miraculous should be obvious, for they completely fail to explain all the plagues, and the incredible results which followed are not explicable on the basis of purely natural occurrences.”

<sup>30</sup> See also Exod. 12:25-27a; 13:8.

<sup>31</sup> Bright (1972:120) wrote, “Of the exodus itself we have not extra-Biblical evidence. But the Bible’s own witness is so impressive as to leave little doubt that some such remarkable deliverance took place.” Moreover, scholars have approached these events from the historical point of view and argued that Egypt was indeed a place of great movement of people. Merrill, for instance, wrote, “History records the movement of thousands of people to and from Egypt throughout this time. These people seemed to be Semitic primarily; though most of them were merchants who went to Egypt only temporarily for trading purposes, some remained there to occupy various parts of the country” (1966:99).

<sup>32</sup> Sarna (1999:38) commented: “No nation would be likely to invent for itself, and faithfully transmit centuries after centuries and millennium, such an inglorious and inconvenient tradition unless it had an authentic historical core.”

<sup>33</sup> Although accepting the fact that most of the Pentateuch narratives reflect “a distant – and distorted – memory of actual events”, Grabbe (2007:88) commented, “Despite the efforts of some fundamentalist arguments, there is no way to salvage the biblical text as a description of historical event.” See also Levin (2005:8).

purposes of historical reconstruction and to take a thoroughly agnostic position regarding the early history of Israel and Judah.” A third school of thought is that of centrists. They are of the opinion that though the slavery and exodus narratives may not have happened the way they are portrayed in the Pentateuch, they still represent memories of what really happened in the past.<sup>34</sup> Scholars such as Grant (1984), Miller and Hayes (1986), Sarna (1999), Hendel (2001), Petrovich (2006), Mazar (2007), to mention only a few, have traced some events that show historical parallelism with the biblical narratives. Grant, for example, pointed out that some Egyptian historians have written documents indicating the existence of Jewish slaves in Egypt and their subsequent expulsion (1984:40). Still with regard to slavery practice, Hendel pointed out that almost throughout the second millennium B.C.E. Egypt practiced different categories of slave trade in replacement of financial demands, or as a result of war imprisonment (2001:605-6).<sup>35</sup> “A text known as Papyrus Anastasi 5, which dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. contains a report from an Egyptian officer on the eastern frontier who is trying to track down two runaway slaves who have escaped into wilderness” (Sarna, 1999:39). Moreover, scholars have suggested that the group of people called Hapiru/Abiru in the Amarna letters can be identified with the Canaanite Hebrew community<sup>36</sup>, and that “the Amarna letters would represent extra-biblical documentary evidence for the Israelite’s invasion of Palestine while at the same time securing an approximate date of this event (Miller and Hayes, 1986:66). This then raises the question about the settlement in the land of the promise, which leads to the last feature – homeland.

#### **2.2.4. Homeland**

Homeland is another important element in the whole idea of exodus and migration, as Olojede said it in reference to the Yoruba people, “The ancestral home, Ilé-Ife has its foundation in the people’s origin myths and the migration theories” (2011:353). Coming back to the biblical exodus, the Bible, though implicitly, portrays all the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) as pastoral and landless people, but who made their living in the world where there were sedentary communities. In Genesis 12-13, for example, it is reported that Abraham went from Haran to Shechem, the site of the great tree of Moreh, and there he set

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<sup>34</sup> Hendel is one of centrist scholars who believe that the biblical narratives about the slavery in Egypt and the exodus experience are collective memories of the past. He wrote “They [collective memories] are communicated orally and in written texts and circulate in a wide discursive network... The collective memory of the exodus is, in this sense, situated in a history of discourse” (2001:601-2).

<sup>35</sup> Merrill (1966:100) hypothesized, “At this point we must consider the Biblical record concerning Jacob and Joseph.”

<sup>36</sup> See also Merrill (1966:153).

up an altar to the Lord. He continued his journey toward the hills east of Bethel, and there he pitched his tent and another altar to the Lord. It seems like Abraham did not stay long in Bethel, he “set out and continued toward the Negev” (12:9). While in the Negev, Abraham ran out of his possessions and could not avoid the great starvation which had spread in the land, so he was forced to flee to a sedentary community, in Egypt. After some time in Egypt, he came back to the Negev, now as a very wealthy man. Even this time, however, Abraham did not stay in one place; “he went from one place to another until he came back to Bethel” (13:3). The same is reported about Abraham’s son and grandson. Isaac roamed among the Philistines (Gen. 26), and so did Jacob among the Shechemites (Gen. 34-35). Finally, when Jacob and his eleven sons<sup>37</sup> and their families (a total of 70 people)<sup>38</sup> migrated to Egypt in search for food, they were given a permanent place, in the region of Goshen (Gen. 46:28), and later they became slaves to the Egyptian lords (Exod. 1). This is one focus in the next few paragraphs – how the descendants of these pastoral and perhaps landless patriarchs, who have been slaves in Egypt for centuries, came to possess a land among the sedentary communities.<sup>39</sup> Before getting to this point, however, it is extremely important to briefly consider the meaning of the number 12, as one of the major focuses in this study is the 12 tribes of Israel.

In his article ‘The Biblical Number 12 and the Formation of the Ancient Nation of Israel’, Buch (1999) significantly addressed the meaning of the number 12 in the context of the Ancient Near East in general and of the biblical narratives in particular. According to Buch, the number 12 played an important role in the social, physical and political sciences of the ancient world. He stated, “The number 12 ruled the lives of the ancients and continues to rule ours today” (1999:49). Buch described how the ancients used the number 12. The annual calendar developed in Egypt and Mesopotamia was based on 12 months; the division of the day into two periods (day and night) was based on the number 12; measurements of length, distance, weight and capacity were also based on the number 12; the Sumerian government used the number 12 to organize the country for legal purposes, to mention only few examples. Coming to the biblical narratives, Buch also pointed out some instances where the number 12 became a prominent figure. Adam’s male descendants were 12 (Gen. 4); Seth and his descendants were 12 (Gen. 5); Jacob’s sons who later became the tribes of Israel were

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<sup>37</sup> Joseph was the twelfth son and, by that time, he was already in Egypt.

<sup>38</sup> See Wood (1975:50).

<sup>39</sup> In fact, Callaway (1999:55) considers this nature of survey as “one of the most unsettled issues in the history of Israel.”

also 12 (Gen. 46:8-24); in preparing to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the first part of the promised land, Joshua called 12 men, one from each tribe (Josh. 4:4-7). In his conclusion, Buch observed that in the ancient world the number 12 meant ‘perfectness, completeness, totality or entirety,’ as he reckoned, “Besides its prevalence for administrative, social, political and scientific purposes, it took on eternal significance in the history of the Jewish people. Since it was considered to be the perfect number, the Nation, the perfect social and political order that was promised to Abraham had to be built on the base of 12” (1999:57). Looking at the meaning of the number 12 in relation to the biblical 12 tribes of Israel, as described by Buch, one will probably have to consider Gottwald’s argument when he wrote, “There is a certain plausibility to the suggestion that the twelve is a number connoting totality and wholeness...” (1979:355). In other words, the meaning of “12 tribes of Israel” may not be necessarily taken literally, but rather as a means to convey the completeness, the totality or wholeness of the nation known as ‘Israel’. Now it is time to move on to look at how this complete (twelve tribes) landless nation came to possess its land.

As indicated previously, from the Pentateuchal point of view, the concept of a land came as a divine promise to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12:7) which was later reaffirmed to Jacob (Gen. 35:12) and lastly to Moses (Exd. 3:15). Wood (1975:51) pointed out, “Not only had God promised a people to Abraham but also the land of Canaan as their place of dwelling.” Right from the day that the promise was given to Abraham till its fulfilment, it was clear that the land belonged to other nations. In this case, Abraham’s descendants, that is, the Israelites had to take it from their respective owners.<sup>40</sup> Now, the question is, how did the Israelites take the land from the original owners? To put it in Gottwald’s words (1979:220-221), “What was this formation of people called Israel which took land and whose social system took form as it took the land?” In an attempt to address this question, scholars have formulated at least four different models.

#### **2.2.4.1. Military Conquest**

The first model is known as the ‘military conquest’, and the book of Joshua is claimed to be the main source of information (Dever, 2003:41). According to William Foxwell Albright

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<sup>40</sup> Na’aman (1994:239) pointed out, “Five ethnic groups of ‘northern’ origin are mentioned in the biblical traditions of the seven nations dispossessed by the Israelites.” However, scholars such as Pitkänen (2004:173) argue that the land should not be considered as an authentic element which distinguishes the early Israelites from the non-Israelites, “as both would be essentially living in the same area, albeit perhaps with the distinction between the highlands and the lowlands.”

and his school,<sup>41</sup> the twelve tribes of Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, formed a mighty army which marched unanimously and conquered the Canaanite independent kingdoms, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Grabbe, 2007:100).<sup>42</sup> Merrill (1994) is another scholar who favours this model. Although he suggests a later date (13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) for the exodus and conquest, Merrill argues that the success of Joshua and his people over the Canaanite people was due to the lack of the Egyptian influence in the Southern Levant. He stated, “Clearly it was this lack of the Egyptian involvement in Palestinian affairs, particularly in central Palestine, that allowed Joshua and the Israelites to enter, conquer, and largely occupy the Palestinian hill country by the end of the reign of Amenhotep III’s son Amenhotep IV” (1994:25). Regardless of its great influence among conservative academics and mainstream scholarship<sup>43</sup>, this model is not free of problems. Hess summarizes what biblical scholars and archaeologists have found to be the major problem of this school of thought: “Many sites mentioned in Joshua have shown no archaeological evidence of having been destroyed during this period”<sup>44</sup> (1999:493-4). The hypothesis that Jericho and Ai, for example, were destroyed in the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 B.C.E.)<sup>45</sup> becomes questionable, as later excavations maintain the hypothesis that Jericho was destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1800-1550 B.C.E.), and since then it remained abandoned until late Iron Age.<sup>46</sup> In fact, in his revised edition, Bright admitted that Jericho was not known during the Late-Bronze Age, when he stated, “There was no town there, but the mound has been so scoured by wind and rain that almost every trace of it has vanished”<sup>47</sup> (1972:127).

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<sup>41</sup> Albright is known as the father of this model. Moore and Kelle (2011:78) stated, “Albright also championed the idea that archaeology confirmed that the Israelites had entered Palestine by conquering native cities – the ‘conquest theory’.”

<sup>42</sup> Callaway (1999:57) commented, “According to this tradition, all twelve tribes of Israel acted together in military operation on both sides of the Jordan.”

<sup>43</sup> The conquest model gained popularity among conservative scholars, because it is said to be in accord with the biblical narratives (Joshua and Judges), and early archaeological finds also seem to support the biblical narratives (Dever, 2003:44).

<sup>44</sup> See also Finkelstein and Mazar (2007:52).

<sup>45</sup> See the chronological periods in Matthews (2002:30).

<sup>46</sup> Dever (2003) stated, “Kenyon, however, equipped with far superior modern methods, and proclaiming herself unencumbered by any ‘biblical baggage’ (so she once told me in Jerusalem), proved that while this destruction indeed dated to ca. 1500 B.C.E., it was part of the now well-attested Egyptian campaigns in the course of expelling the Asiatic ‘Hyksos’ from Egypt at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Moreover, Kenyon showed beyond doubt that in the mid-late 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. – the time period now required for any Israelite ‘conquest’ – Jericho lay completely abandoned” (2003:45-46). Furthermore, it has been argued that Edom represents another site that was not occupied by the time of the supposed conquests. Dever (2003:27) pointed out, “We now know that occupation of Edom did not begin until much later, and even then it was extremely sparse. And the area remained largely nomadic until perhaps the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., when a sort of semi-sedentary ‘tribal state’ finally emerged.” See also Stiebing (1989:152).

<sup>47</sup> In agreement with Bright, Pitkänen pointed out, “It appears that there was no town for the Israelites to



#### 2.2.4.2. Peaceful Infiltration

The second model is called ‘peaceful infiltration’ by the school of Alt and Noth. Hess (1999:495) summarized it as follows, “Israel’s origin is to be found in wandering semi-nomadic clans who peacefully entered the land and settled in the hilly country which was not occupied. Brought together into loosely knit association by a group of Yahweh worshippers from the desert, and perhaps ultimately from Egypt...” Like the Albright school, Alt and Noth approached this model, though implicitly, from a biblical point of view. First, just as the patriarchs who are portrayed in the biblical narratives as semi-nomads, it is so with those who migrated and settled in the highlands. Second, it accommodates the biblical narrative about a group of run-away slaves from Egypt who attracted other semi-nomadic groups from different places and settled around Shechem, as Hess (1999:495) commented, “This may attest to a peaceful settlement in such an area.” However, this approach has been called into question. Like the conquest model, this school seems to advocate the understanding that all the Israelites were semi-nomadic in origin and had come from outside Canaan.<sup>48</sup> By taking this approach, it may imply that the parallelism between Hapiru/Abiru and the Hebrews is no longer there, that is, there is no room for those who suggest that the name Hebrews might derive from the Hapiru/Abiru, as mentioned above.<sup>49</sup> To put it in Halpern’s terms, the Hapiru/Abiru community that is supposed to have been identified somewhere in the land of Canaan and the Israelites who call themselves Hebrews and are also found in the same land of Canaan “cannot be equated either functionally or linearly” (1983:51). In fact, a group of scholars have argued that if the exodus is to be dated no earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., then the Hapiru people should be different from the biblical Hebrew people. The Canaanite Hapiru lived in the land of Canaan, around 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and fought against the Israelites during their stay in Shechem. Wood (1975:162) stated, “The first of the oppressors was probably a Habiru leader, who had led the strong Habiru people first against the Canaanites of southern Canaan and then turned his attention to the Israelites.”

#### 2.2.4.3. Peasant Revolt

The third model is attributed to Mendenhall who proposed that the origin of both a people and a geographical nation called Israel was a result of “an internal revolution that was

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conquer, contrary to the biblical account in Joshua” (2004:162).

<sup>48</sup> Hess (1999:493), in addressing the implication of origin of the Israelites with regard to the different theories proposed by scholars, pointed out, “According to the Conquest and Peaceful Infiltration theories, they come from outside Canaan.”

<sup>49</sup> In fact, in his reference to the “Peasant Revolt Model” Brueggemann did not avoid the term ‘habiru’ to mean those peasants who are said to revolt against the city-state. He wrote “The ‘habiru’ mounted a revolution against tyrannical city-kings, rejecting the given social order” (1979:163). See also Gottwald (1979:401).



religiously motivated”<sup>50</sup> (Dever, 2003:52). Different from the conquest model which seems to suggest that the Israelites were all from outside Canaan, this one is of the opinion that Israel was comprised of both local people and outsiders. Gottwald (1979:210) stated, “The revolt model offers the intriguing proposal that we can account for much, if not all, of what the Bible tells us of Israel’s entrance into Canaan on the theory that Israel was in fact composed in considerable part of native Canaanites who revolted against their overlords and joined forces with a nuclear group of invaders and/or infiltration from the desert.” As to why some people would engage into some sort of insurrection, it is argued that perhaps it was because of economic pressure that some disadvantaged rural populations from different tribes in the plains of Canaan used some religious principles to revolt against the existing regimes.<sup>51</sup> Besides the fact that this model has some sort of parallelism with biblical principles,<sup>52</sup> such as the egalitarian system, the Davidic regime that unified different tribes into one dynasty, to mention only two, it has been equally criticized due to the fact that, on the one hand, it is constructed around Marxist ideology,<sup>53</sup> based on personal imagination. Hess (1999:498) observed, “The use of this ‘heuristic model’ to explain a society is illegitimate because it implies that societies will behave in predictable patterns, given the presence of certain phenomena.” On the one hand, the model seems to underestimate the complexity of the nomadism and settlement in the ancient Near East by approaching the phenomenon of settlement based on the so-called “amphictyony” – an ancient Greek/Italian association of states which was created to defend a common religious centre. Being one of the advocates of this model, Gottwald (1979:357) acknowledged the risk of overemphasizing this parallelism and commented, “A heuristic model that is useful, as long as it compares and contrasts what is actually known at first-hand about the two types of unions, becomes dogmatically inhibiting and distorting when it overreaches itself and insists on correspondences when none are known to exist, ignoring evidence that is not amenable to the model, and ends up by using the more fully described example from another culture to ‘reconstruct’ the less fully

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<sup>50</sup> See also Grabbe (2007:102).

<sup>51</sup> In his outline of the three models of conquest, Halpern (1983:48) stated the third model as follows, “The peasants of Canaan, long in ferment, staged a succession of coups at the instigation of an innovative egalitarian religion borne by a community called Israel.”

<sup>52</sup> With regard to this model’s parallelism with biblical principles, Gottwald (1979:210-211) wrote, “It proposes a way of accounting for the phenomenal rise of Yahwism, its indigenous roots and power to adapt, its astonishing growth and integrating inclusiveness.”

<sup>53</sup> Referring to the fact that students of the Peasant Revolt schools tend to develop their arguments based on Marxist ideology, Gottwald (1979:218) noted, “Presumably the real but hidden passion of the revolt model advocate is to ground his impulse to contemporary social justice in biblical injunctions, or at least in some romanticized ancient Israel social religion.”

described example in Israel.” In fact, it may not always be practical to develop a hypothesis about events that took place in the ancient times using modern data. In this case, one would need to be very careful not to utilize modern context in order to interpret events that took place in the context of the ancient Near East, given the fact that, though there might be some similarities, each case has to be viewed in its own context. Moreover, the fact that this model includes religious belief as one of the strongest motives for the revolt, it tends to propose that Israel was comprised only of those who had adhered to that particular religious circle – “the monotheistic belief in Yahweh, the God of Israel, and to the superiority of this religion’s ethical claims to the previous Canaanite religion” (Lemche, 1997:137). Taken from this perspective, it may imply that the formation of the community of Yahweh was an easy and short-term process, yet that seems not to be the case. For example, one will notice that the call to return or to adhere to Yahweh is one of the dominant messages in both Deuteronomistic and prophetic literature through many generations. In other words, all Yahweh followers might have been Israelites, but not all the Israelites were necessarily Yahweh followers.

#### **2.2.4.4. An Alternative Model**

Different from the three previous models, the present model attempts to approach this topic from the entire context of the Iron Age I period (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.), an era in which the whole Mediterranean region experienced ‘a reversal settlement trends.’<sup>54</sup> It is in this sense that Gottwald, in his critical analysis of these three most dominant models commented, “Obviously, the adequate model of Israel’s occupation of the land cannot simply be a composite of elements arbitrarily juxtaposed. It will have to be an integrated synthesis... But to do so, a settlement model will have to be set in a larger context than has been the practice to date” (1979:220). In other words, none of the three models described above seems to provide a full and comprehensive explanation about the occupation of the land and the subsequent formation of the nation called Israel; nevertheless, each of them is part of an alternative solution, as Hess (1999:501) has stated it well, “Aspects of each of them may well have been true in some measure.” On the one hand, the deuteronomistic narratives seem to reflect some historical events about military confrontations between the sedentary communities and the semi-nomadic groups, including some sort of slaves who had escaped

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<sup>54</sup> Na’aman describes this phenomenon as follows, “The settlement process in Palestine in the twelfth-eleventh centuries BCE was synchronous with an enormous wave of migration, whose results were felt in all areas of Western Asia and in large parts of the Mediterranean.” See also Coote (1990:113), Kessler (2008:45-47) and Moore and Kelle (2011:80).

from Egypt.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, peaceful integration might have occurred (Grant, 1984:54). Still in the course of settlement social and religious struggles between different classes of the same or of different groups should not be a matter of question; however, not to the extent that those struggles and breakaways stand as an obvious background of the modern Marxist ideology. This goes in line with Pitkänen's approach when he said, "I will suggest a model which takes indigenous origins of Israel into account but also leaves a room for the possibility of external origins as described in the biblical tradition" (2004:165).

Kessler addressed the topic from an archaeological viewpoint and argued that in the Bronze Age, the Mesopotamian region was notorious because of its independent city-states that lived "alongside each other in a tense relationship of cooperation and competition" (2008:41). At this time Egypt was the superpower and extended its dominion and influence over the Levant. Besides these city-states with fairly centralized administration system, Kessler pointed out that archaeology has uncovered the existence of at least two different nomadic groups: the Hapiru, mentioned in the Amarna letters, and the Shasu, mentioned in Egyptian sources (2008:42). Could there be a possibility that the nomads bearing the name "Hapiru" be the biblical "Hebrew"? The answer to this and other related questions might be still hidden in the caves of the ancient world. However, some interesting information dated around 1200 B.C.E. appeared in one of the Egyptian manuscripts, on a stele of Pharaoh Merneptah. On this stele, Pharaoh Merneptah presents three city-states he had conquered plus one group of people he assumed to have destroyed completely, as stated, "Israel is laid waste, his seed is not" (Kessler, 2008:44). Could it mean that the same Israel on Merneptah's stele would be the biblical Israel?" The answer still remains a speculation based on the theophoric name element "El", which is found in the name Isra[el] and always associated with YHWH. It is from here that scholars draw their tentative conclusion that probably in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. people identified on Merneptah's stele with the name "Israel" had joined or been dissolved into a group of YHWH worshipers, and retained the name "Israel" (Kessler, 2008:45).

Grabbe (2007:107) approached this subject from an anthropological viewpoint, and in agreement with many other scholars, he pointed out different factors that contributed to the phenomenon of settlement in the Mediterranean region in general and of the Israelites in

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<sup>55</sup> Scholars such as Pitkänen (2004:170) have suggested the possibility that a group of slaves might have "escaped from Egypt and entered the land of Canaan during the time of the early Israelites" though in a different context from the one in the Bible.

particular.<sup>56</sup> To some extent, Grabbe seems to concur with those scholars who address the subject from the general context of the Mediterranean region of the Late Bronze and Early Iron ages. According to him, among many factors, one would be the technological innovations such as plastered cisterns, terracing, collared-rim jars, and the use of iron, which are suggested to have taken place in the highlands of the Fertile Crescent. In fact, Gottwald sees this as one of the primary causes for the settlement of the Israelites when he wrote, “Two technological advances in particular have been singled out by biblical archaeologists and historians as magnificent contributors to the successful Israelite settlement in the hill country” (1979:655)<sup>57</sup>. Other scholars, however, have pointed out the absence of evidence which seems to prove that this technological innovation was indeed exclusively experienced by the Israelites in the highlands (Grabbe, 2007:119).<sup>58</sup> Other two factors suggested by scholars to have contributed to the phenomenon of settlement is demographic growth and consciousness of ethnicity.<sup>59</sup> Different families/clans were aware of their differences as well as their similarities and gradually started to congregate themselves according to their uniformities and to distance themselves from each other according to their distinctions. While other groups in the region distinguished themselves with other deities, the Israelites adopted Yahwism as the hub of their identity formation (Halpern, 1983:213).<sup>60</sup> It is around this national God that different families/clans were linked to one another, whether through blood kinship, marital exchange or peaceful integration, and formed their supposed uniqueness with this common

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<sup>56</sup> For more discussion on this topic, see Grabbe (2007:118-119).

<sup>57</sup> Halpern (1983:211) argued that besides the technological innovation which contributed to such changes, there were other negative factors which include, “Plagues, food shortage, urban violence and disruption of inter-urban communications.”

<sup>58</sup> Bloch-Smith approached this subject from an ethnic point of view and indicated that scholars, such as Finkelstein, were of the conviction that archaeology had uncovered Israel’s exclusive cultural features. However, later studies seem to claim the opposite, as she pointed out, “Not a single feature of the highland settlements attributed to early Israel may be conclusively identified as exclusively ‘Israelite’ or distinguishing ‘Israelites’ from neighbouring people such as the ‘Gibeonites’ or ‘Canaanites’” (2003:406).

<sup>59</sup> With reference to the ethnic identity of the Israelites, Dever (2003) argues that extra-biblical resources such as documents written by Egyptian historians and the information found in the Merneptah Stele do confirm this factor. According to Dever, when these sources mention Israel (though in the sense of proto-Israel), they do not refer to place but to a particular group or people. He asserted, “There existed in Canaan by 1210 B.C.E. a cultural and probably political entity that called itself ‘Israel’ and was known to the Egyptian by that name” (2003:206). In fact, Halpern (1983:177) approached the issue of ethnicity from the biblical point of view and stated, “The conflicts with Midian (Judg. 6-8) and with Ammon (Judg. 11) along with the Philistine wars (Samuel, Saul) suggest that the areas of ethnic tension in this era were primarily peripheral.” See also Mazar (2007:74).

<sup>60</sup> It is argued that, just like other communities in the Mediterranean region, Israel was originally a polytheistic community. Callaway (1999:87) pointed out, “If Yahwism did have its origin among the desert people of the south, its acceptance among the tribal groups in Canaan apparently occurred over a long period of time, during which different factions competed.” See also Pitkänen (2004:171).

ideology, as Halpern (1983:224) pointed out, “It was in the cultic sphere that the first articulation of unity must have developed.”

Gerstenberger (2002) is another scholar who addressed this topic from a socio-historical approach and argued that the formation of ancient Israel should not be disassociated from the general norm of a “prehistoric period of humankind” (2002:19). There are at least four socio-economic and political organizations which should be considered: family, clan, tribe and state. According to Gerstenberger, individual families were linked to one another and formed clans, tribes then states. In reference to ancient Israel, this is probably what Gottwald (1979:345) meant when he stated, “The inclusive social system of old Israel was an organization of autonomous social entities built around the extended family as the prime socioeconomic unit but extending to higher levels of organization in the form of protective associations of families and the form of tribal units.” In other words, as different families/clans or tribes came together into one geographical settlement, they needed some kind of organizational and administrative tasks mainly for economic and security reasons. On the one hand, there was a need of peace keepers. In this case, some local rules and regulations had to be worked out and implemented in order to monitor internal conflicts in the community. Mendenhall (1955:12) stated, “Law begins with the establishment of a community.” On the other hand, there was a need for community protection not only against external human threats but also against spirits and natural phenomena, such as storm, heat, lightning, thunder, plagues and night, to mention only a few, which were believed to have supernatural and human life-threatening powers.<sup>61</sup> Viewed from this approach, one can agree with Gottwald who stated, “The associated tribes formed a bounded, distinctive social system with cultural, socioeconomic, political, and religious facets”<sup>62</sup> (1979:345).

In short, the quest for the origin of the Israelites remains an open and ongoing debate among biblical scholars,<sup>63</sup> historians and archaeologists due to the fact that it has proved to be a more complex and long process than what we hear from the biblical witnesses and from what history and archaeology have uncovered so far. The biblical narratives affirm that the origin of Israel goes as far back as the time of the patriarchs who were divinely promised a nation

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<sup>61</sup> According to Gerstenberger (2002:22), it is due to the need of this type of protection that “In the Hebrew tradition, Yahweh, the warrior God, is quite clearly initially a tribal deity; only secondarily does he become the divine supreme head of the nation and also of the family.”

<sup>62</sup> This seems to be what Halpern (1983:235) meant when referring to Israelite’s political development. “Their ethnicity was cultural, geographic, affinal and cultic in character.”

<sup>63</sup> In response to some criticisms raised by different scholars in reference to the peasant revolt model, Gottwald (1979:37) argued that the hypothesis should not be considered already developed and finished.

among the Canaanites, and there are at least three traditional models that are frequently used to justify the occupation of the land, namely the military conquest, peaceful infiltration and peasant revolt. In addition to these three models, modern scholars have suggested an alternate one – that the origin of Israel should be seen in the context of the Mediterranean history during the Iron Age period, an era characterized by massive settlements and resettlements, technological innovations, and awareness of ethnicity and group identity. It is in these circumstances that, like any other settlement in the Southern Levant, a group of different tribes settled in the hill country of this region. Now one could ask: If the twelve tribes had ever, after a long process, formed one nation with common ideologies, who are the biblical Samaritans? Where are they from? When did they become different from the Israelites? But to address these questions, one must have to consider first the socio-political life of Israel during and after the settlement, starting with the assumption that to some extent the biblical Samaritans feature in the context of the so-called “the ten lost tribes”<sup>64</sup> of Israel.

### **2.3. Israel from Tribal Alliance to Monarchy**

Based on the assumption that Israel’s origin should be viewed in the context of the Mediterranean region in general, the Southern Levant region of Late Bronze and Iron Ages in particular, the present discussion will start by reiterating that, just like many other people groups in the history of humankind, Israel as a distinct group of people came from the very basic and most simple system of organization, that is, family/clan and gradually moved on to tribal level and lastly to a dynasty/national rank. According to this approach, scholars have classified the history of Israel during and after the settlement into two phases: the pre-monarchic and the monarchic eras. The former is characterized by its loose tribal structure (Callaway, 1999:80-81), while the latter is known by its centralized and relatively effective administrative system (Lemaire, 1999:104-5). The next task will be to look briefly at each of these phases.

#### **2.3.1. Pre-monarchic Period**

At least three aspects characterize the pre-monarchic period of the history of Israel. One, from both biblical and historical points of view, the presumed twelve tribes that comprised the nation of Israel were to some extent in a state of disorder. Although some of the biblical

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<sup>64</sup> This is still under debate among biblical scholars whether the ten tribes got lost in a real sense of the word or it is merely a myth. One of the predominant views is represented here by scholars such as Lewin (2005:11) who stated, “The ancient northern kingdom disappeared into the mists of legend as the ‘ten lost tribes,’ though the Samaritans still claim to be their descendants.” See Knoppers (2013:5-8).



narratives present the impression that before the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to settle in the Promised Land they were already a nation, the real situation in the land seems to reveal a completely opposite scenario. First, each family/clan or tribe seemed to live independently from others, and second, Israel as a nation (if one would think that way) did not have, in any practical sense, a unifying system. Bright (1972:158) contended, “Israel’s structure remained in theory tribal. She had no statehood, no central government, no capital city, and no administrative machinery.” This is probably why Gottwald proposed the term “intertribal association” to mean that the twelve tribes were not linked to one another by any organizational system (1979:358). For that reason, their settlement was not as easy a process as one would expect. Because of this socio-political situation, the presence of fairly centralized city-states with a well-equipped military force, such as the Philistines, Moabites, Amorites, Amalekites, and Edomites, to mention only a few, made the life of the Israelites difficult. However, as indicated above, whenever the Israelites thought of and spoke about their unity, they meant around the shrine.<sup>65</sup> Mendenhall (1955:13) contended, “The one factor which held the tribes together at all was the religious bond which imposed upon them common religious obligations, not a common political system enforced by central authority.” It was the belief of YHWH that made them one people, as Lasine (2000:657) commented, “Repeatedly a nation oppressed Israel, and God responded to the people’s distress by sending them a ‘judge’ as a deliverer.” That means when internal conflicts or external threats broke into the lives of the Israelites, they had no source of help other than religious; they depended on God’s intervention. The second major characteristic of this period – the cultic centre – is the topic for the next section.

The second aspect which characterizes this period is the location of cultic centre. The point of departure in this discussion will be the assumption that, though the Hebrew text seems to support the existence of different cultic centres, such as Mizpah, Bethel, Gilgal and Hebron (Schley, 1989:15), Shiloh seems to be the main one in the pre-monarchic period (Wood, 1975:59).<sup>66</sup> Schley is one of the modern scholars who has extensively analysed this topic.

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<sup>65</sup> Lemaire (1999:100) addressed the socio-political life of the Israelites from an archaeological viewpoint and commented, “Archaeology seems to confirm that until about 1000 B.C.E., the end of Iron Age I, Israelite society was essentially a society of farmers and stockbreeders without any truly centralized organization and administration.” As to how then Israel justified their claim of being a nation, Halpern (1983:225) contended, “The primary early organs for articulating nationhood were cultic.” Bloch-Smith (2003:404) pointed out, “Earliest Israel likely consisted of a federation of clans worshiping El as their chief deity... Thereafter worship of Yahweh and/or El defined Israel.”

<sup>66</sup> Miller and Hayes (1986:116) stated, “The compilers of Genesis – II Kings present Shiloh as the major religious and political centre for all the tribes during the post-conquest period.” In his article “The Reference to



Schley started by addressing the nineteenth century scholarship and pointed out that, in his comparative studies between the Pentateuch and the historical narratives, De Wette, one of the prominent and influential scholars of his day, hypothesized that the concept of a geographic cultic centre did not exist until the monarchic period (1989:14).<sup>67</sup> In other words, before the time of David and Solomon, the Israelites performed their cultic practices in the tent of meeting, in which they also placed the Ark of the Lord. Grant is another scholar who supports this hypothesis, and according to him, one of the reasons the Israelites preferred a “mobile shrine” was to differentiate themselves from the Canaanites who emphasized the geographical places in their worship practices (1984:61).

A century later, De Wette’s hypothesis lost its popularity, and scholars such as Wellhausen argued that there should be no doubt that Shiloh was one of the most important cultic centres late in the pre-monarchic period (1989:65).<sup>68</sup> This hypothesis seems to have archaeological support, at least from Schmidt’s interpretation of data published in 1927, which gave the impression that when the Ark of the Lord was captured by the Philistines, Shiloh was not as seriously destroyed as some conservative scholars have claimed. However, taking into account that the Ark played an important role as far as the value and popularity of the place called Shiloh, it is highly possible that its absence had contributed to the decline of the town’s importance (Schley, 1989:68).

Schley moved on to address this topic from a biblical viewpoint and centred his analysis particularly on the chapters of Joshua 22 and Judges 17-21. One of the issues raised in Joshua 22 is the apparent existence of two different shrines. It is reported that the two and half tribes that were allocated in the lands of Gilead had built a different shrine from the one in Shiloh. Extremely worried about this situation and with the fear that the Lord would strike all the Israelites, the assembly of the rest of the tribes of Israel commissioned Phineas son of Eleazar, the high priest, together with representatives, one from each of the Israelites

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Shiloh in Psalm 78”, Leuchter (2006:2) commented “According to the biblical tradition, Shiloh had functioned as the locus of central priestly administration over the Ephraimite population in the pre-monarchic period, serving as a home to the Ark of the Covenant and staffed by a powerful Levitical line bound to Moses.” Moreover, Hess (1999:509) approached this topic from an archaeological point of view and argued that Shiloh was a cultic centre for more than one tribe: “Insofar as Israelite groups may be identified as tribal, Shiloh may have served as an intertribal sanctuary site.”

<sup>67</sup> About six years before Schley’s publication, Castel (1983:69) had pointed out, “The idea of ‘all Israel’ gathering at a single sanctuary, as it is presupposed in Joshua 24, actually became a reality only at a late period.”

<sup>68</sup> Miller and Hayes are some of the scholars who support the assumption that Shiloh remained as cultic centre until its destruction by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:1-11), “and then, with the loss of the Ark, had ceased to function for all practical purposes by the time Saul appeared on the scene” (1986:132).

clans/tribes, to go and enquire about the matter. The result of the enquiry was that the shrine in Gilead was not in competition with the one in Shiloh, as it reads, “Far be it from us to rebel against the Lord and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle” (Josh. 22:29). After a critical analysis of the Joshua 22 narrative, which is also considered to be part of the Priestly code, Schley (1989:125) pointed out, “For P, then, the legitimate cults in the Promised Land centred on the tent and the altar which stood before the tent, both of which were located at Shiloh.”

Besides the strong connection between Shiloh and some very important figures in the history of Israel, such as Samuel (who grew up in the tabernacle of Shiloh and later assumed the priestly function and anointed Saul and David as kings of Israel, and Ahijah),<sup>69</sup> one of the most interesting aspects about the position of Shiloh in Israel’s tradition is to see the status it has received in later literary material, namely Psalms and Jeremiah. Ps. 78:60-72, for example, has become one of focal passages outside the Deutenomistic traditions with regard to the issue of Shiloh against Jerusalem. Without going into details with reference to various opinions raised by different biblical scholars, the researcher’s primary interest here is to highlight the hypothesis that the Psalmist of this particular text seems to indicate that Shiloh was the cultic centre in the pre-monarchic period. A close look at this Psalm gives the impression that this particular narrative carries in itself a reflection of the life of the Israelites in the period of charismatic leadership – God punished his people by turning them over to their enemies, but after a certain period of oppression, God would turn against the oppressing nations.<sup>70</sup> The majority of scholars, however, relate this narrative to the pre-monarchic period, as Leuchter (2006:3) reckoned, “The psalmist does not simply recount the event but exploits it, using it to set up the eventual discussion of David, Jerusalem and the Temple in

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<sup>69</sup> Besides, Ahijah is known as the prophet who confirmed to Jeroboam that his ascending to the throne to rule over the northern ten tribes of Israel was neither an accident nor a human plan. It was rather a fulfilment of God’s plan (1 Kgs. 11:29-37). Moreover, it is the same prophet who came against Jeroboam’s religious innovations – the erection of cultic shrines in different places such as Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs. 12:28-33) – and announced the Lord’s judgement against Jeroboam because of those other cultic places. However, some scholars have argued that probably Ahijah hoped that Jeroboam would use his political powers, as David did to Jerusalem, to re-establish and strengthen the old sanctuary at Shiloh and proclaim it as the only cultic centre of the northern kingdom (Schley, 1989:166). In fact, Muller and Hayes (1986:243) commented, “If Ahijah hoped for the revival of the Shiloh cultic centre, he was disappointed.”

<sup>70</sup> It is important to acknowledge here that this Deutenomistic interpretation of God’s anger against his people is not limited only to the period of Judges, but also it extends throughout the history of the Israelites. For that reason, scholars have different opinions concerning the date of this Psalm. Some scholars maintain that it was written during King Solomon’s period, others opt for the Hezekiah and Josianic periods, and still scholars take it to as far as the exilic and post-exilic periods (Leuchter, 2006:1).

the closing verses of the psalm (vv. 58-72). The impression is that the reader must be convinced that Shiloh is defunct before accepting the legitimacy of the Jerusalem cult and Davidic line.”<sup>71</sup> The other material outside deuteronomistic narrative which gives mention to Shiloh is Jeremiah 7:12-15. Two things are noteworthy in this text. First, Jeremiah seems to make it clear that the assumption that Shiloh was once in the far past Yahweh’s worship centre is highly undisputable. “Go now to the place of Shiloh where I first made a dwelling place for my Name” (v. 12). Second, Jeremiah’s contemporary people and their shrine were no better than the people and the shrine of Shiloh (v. 14).<sup>72</sup> Both groups of people behaved the same way and God is determined to respond to both of them in the same way. The study now moves to the third aspect of the pre-monarchic era.

The third characteristic of the pre-monarchic period is the presence of spontaneous and charismatic leaders who emerged in times of both internal and external crises.<sup>73</sup> In one way or the other, the Israelites needed a certain type of organizational structure and capable persons/people to stand up heroically for the people. In this particular period of history, the only formal organizational structure was the cultic system and the person in the leadership was known as “Judge”, who could be either a man or a woman. God would hear the cry of the people, then spontaneously raise a man/woman to lead them in search of possible solutions for that particular crisis. As the judge came up, his/her first assignment was to deal with the internal situation of the people, which was often a broken relationship with YHWH. Wood (1975:161) commented, “The judges also must have been spiritually right with God...for an individual who did not personally follow God would not lead or influence others to do differently.” The second responsibility of the judge was to mobilize the people who could go with him/her and fight against the opponent, particularly their oppressors. In this sense, the judge played two roles, namely priestly and military (Wood, 1975:375-380). A clear example to illustrate this point would be Samuel’s role as a priest and judge.

It seems that from the time of Joshua to Eli, Israel, as a distinct group of people, never came together in an assembly until after Samuel became a judge. It came to Samuel’s awareness

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<sup>71</sup> In his literary analysis, Schley (1989:168) argues that the language implied in these verses seems to be of a person who has a vast knowledge and understanding of the history of Shiloh and the cultic role in the pre-monarchic period.

<sup>72</sup> This is probably what Schley meant when he wrote, “The cultic community in Jerusalem seems to have believed that Mount Zion, in succeeding to Shiloh’s position as the place where Yahweh had caused his name to dwell, had attained to an unparalleled status of glory and cultic eminence (1989:172).”

<sup>73</sup> Wood (1975:161) discussed briefly the origin of the judges and pointed out that, “They were not routine appointees who inherited their jobs. They were especially selected by God in an emergency.”

that if the Israelites continued to live individually and separate from each other, they would not survive in the midst of the Canaanite indigenous warriors. One could imagine Samuel having unconsciously applied the common proverb which says “united we stand, divided we fall”, and one of the basic strategic principles of the enemy, which is to divide the opponents in order to neutralize their power and rule over them. This is to say that as soon as Samuel took over Eli’s office as a priest, the first thing he did was to unite the Israelites by calling a general assembly at Mizpah. In this gathering, he had at least three important points on his agenda. One was to exercise his priestly duty by correcting the Israelites relationship with Yahweh. For many years the Israelites had abandoned YHWH and followed the Canaanite gods (Baal and the Ashtoreth). Now Samuel is calling the people back to the Lord, God of their fathers. Then Samuel said, “Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the Lord for you” (1 Sam. 7:5). The second point was to reverse the political situation, that is, to bring to an end the vandalizing and oppressing army of the Philistines: “Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to her... and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites” (vv. 13-14). The third point in Samuel’s agenda was that the unifying event would be to some extent an anticipation of the next phase of Israel’s history – the monarchical era. In fact, Hertzberg introduces his analysis of 1 Samuel chapters 7-15 by portraying Samuel as an important figure that stood for his people in times of political crises. He wrote, “With chapter 7 we begin a new complex in the Books of Samuel, which, while not having the relative compactness of such sections as 1-3 and 4-6, nevertheless shows a certain unity of subject. It describes the rise of the first king and his achievements, and particularly the struggle against the Philistines...” (1964:65). In this case, if one would choose to stay as close to the biblical narratives as possible, it would probably be fair to argue that one of Samuel’s greatest achievements as a judge in his days was the unification of the people of Israel to the point that they felt they were ready to be a monarchy on their own, just like their neighbouring nations.

### **2.3.2. The Monarchic Period**

Although scholars, such as Hertzberg (1964), as shown above, have attempted to address this topic from a biblical point of view, the 1 Samuel narratives in particular, seem to consider Samuel as the first king in Israel’s history,<sup>74</sup> the majority of scholars who approach this

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<sup>74</sup> The title king here is in the sense that Samuel stands as a bridge from the pre-monarchic to the monarchic period, and he is the first judge to anoint the first ruler known as king in the history of Israel as a nation.

subject from a historical perspective have harmoniously maintained that Israel's monarchy was established not earlier than the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.<sup>75</sup> However, because of lack of extra-biblical material to support the hypothesis of the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.,<sup>76</sup> recent researchers have suggested that Judah became a kingdom early in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. In his comparative studies of the Amarna Age and the period of King David, Van Seters (2009:87) wrote "The study concluded that it was not until the late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. that Judah actually became a state that could sustain a cultural and literate elite and an administration of government and military officials." This assertion is also supported by scholars such as Na'aman and others who did some studies on the history of the composition of deuteronomistic narratives. The hypothesis of these scholars is that the historiography of Israel was developed in the courts of David and Solomon not earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Na'aman, 1997:58). This hypothesis has also been supported by archaeological studies such as those of Finkelstein and Mazar (2007), Dever (2012) and many others. Finkelstein, for example, argued that the biblical portrayal of David and Solomon is not scientifically justified. In other words, there is no archaeological or historical proof that in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Jerusalem was a strong and prosperous city. He stated, "In the tenth century B.C.E., places such as Megiddo in the north still featured Canaanite material culture. The kingdom of David and Solomon was no more than a poor, demographically depleted chiefdom centred in Jerusalem, a humble village" (2007:115). Finkelstein went on to argue that the golden age of ancient Israel, which biblical writers attributed to David and Solomon did not take place until the reign of Omri, in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Now to answer the question as to why the Deuteronomistic historians decided to misrepresent such important information, Finkelstein's argument is that most of this information was not written until the reign of King Josiah of Judah, in the late-seventh

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<sup>75</sup> This assumption is based on Israel's writings, and scholars have contended that it was around the 10<sup>th</sup> century that scribal office was created in order to keep all the records of the state of Israel, such as the wisdom narratives associated with Solomon and the book of acts of Solomon. With reference to this school of thought, Na'aman (1997:57) reckoned, "Many scholars accept a tenth century date for the beginning of historical writing in Israel." Other scholars, however, such as Schaper (2013:110), in slightly disagreement with Na'aman, have suggested that the writing art became visible later than the tenth century. They wrote, "As far as we know, only in the late ninth century was there a significant increase in the production of written texts in Palestine. Moreover, this school gives further argument based on 1 Kgs. 14:25-28 – Shishak's campaign. Although the text refers to kings of the fourth generation, in this case Rehoboam, it is held that the account must have been a chronicle, recounting an event that happened during the time of King Solomon (Na'aman, 1997:59). See also Van Seters (2009:73).

<sup>76</sup> Na'aman argues that the account about Shishak's campaign in 1 Kgs. 14:25-28 may indicate that there was some kind of scribal activities in the court of Jerusalem in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (1997:59). Moreover, the lack of extra-biblical sources should not be the main reason to dismiss the hypothesis which locates the beginning of Israel's monarchic period somewhere in the 10<sup>th</sup> century because "The silence of 10<sup>th</sup> century sources neither proves nor disapproves the biblical accounts of the United Monarchy (1997:58-59)."

century B.C.E., several centuries after David and Solomon. The possible reason, therefore, why the writers deliberately decided to transfer the data to a wrong people at a wrong time might be that “the Deuteronomistic History was intended to serve Josiah’s agenda of centralization of the cult in Jerusalem and territorial expansion into the northern land of vanquished Israel after the withdrawal of Assyria” (2007:115).

Whatever the date might be, like the pre-monarchic period, this one is characterized by at least three aspects. The first one is strengthened unity among some of the tribes of Israel. From the biblical point of view, Saul is the first figure to assume the royal throne in Israel’s history. The Scriptures (1 Sam. 8) say that as Samuel was advancing in age, he designated his two sons to step in as judges for Israel. However, like Eli’s sons, these also were wicked and corrupt. The elders of Israel approached Samuel and asked him to appoint them a king for one major reason – to be like the surrounding nations. During Samuel’s leadership the Israelites had a sense of unity and experienced a significant number of victories and, therefore, they wanted to maintain this new experience against their opponents by having a military leader. Castel (1983:82) stated, “They would no longer look for a leader raised up by God, but wanted a recognized military leader. They wanted a leader capable of rescuing them from the control of the Philistines who had a monopoly on iron and thus kept Israel at their mercy not only for arms but for farming tools.” In this sense, Saul was the right man for the day. Besides the fact that the Scriptures still maintain the tradition of divine designation, there is also what is known as the Pro-Saul tradition, which presents Saul as an authentic military figure. Grabbe (2007:112) describes Saul as follows, “Saul was a successful leader, the first to develop a standing army, who had the support of the people, including those of the Judahite hill country. Saul was not only able to unite the Israelite tribes but also to incorporate Canaanites and other minority groups into the emerging state.” This leads to the second aspect – the expansion of the kingdom.

Despite the fact that biblical writers have dedicated only 3 chapters (1 Sam. 9-11) to Saul’s successful life as king of the Israelites before he found himself at the crossroads with God and David, some scholars believe that Saul contributed significantly not only in the sense of unification of some tribes, but also in the expansion of the new-born kingdom of Israel. Saul is portrayed as a Benjaminite and, therefore, it is possible that in the first place his kingdom “consisted of Benjamin, Gilead and doubtless Ephraim” (Castel, 1983:82). By the time Saul got into conflict with David, it is observed that he might have extended his kingdom a bit further to the southern hills of Jerusalem. In fact, based on the short narrative in 1 Samuel



30:1-3 which reports that David and his troops went to rescue a certain clan/tribe called Ziklag that was taken captives by the Amalekites, Miller and Hayes point out the possibility that this clan/tribe might have been incorporated into the kingdom of Israel during Saul's reign for protection "in the same way that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had appealed to him for help against the Amalekites" (1986:138). Another hint of Saul's great influence among other non-Israelite territories is the account of David taking refuge among the Philistines when he fled from Saul. The question raised is why would David run to the territory of the Israelite's enemy, and Saul, in search for David, gets the information from the residents. If this short account reflects some sort of historical events, then "Saul obviously exerted some political influence south of Jerusalem in the northern mountains of Judah, preparing the way for federation of Israel and Judah under David" (Lemaire, 1999:99). After the death of Saul during the battle against the Amalekites, it is reported that David went to occupy the lands of Hebron, and immediately the tribe of Judah came and crowned him there king (2 Sam. 2:4), probably "because of his military feats" (Castel, 1985:89). Would this give David an automatic pass to exercise political influence over the late Saul's territory? From the biblical narratives, the answer is no. In 2 Sam. 3:6-4:12 it is reported that there were successive wars between the house of David and the house of Saul, which resulted in the assassinations of both of Saul's sons. Miller and Hayes (1986:170) commented: "Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that the 'elders of Israel' came to David at Hebron and anointed him as their king." In other words, David became the king of both northern and southern tribes and centralized both political and religious powers,<sup>77</sup> which is the third characteristic of the monarchic period.

The unity of the kingdom was an essential step for the survival of the isolated tribes. But now another challenge arose as to how to make this unity real and maintainable. Castel (1985:90) presumes it is the second step which David needed to take. David had to identify a strategic and probably neutral city and established the capital of his United Kingdom. The place should be strategic in the sense that it should be relatively accessible to both northern and southern tribes as well as politically safe. It should be neutral so that no one tribe/clan would claim personal ownership. That city was Jerusalem, as Castel (1985:90) noted, "At the heart of realm stood Jerusalem, an independent Canaanite city... Jerusalem was not part either of Israel or of Judah and was therefore an ideal capital for purposes of political unity." Just like

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<sup>77</sup> Castel (1985:89) pointed out the fact that this was the first time that unity of the so-called the tribes of Israel (the ones in the north and those in the south) occurred.



other Canaanite cities, Jerusalem was already inhabited and probably well developed and properly protected. In this case, David had to engage in another war campaign in order to invade and possess it. The biblical narrative about the capture of the city of Jerusalem by David and his army is problematic in the sense that, first, the account is not detailed enough. The text simply says, “The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, ‘You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off... Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the city of David’ (2 Sam. 5:6-7). The first concern of this short record is why the conquest of Jerusalem seems to be the easiest of all the lands of Canaan. One way of looking at this episode is probably to consider Van Seters’ comment which reads, “The collection of texts has to do with a number of loosely connected units and topics that do not fit into any clear chronological development and feature a number of difficult, if not insoluble, problems” (2009:214). The second concern is with reference to the fact that Jerusalem belonged to the Jebusites and, therefore, was a neutral place in relation to both northern and southern tribes. From a literary point of view, one is tempted to argue that the text contains some elements of political propaganda, especially in verse 7 which reads, “Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the city of David” (2 Sam. 5:6-7). It is highly possible that one of the objectives of the narrator was to try to convince his audience that it is David himself who conquered the city of Jerusalem and, therefore, it is his “personal property” (2009:215).

Nevertheless, having the political centre defined and set up was not the only requirement for the unity of the kingdom. As previously mentioned, for many centuries, these individual tribes/clans developed a sense of unity and common identity through Yahweh whose dwelling among his people was represented by the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, which were both located at Shiloh. So, to maintain these two very important religious emblems at Shiloh would mean to have two separate capitals – one at Shiloh, representing the religious centre, and the other in Jerusalem as the political centre. David, in this case, had to build a tabernacle in Jerusalem and transfer the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-Jearim. Having done this, David had brought the two sets of tribal alliances into complete unity, as Bright pointed out “The significance of this action cannot be overestimated. It was David’s aim to make Jerusalem the religious as well as the political capital of the realm. Through the Ark he sought to link the newly created state to Israel’s ancient order as its legitimate successor and to advertise the state as the patron and protector of the sacral institutions of the

past” (1972:196).<sup>78</sup> For decades prior to the death of King Solomon, the legitimate successor of King David, Israel managed to gain control over its borders and increase influence in foreign relations with other kingdoms in the region, such as Egypt, Tyre, Moab and Phoenicia, to mention only four. Having mentioned King Solomon, it is important to highlight here that there are many debates among modern biblical scholars as to whether the biblical narratives about this wise, diplomatic, powerful, builder and richest king that Israel ever had in her existence should be considered historically reliable or not. Just an indication of how very interesting these scholarly debates on Solomonic tradition are, after an extensive analysis of the Saul, David and Solomon traditions, Grabbe (2007:115) commented, “Here and there might be a verse that reflects the historical Solomon, but to my mind the Solomon story is the most problematic, providing the thickest cloud of obscurity over the history that lies behind it.”<sup>79</sup> For the sake of the purpose in this chapter, the next point is the splitting of the monarchy.

### **2.3.3. The Divided Monarchy**

Though the biblical text seems to portray the Solomonic period as the “Golden Age” in the history of Israel (Kessler, 2008:92), it is quite clear that from the very beginning until its actual division, supposedly in 933 B.C.E.,<sup>80</sup> the United Kingdom of Israel had experienced immeasurable political tensions not only from the outside but also from within. One of the indicators of the external pressure is the prohibition given to David when he wanted to build the temple for Yahweh, that is, due to the accusation that he had been involved in many wars and, consequently, his hands had shed much blood (1 Kgs. 5:3 and 1 Chr. 22:7-8). As indicated previously, both Saul and David had to engage in battles against other surrounding tribes/clans in order to be free from oppression, to establish their respective kingdoms, and to expand and protect their borders.<sup>81</sup> Internally, the unification of the two kingdoms (the northern and the southern) did not happen as a result of good and friendly negotiations,<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See also Lemaire (1999:103) and Castel (1985:90).

<sup>79</sup> More about the debates on the historicity of Solomon’s narratives, see Miller and Hayes (1986:189-202), Millard (1997:25-29); Knauf (1997:81-82); Lemaire (1999:108-109).

<sup>80</sup> Scholars have not come to an agreement as to the precise year Solomon died and his son Rehoboam ascended the throne. For example, while Castel (1985:97) seems to follow Merrill’s (1966:243) chronology which positions the division of the United Monarchy in the year 931 B.C.E., Bright (1972:225) has followed, as he said, the chronology of scholars such as W. F. Albright and suggested that Solomon died in 922 B.C.E. Miller and Hayes (1986:220) seem to go along with Bright, though they reckon at least two years earlier, suggesting that Rehoboam assumed the throne in 924 B.C.E.

<sup>81</sup> Kessler, (2008:91) remarked, “Saul’s kingdom, which can readily be perceived as a rule over Benjamin and neighbouring territories, arose in connection with the struggle for freedom from the Philistines, who play a crucial role both in the stories of the Ark and in those about the rise and fall of Saul.”

<sup>82</sup> Castel (1985:97) has suggested the possibility that before the unification by presumably David, the two sets of

instead, it was after extensive wars and loss of royal members. In fact, this study will argue that these internal conflicts played a great role in the division of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom. A few examples will be sufficient to demonstrate this point. One is David's marriage to Michal, which represents the preparation for the unification of the two kingdoms. Scholars have argued that David's marriage to Michal, Saul's daughter, was more of a political issue than merely social. It seemed like Saul had sensed that David was to some extent an enemy, and he decided to use his daughter's marriage as a trap to hunt David's life so as to prevent him from implementing his political hidden agenda. "I will give her to him, he thought, so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him" (1 Sam. 18:21). It is in this sense that Miller and Hayes (1986:161) helpfully commented, "Possibly, the marriage was arranged before David had become so exceedingly popular that Saul began to regard him as a threat." The second example is the war between David and Saul's sons, which results in the unification of the two kingdoms. The threat which Saul had foreseen in David became a reality soon after his death. In 2 Sam. 3:1 we read, "The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker." Scholars such as Lemaire (1999:102) have argued that for David to assume the kingship in the northern hills, he first had to kill Saul's sons who were the potential and legitimate successors of their father's throne.<sup>83</sup>

The third example refers to the two rebellious movements that arose during David's reign (2 Sam. 15-17) and helped the occasion for the division of the united monarchy. One movement was created by Absalom, one of King David's sons, who turned against his father and gained favour and popularity among the northern tribes. In fact, in his comment about this topic, Castel (1985:97) referred to Absalom having, up to a certain point, created an attempt to overthrow his father. This incident seemed to instigate more anger and antagonism among the northern tribes against David, as seen in 2 Samuel 16:5-8 where a man called Shimei, from

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tribal alliances, the northern and southern, lived independently from each other. In fact, Miller and Hayes contended "Both Israel and Judah appear to have remained separate political entities, so that the unity of the two states was represented by the person of the king" (1986:170).

<sup>83</sup> Kessler (2008:65) has pointed out, "The reason why Saul's kingdom did not last any longer, even though one of his sons (Ishbaal) succeeded him was that a rival arose in the person of David, who established an independent sphere of influence in the region south of Benjamin... With the murder of Ishbaal, David was able to assume power over the former sphere of Saul's rule as well." In his analysis of the theological concept which indicates that God had rejected Saul and accepted David, Castel understands it as a clear cut example of the tension between the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. He stated, "Saul is not mistaken when he warns the Benjamites that if they follow David of Judah, they will lose many of the advantages which he, Saul, and his house guaranteed to them" (1985:85).

Saul's clan, confronted David. It reads, "As he cursed, Shimei said, 'Get out, get out, you man of blood, you scoundrel! The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned... The Lord has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have come to ruin, because you are a man of blood.'" The other rebellious movement was headed by Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite (2 Sam. 20). Sheba's primary agenda was to recover the northern kingdom from David's kingship, as it reads, "Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted, 'We have no share in David, no part in Jesse's son. Every man to his tent, O Israel!' So, all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from Jordan to Jerusalem" (v. 2). The last and fourth example is what this study could call the general rebellion of the northern tribes against Rehoboam, which resulted in ultimate division of the united monarchy. Given the fact that the tension between the northern and southern regions of the kingdom continued during Solomon's reign (Jeroboam's narrative in 1 Kgs. 11:26 is a clear evidence), the recognition of Rehoboam as the legitimate successor to Solomon by only the southern tribes was not enough; Rehoboam had to go up to Shechem to legitimize his kingship among the northern tribes as well. Scholars have interpreted this journey to Shechem as a sign of internal political crisis<sup>84</sup> (Miller and Hayes, 1986:229-230). According to Merrill (1966:247), "The selection of this holy place in the north may have been for the purpose of uniting the nation which had given evidence of being already seriously divided in opinion and loyalty." Unfortunately, the assembly in Shechem did not achieve its intended purpose – to maintain the unity of the monarchy. Instead, its final outcome was a permanent division of the kingdom into two independent nations – Judah in the south and Israel in the north.

Now, on to briefly highlight some important aspects of each kingdom, at least two important aspects have to be taken into consideration. First, this schism did not make life better for either one of the two nations, mainly because, on the one hand, the two kingdoms remained in constant hostility with each other<sup>85</sup> (Horn, 1999:136), and one of the major reasons for that hostility was the issue of border control. Based on archaeological data, Grabbe (2007:125)

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<sup>84</sup> Scholars such as Castel have indicated that in addition to the forced labour, which seems to be the main reason for the division of the united monarchy, as far as the biblical text is concerned, might be that King Solomon demanded higher and heavier tributes and taxes from the northern tribes than he did from the Judeans (1985:97).

<sup>85</sup> In fact, Merrill (1966:249) has pointed out that the first two kings died as a result of the constant conflicts between the two kingdoms, as recorded in 2 Chr. 13.

pointed out, “In the southern central range of the Ephraimite hills some sites were abandoned and a fall in the population generally in this region is probably to be explained by border conflicts and tensions between the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah.” On the other hand, the surrounding tribes/clans and/or kingdoms that had been previously conquered by either Saul or David took advantage of the current situation and quickly waved their flags of freedom (Bright, 1972: 228-229). This is the case of the different Philistine settlements in the southwest (2 Chr. 11), the Ammonites in the east, and the Moabites, to list only a few. The second aspect which needs to be considered here is that the two kingdoms had, to some extent, different realities mainly determined by their geographical locations and their different ideologies.

### **2.3.3.1. The Northern Kingdom of Israel**

From both biblical and historical sources, one learns that the northern kingdom of Israel had a significantly vaster territory and higher number of population in comparison to the southern kingdom of Judah. According to Ahija, the prophet of Shiloh, the northern kingdom was comprised of ten out of the twelve tribes (1 Kgs. 11: 29-34). In fact, scholars have argued that Israel’s population was about four times larger than that of Judah.<sup>86</sup> Although the biblical narratives seem to portray the southern kingdom of Judah as superior and more important than Israel (Miller and Hayes, 1985:233), the reality has proved to be the opposite. Grant (1984:113) pointed out, “Israel would tend towards more autocratic regimes than Judah. It was also the ‘older sister’ – and stood a better chance of success...”<sup>87</sup> Also in his article ‘Overcoming the Sub-Deuteronomism and Sub-Chronism of Historiography in Biblical Studies: The Case of the Samaritans’, Konrad Schmid noted that the elevation of the southern kingdom of Judah at the expense of the northern kingdom of Israel only is found in the biblical ideologies during its transmission and reception (2016:6).

However, while it is true that Israel stood a better chance of success and could freely engage in international relations and commerce either by land or by sea,<sup>88</sup> it is also important to

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<sup>86</sup> See Grant (1984:113).

<sup>87</sup> All this implied that Israel enjoyed the benefits of her geographical location and exposure to international relations. Miller and Hayes (1986:234) have pointed out: “To the extent that the Israelites held the Sharon and Jezreel plains, Galilee, and the northern Transjordan, they had direct access to the Mediterranean Sea, close communication with Phoenicia and Damascus, and control of the north-south trade route through Transjordan. This access and control allowed Israel to profit from international trade more than the kingdom of Judah. See also Finkelstein and Silberman (2006:261).

<sup>88</sup> These international relations can be attested by archaeological finds. Samaria is known for holding a greater number different coins than Judah, as Grabbe (2004:67) revealed, “This is in contrast to the Judean coinage which exhibits only a few types but with a number of coins representing each type. The Samaritan coins follow

notice that because of her strategic location she endured both internal and external conflicts throughout her existence. For example, it is said that soon after the division of the united monarchy, Shishak of Egypt launched an attack against Jerusalem and other fortified cities of Judah, but “the Egyptian army marched through the heartland of the northern kingdom, subduing many of Jeroboam’s own cities as well as the adjoining regions” (Horn, 1999:131). This was followed by the Damascus campaign (885-870 B.C.E.). With the help of Asa of Judah, Damascus also launched her campaign in the northern region and, as a result Israel lost part of the northern Galilee<sup>89</sup> (Grant, 1984:114-115). Besides the hostile relationship between the two sister-kingdoms, causing Israel to lose part of her territory, scholars such as Bright (1972:234) have indicated that internal instability should be viewed as the primary element that characterizes the northern kingdom of Israel. Soon after the schism took place, Jeroboam established the capital of the newly created kingdom in Shechem,<sup>90</sup> and later he transferred it to Tirzah. It is reported that there was strong power struggle among the northern tribes, and as a result, after the death of Jeroboam in Tirzah, the throne turned into a burial place for many kings.<sup>91</sup> In fact, in his analysis of the biblical portrayal of the northern kingdom, Römer (2007:10) pointed out, “The situation in the North is depicted as anarchic; kings are murdered and dynasties change often.” Kessler (2008:95) argues that it was due to the fact that in the northern kingdom “religion played no part in the transfers of power.” The northern dynasty was basically a military one, and this is shown by the passing of the power frequently done through the assassinations of kings and/or royal families until Omri’s dynasty (Horn, 1999:138).<sup>92</sup>

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several different prototypes mainly Tyrian, Cilician, and Athenian in contrast to Yehud coinage which follows mainly Athenian.”

<sup>89</sup> It is also argued that Israel did not only lose part of her territory, but she was also, at a certain point, a vassal of Damascus (Grabbe, 2007:147)

<sup>90</sup> There are many arguments about Jeroboam’s choice of Shechem as his capital. For example, Bright (1972:232) noted, “His [Jeroboam’s] reasons were probably those which led David to select Jerusalem. Shechem was centrally located, had ancient cultic associations, and, since it was a Canaanite-Hebrew enclave within Manasseh but loosely related to the tribal system, its choice would arouse a minimum of tribal jealousy and, at the same time, please non-Israelite elements of the population.”

<sup>91</sup> While 1 Kgs. 16:8-20 gives a brief summary of this phenomenon, Bright (1972:234) states, “While Judah stuck with the Davidic line through the whole of her history, Israel’s throne changed hands by violence thrice in the first fifty years. The explanation of this lies in the presence of a lively amphictyonic tradition in which dynastic succession was not recognized.” In fact, 1 Kgs. 16:8-20 gives a brief summary of this phenomenon. Bruce (1997:51) contended, “The people had lost their former cohesion: social corruption was followed by political anarchy, and the swift succession of kings reflected the instability of the nation.”

<sup>92</sup> Gerstenberger (2002) looked at the situation from the socio-structural point of view and argued that this phenomenon represents a practical implication of the change from the tribal to monarchical systems. Contrary to the monarchic system, in the tribal structure the leader is a charismatic figure that emerges in the community. It is in this perspective that Gerstenberger stated, “From this we can conclude that the tribal structures had not yet



After Omri ascended the throne, he moved the capital from Tirzah to Samaria. This move was so significant that it took Israel's political, socio-economic and religious status from one level to another. Horn (1999:139) commented, "Though Omri ruled only 12 years (c. 883-872), he seems to have accomplished quite a bit, founding a dynasty and restoring Israel to its position as an important trading nation." For this achievement to be possible, Omri had to work very hard at both national and international instability. On the national level, it is argued that Omri's dynasty was inclusive; his aim was to bring both Israelites and Canaanites together on board, "in a personal union under the monarchy" (Grant, 1984:116). Internationally, Omri was able to re-establish good relationships with the southern kingdom of Judah – an "alliance that was both military and commercial" (Bright 1972:238) and with Tyre through marriage between his son Ahab and Ittobaal's daughter Jezebel. Though there is no way one should underestimate Omri's achievements, it is also important to indicate that they also produced negative effects for the rest of Israel's existence and beyond. On the one hand, the myth of the 'lost ten tribes' of the northern kingdom is strongly based on both the inclusion of the Canaanites into the dynasty and the marriage between Ahab and Jezebel.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, Israel's friendship with Tyre was not welcomed by other regional and commercial competitors of the day, such as Damascus, Egypt and Assyria whose dominion in the region determined the future of the northern kingdom of Israel and her history (Bright, 1972:236-237).

It was during Omri and Ahab's dynasties (883-851 B.C.E.),<sup>94</sup> that the Assyrians, "motivated by a desire to control the trade route through northern Syria into the mineral-rich mountain country of Anatolia"<sup>95</sup>, proved to be the best candidate for the regional leading power for the next century or so. Under the command of Tiglath-Pileser III, the Assyrians intensified their campaign and conquered Damascus, Palestine, Tyre and other Philistinian cities. In response to this strong and perhaps unstoppable imperial power that imposed heavy taxes on their vassals, an anti-Assyrian movement was created, in which Israel was an active member.<sup>96</sup>

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been forgotten in the northern Israel" (2002:175).

<sup>93</sup> The researcher will come back to this topic when he addresses the Samaritan's origin below.

<sup>94</sup> In this regard, Liverani (2003:108) commented, "Omri's coming to power marks a decisive change in the politic-institutional and economic development of the kingdom of Israel. Omri reigned about ten years (885-874) and his son Ahab twenty years (874-853). Socio-religiously, however, the biblical text portrays Ahab as the worst of all the kings who reigned over Israel. "He is married to a foreign woman, Jezebel of Tyre, who aggressively promotes the worship of Baal in Israel. Together, Ahab and Jezebel abuse and exploit their Israelite subjects" (Horn, 1999:143).

<sup>95</sup> See Horn (1999:143).

<sup>96</sup> Horn, describes this movement as follows, "We know from Assyrian sources that Rezin of *Damascus* and



When Tiglath-Pileser III found out about this political manifestation, he intensified his imperial campaign which gave him control over the Phoenician and Philistine coasts, in 726-722 B.C.E., “thus preventing any intervention by Egypt” (Castel, 1985:121). Unfortunately, Israel (now ruled by King Hoshea) did what Bright considers to be pure “suicide” (1972:275). She took the Assyrian actions lightly by calling on Egypt for help. Hoshea’s deliberate decision to turn his back on the Assyrians resulted in a final siege of Samaria and deportation of its inhabitants in 722 B.C.E. by Sargon II. That was, according to Grant, the end of the northern Kingdom of Israel’s existence in the history of the ancient Near East (1984:121).<sup>97</sup>

### 2.3.3.2. The Southern Kingdom of Judah

Scholars have identified at least two basic elements that best characterize the southern kingdom of Judah. One is the political regime. It is said that the political system of Judah was structured in such a way that the unity between the ruling class and the rest of the subjects happened naturally. This is what Kessler refers to as a participatory governing system. He pointed out, “The Davidides succeeded in uniting themselves closely with the so-called ‘people of the land’, and at the same time creating a civil-service aristocracy that, as an independent group, both participated in royal power and supported it” (2008:98). In other words, all the people identified themselves as children of the ‘House of David’ and, therefore, the ‘House of David belonged to all his children’.<sup>98</sup> The second element is a religious affair. In discussing the role of the temple in Israel’s<sup>99</sup> community, Kessler proposes that, more than anything else, the temple played a great role in uniting the people. He reckoned, “What is decisive is that the society as a whole, represented from the time of the state’s establishment and in the figure of the king, symbolized its unity by the worship of YHWH” (2008:88). In addition to these two, there is a need to highlight the third basic element – the geographical location of the kingdom of Judah. It has been indicated above that in relation to the northern kingdom of Israel, Judah stood in an unfavourable position in terms of both natural and socio-economic resources. Out of the twelve tribes, only two (Judah and Benjamin) belonged to the southern kingdom. In fact, Grant (1984:135) gave an estimate of the population and indicated

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*Pekah of Israel* were involved in a larger anti-Assyrian movement in the West, which included Hiram of Tyre as well as the kings of two Philistinian cities, Mitinti of Ashkelon and Hunun (or Hanno) of Gaza” (1999:68; italics added).

<sup>97</sup> See more in Bruce (1997:545).

<sup>98</sup> This is probably what Römer meant, in his comment on biblical characterization of the southern kingdom. He stated: “The southern kingdom, on the contrary, appears to have been ruled all the time by kings from the Davidic dynasty” (2007:10).

<sup>99</sup> The term ‘Israel’ here is not limited to the northern kingdom, but refers to the twelve tribes.

that the total is not more than a quarter of Israel's population. Though it is not always the case, one could argue that the reduced number of her population may be a good indicator of the fact that its geographical area was also significantly reduced. For that reason, one of Judah's immediate actions, after the schism, was to defend Jerusalem and make sure that it did not fall under Israel's territorial jurisdiction. Bright said it well, "Since Jerusalem lay on the very border of Benjamin, loss of Benjamin would have rendered the capital untenable. Rehoboam therefore took steps to occupy Benjamite territory and apparently succeeded in holding a frontier near its northern limits. As a result, the capital city was held, and the fortunes of Benjamin were thereafter linked with those of Judah" (1972:229). These and other factors have made the southern kingdom of Judah "less vulnerable to external aggression" (Grant, 1984:135). Therefore, unlike the northern kingdom of Israel, Judah escaped the Assyrian vandalism.

However, for the entire period of Judah's existence, she did not remain without challenges. Out of many instances, the study is going to consider only two. One is the consequences of Judah's refusal to be part of the Israel-Damascus anti-Assyrian movement. The biblical account stated that Ahaz ascended the throne over Judah (735-727 B.C.E.)<sup>100</sup> during the time that Israel, Damascus and other Philistine states came together and formed an anti-Assyrian coalition, in which Judah was expected to be actively involved. Ahaz had to make a choice whether to join or not, having in mind that whatever choice he would make, there would be some consequences. He then decided not to join. As a result, Rezin and Pekah invaded Judah and besieged Jerusalem (Grant, 1984:120). In response to this attack, Ahaz took at least two major steps for his survival. First, he decided to remain loyal and faithful to the heavy tributes he paid to the Assyrians. To see how serious the issue of tributes was, it is reported that Ahaz took the treasures from both the Temple of YHWH in Jerusalem and the royal palace to the Assyrian lords (Liverani, 2003:132). Second, Ahaz was determined to remain in complete submission to the Assyrians and to ask them for help. 2 Kgs. 16:7 reads, "Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, 'I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me.'" This is how the southern kingdom survived the Assyrian (737-721) heavy campaign accompanied by brutal assaults. In the next decades Judah was one of the few nations, if not

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<sup>100</sup> This chronological reference was taken from Horn (1999:137). Other scholars such as Grant (1984:138) propose the date (741-725 B.C.E.).

the only “surviving independent state in the region” (Grant, 1984:139) until early in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

The second instance that Judah faced political challenges is when another coalition against Assyria was formed, and this time Judah decided to be actively involved. When Sargon II died in 705 B.C.E., Babylon, Egypt, Judah and some of the Philistine cities came together and formed a coalition against Assyria. In response to this movement, Sennacherib, Sargon II’s successor, reacted as expected toward Judah and the other nations. A summary of Sennacherib’s actions is recorded in 2 Kgs. 18:13.

“In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: ‘I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand from me.’ The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. So, Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace.”

Though scholars such as Grant (1984:139) have argued that the text contains some sort of exaggeration, the point the researcher wants to make here is that this is how life was for Judah. For her survival, Judah had to be faithful to the demands of each regionally dominant power. When a new dynasty arose, Judah had to adjust to the new reality.

Finally, the Assyrian empire was coming close to its end. In 626-614 B.C.E., both the Babylonians and Medes joined their effort and overwhelmed the Assyrians. When this happened, Judah thought it was the end of her absolute and unwilling submission to the Assyrians; it was time to go back and revive her old alliances with Egypt.<sup>101</sup> Not long after King Jehoiakim made an alliance with Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar took control of Syria and Palestine, and that was the end of the road for Judah. In the first place, the Babylonians demanded tribute from Judah, as the previous dynasties did. Castel (1985:137) pointed out, “Jehoiakim paid tribute to Babylon, to those henceforth known as the Chaldeans.” This, however, did not make any difference or change Judah’s friendly relationships with Egypt. In 598/7 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty troops invaded Jerusalem, destroyed the city and deported the king and his nobles. Clements (1989:74) describes the incident as follows, “When Johoiakim rebelled against Babylon, Judah’s resistance was quickly swept aside and

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<sup>101</sup> This explains how King Josiah was fatally wounded by Necho II of Egypt. Merrill (1966:289) describes, “Josiah, both hoping to rid himself of Assyrian aggression once and for all and also deeply committed to Babylonia, elected to meet Necho at Megiddo and thwart his attempts to come to Haran in time to be of any help to the Assyrians.”

Jerusalem was captured after the siege in 598 BC. By this time Jehoiakim was dead and his successor, Jehoiachin, was deported to Babylon along with many other citizens and priests from Judah.” Like Israel over a century before, Judah, as an independent kingdom, disappeared from the map and history of the Ancient Near East.

To summarize, the nation of Israel started as an alliance of different tribes/clans, with no organizational system, except the belief of Yahweh under the leadership of spontaneous leaders (the judges) around the shrine. As challenges intensified, a more formal and strong unity among the tribes was needed. This unity was achieved by having a king, in this case Saul, then David who brought both the northern and southern tribes together and formed one nation which came to be known as the United Monarchy of Israel, with its political and religious capital in Jerusalem. However, conflicts and tensions between the northern and the southern regions as well as between Saul’s family and David’s continued until Solomon’s death when the schism took place and each region became an independent and autonomous kingdom. The northern kingdom, on the one hand, enjoyed international relationships – trading and communication – but became a victim of the regional superpower and vulnerable to other religious beliefs and practices. For that reason, Israel was the first to disappear from the ancient Near Eastern history, in 722 B.C.E., under the Assyrian warrior Sargon II. On the other hand, the southern kingdom, probably due to her awkward location and aristocratic regime, had less internal challenges but suffered under the abusive demand of tribute from the regional imperial powers until she could bear no more. Finally, like Israel who fell under the Assyrians, over a century earlier, Judah was vandalized by Nebuchadnezzar firstly in 598/7 B.C.E. and finally in 597/6 B.C.E. taken captive. Having said this, the study moves on to the second major question namely, who are the biblical Samaritans and how are they different from the Jews?

#### **2.4. The Biblical Samaritan Community**

This section will start by addressing at least three different perspectives with reference to the origins of the Samaritans. The first perspective will be that of the Samaritans themselves. The Samaritans claim to be Israelites, descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They claim to be the people of the exodus and of the northern kingdom of Israel. The second perspective will be the anti-Samaritan, which is found in both biblical and extra-biblical sources, in this case, the writings of Josephus. It is argued that the biblical Samaritans are different from the biblical Israelites in the northern kingdom of Israel. The former were

brought in by the Assyrians when Sargon II destroyed Samaria while the latter was deported and settled in the lands of Assyria, as described in 2 Kgs. 17. The third perspective is based on historical and scientific views. Here the researcher will consider different approaches from among modern biblical scholars as well as the hypothesis drawn from scientific investigations on genetic samples from both Jewish and Samaritan groups. Before coming to the first perspective, however, the study will first consider at least one preliminary aspect – the terminology.

#### **2.4.1. Terminology**

Scholars such as Coggins (1975), Deist (1988), Anderson and Giles (2002) and Pummer (2007), to mention only a few, have argued that until very recently the term Samaritans has been misunderstood, as it carried a double meaning. In their comment about the ambiguity of the term ‘Samaritans’, Anderson and Giles remarked, “We cannot assume that every mention of ‘Samaritans’ taken from an ancient text refers to the religious sect” (2002:9). The main reason for this ambiguity or double meaning is what Crown pointed out when he said “The name Samaria is the source of confusion of the identity between Samaritans and Samaritans” (1991:19). On the one hand, the term meant to refer to all the inhabitants of the political province of Samaria. A place called Samaria existed even far before the schism of the Davidic united monarchy (Hjelm, 2015:186). As it has been referred to above in the discussion of the divided monarchy, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel was first in Shechem and later was transferred to Tirzah, and then to Samaria. Moreover, before the Persian period, Samaria was one of the important provinces of the Babylonian empire.<sup>102</sup> In comparison to Yehuda, Grabbe (2004:156) describes Samaria as follows, “The geographical area of Samaria was generally better favoured by agricultural resources than Judah.” On the other hand, the term Samaria is said to mean a religious group of people who lived in the northern kingdom of Israel.<sup>103</sup> In this respect, the original name of Samaria has nothing to do

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<sup>102</sup> Archaeological studies have identified coins used exclusively in Samaria, which came to give more evidence that Samaria was, at a certain point in history, an independent province that, like other provinces in the region, responded to the regional imperial powers. In reference to the Persian period, for example, archaeologists have identified Samaritan coins, as Gerstenberger (2011:67) has commented, “One of the most dramatic increases in primary information for this period is the number of Samaritan coins, mainly because of the finding of two coin hoards (one in Nablus and one in Samaria)...” Becking is another biblical scholar who approached Samaria from an archaeological point of view and indicated that Samaria, as any other political place, had been involved in slave trade. He argued that some papyri were found in Wadi ed-Daliyeh, and “their texts document the sale of slaves in Samaria. In three papyri the transaction can be dated with the use of reference to Persian emperors mentioned in the text” (2011:66).

<sup>103</sup> Instead, Hjelm sees this group of people as not merely religious, but with an ethnic identity. He put it as follows, “The term *Samaritan* here might signify the traditional ethnic designation of the Yahwists of Persian period *Shomron*” (2015:186).

with the city of Samaria (Sacchi, 2000:154). Like the southern kingdom of Judah which was first known as a political colony (Yehuda) and later became a religious centre (Hayes, 2011:1), “very likely, the designation ‘Samaritans’ has had a long history of referents and only gradually became identified with a religious sect based in Samaria” (Anderson and Giles, 2002:9). These are the Samaritans that Deist characterized as being the second group when he spoke about two groups of Samaritans in the following terms, “The second group consists of a religious community with its centre at Shechem in Northern Israel territory” (1988:95). Returning to the main point of this section, the origins of the Samaritans, this study will basically be referring to the latter meaning of the term, in this case, the religious group.

#### **2.4.2. The Samaritan Perspective**

The first perspective, with regard to this topic, is that of the Samaritans themselves. They allege to be the offspring of Jacob, as Purvis (1968:83) pointed out, “The Samaritans claim to be the descendants of the ancient Joseph tribes of the Levitical priests who have lived in Shechem and its environs since the days of the Israelite settlement in Canaan.” In other words, the history of their origin goes as far back as the time of the Patriarchs, and they associate themselves with the places of Shechem and Shiloh and with Eli the priest.<sup>104</sup> In the Samaritan Chronicles, for example, it is said that apart from those Israelites who abandoned Moses’ ordinances about Yahweh worship and joined other Canaanites in the worship of idols, Israel was divided into two major groups. One followed Eli son of Yafni, who deserted from the main priesthood and migrated to Shiloh where he instituted a worship centre different from that in Shechem. It was due to this incident which is portrayed as ‘religious defilement and spiritual corruption’ that the Philistines were able to confiscate the Ark of the Covenant from ‘the false sanctuary at Shiloh’. The second group of the Israelites remained in Shechem under the leadership of High Priest Uzzi the son of Bukki. This is the group that came to be known as Samaritans (Anderson and Giles, 2012:11-12). MacDonald describes the division as follows, “Thus Israel now existed in two main divisions – those who belonged with Josephites, i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh, with their associates; and those who swore fealty now to a king, King Saul, anointed by Samuel under great pressure from the multitude of

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<sup>104</sup> According to MacDonald (1964:15-21), the Samaritan history is based on the Deuteronomistic history. Their origin goes as far back as the creation of Adam in Genesis 2, throughout the patriarchal era (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the exodus experience from Egypt to Canaan under the leadership of Moses then Joshua, up to pre-monarchic period. See also Purvis (1968:88-89), Nodet (1997:123), Sacchi (2000:154) and Becking (2011:111). However, scholars such as Kartveit (2009: 351-353) argue that the history of the Samaritans can go only as far as back to the construction of the Temple on Mt. Gerizim. Beyond that, there is no information about this group of people.



Israel. There was also that group of Israelites who had taken to heathen practices and swore allegiance neither to Saul nor to the High Priest of the Josephites” (1964:18). Furthermore, the Samaritans profess to be originally from the northern kingdom of Israel, representing mainly the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh<sup>105</sup> (Knoppers (2013:2). They claim to be the people of the Ark of the Covenant and have witnessed the unpleasant experience with the Philistines. They also witnessed the transferring of the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh to Jerusalem, the construction, dedication and proclamation of the Temple in Jerusalem as the only worship centre for the entire united monarchy. They, therefore, travelled all the way from the north to Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices to Yahweh, in the Temple. The Samaritans accept the fact that the incident reported in 1 Kgs. 12 – the split of the united monarchy – is part of their history.

Moreover, it is maintained that the term ‘Samaritans’ had a deeper meaning than merely a religious group; it means guardians. Knoppers (2013:15-16) noted, “The designation ‘Samaritans’ is largely shunned by the Samaritans, who prefer to call themselves northern Israel, the ‘community of the Samarians’, ‘the Samarian Israelites’, or the ‘community of the Samarian Israelites’. Or, playing on the Hebrew root שמר ‘to guard, keep, observe’, they refer to themselves שמרים ‘guardians’, that is, guardians of the Torah.”<sup>106</sup> It is also said that the designation “Cutheans” in the rabbinic literature has nothing to do with 2 Kgs. 17:26-26, but rather it refers to Yahweh worshipers of the Mt. Gerizim (Crown, 1991:18-19). From an archaeological viewpoint, it is argued that the Samaritan claim of their Israelite identity has ancient antecedents. A careful study of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. Delian inscriptions, scholars have observed that apart from their place of worship – on Mt. Gerizim – the Samaritans were no different from their counterpart Israelites in Judea,<sup>107</sup> as Crown (1991:19) stated, “Like the Judeans they are called Israelites in those inscriptions.” From these and other facts, one gets the impression that the Samaritans identify themselves, first of all, with the Patriarch Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel and the bearer of the name Israel. This identity remained unchanged until the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. For example, in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, according to the narrator of the Gospel of John, at Jacob’s well (4:6), Jesus challenged the woman seek for living water. In her reply, the woman stated

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<sup>105</sup> Oefner (2013) stated “According to the Samaritan tradition, they are descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, and Levitical priests, from Shechem (traditionally associated with the contemporary city of Nablus).”

<sup>106</sup> See also MacDonald (1964:18) and Anderson and Giles (2002:13).

<sup>107</sup> See Dusek (2012:75-79).



categorically that the Samaritans were the children of Jacob. It reads, "... Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his flocks and herds?" (vv. 11-12).

Besides, there are at least two more elements that the Samaritans identify themselves with – the Torah of Moses and cultic centre of Gerizim. Their exclusive identity to the Torah of Moses should not be interpreted as if it was exclusively their possession, but because they were extremely faithful observers to it. Like the Jewish community, the Samaritans call themselves the people of the Torah of Moses. Coggins (1975:133-134) noticed that with reference to the observance of the Sabbath, the Samaritans were more rigorous than at least some of the Judeans. He argued that while the Judeans produced a list of things that should not be done on the Sabbath, the Samaritans found nothing more important than the Day of Yahweh, and the only thing they did was to go to the synagogue.<sup>108</sup> With regard to the cultic centre, the question one should ask is what role does the Temple in Jerusalem play in determining whether someone should be considered a Jew or a Samaritan. On the one hand, for the Judeans the Jerusalem temple stood as one of the key diagnostic features of the Israelite's identity, as Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush (2003:264) pointed out, "A second theme underscores the temple and Torah as the twin base of postexilic Israel's identity." On the other hand, the Samaritans identify themselves with Mount Gerizim, and "They prefer to be called Israelites since they worship on Mount Gerizim, the Mount of Blessings, which was certainly a place of worship during the patriarchal period" (Charlesworth, 2013:xvii). In short, according to this perspective, the origin of the Samaritans is obvious.<sup>109</sup> Despite their hostile relationships throughout the history, both the Samaritans and the Judeans share the same ancestral origin and share the same world-view based on the commandments and moral values of the Pentateuch of Moses.

#### **2.4.3. The Anti-Samaritan Perspective**

This perspective, also known as the Jewish or biblical interpretation, is based on 2 Kgs. 17<sup>110</sup>. Although it acknowledges the existence of the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria, it also maintains that the biblical Samaritans have nothing in common with the

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<sup>108</sup> See also Weiss (1994:258).

<sup>109</sup> In his study on the Samaritans' Chronicles, Kartveit (2009:22) stated, "The Samaritans do not have to explain their origins, as they envisage themselves as descendants of the original Israel."

<sup>110</sup> In fact, in his article 'os Samaritanos: Um enigma na História Bíblica' (The Samaritans: An enigma in the Biblical History), João Lourenço argued that 2 Kgs. 17:24-41 is to some extent used by the pro-Judahite to justify the origin of the Samaritans as a result of the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/21 B.C.E.

biblical Jews. The first impression that one gets from 2 Kgs. 17 is that the final editor of this episode seemed to be very much aware of the historical background of the Israelites in the northern kingdom. He knew that, together with those in the southern kingdom, these Israelites were once slaves in Egypt and were miraculously brought out by their God (v. 7). On their way to the Promised Land, they were commanded not to sin against their God by worshiping other gods. When they arrived in the land, however, they failed to observe this commandment. Instead, they engaged in the worship of other gods (vv. 8-12). As a result, the Lord, God of their fathers, got angry and handed them over to the Assyrians, who removed them all from the land and replaced them with other people. In this case, the inhabitants that are currently in the land are not Israelites; they are all foreigners from different parts of the Assyrian Empire (v.24). It is from this viewpoint that Lourenço (1985:54) argues that the purpose of 2 Kgs. 17:24-41 is not to give a clear cut definition of the Samaritans' entity, but rather to explain the controversy between Yahwism and the syncretism in Samaria.<sup>111</sup> The second impression one gets from this chapter is that the Samaritans have another religion, but now they have adopted Yahwism – the religion of the land. The biblical text reports that when these expatriates settled in the land, they did not know anything about the God of the Israelites until the king of Assyria sent back to Samaria one of the priests who was taken captive to teach them the local deity required from his worshipers. It is in this sense that scholars argue that these new inhabitants could not observe the law of the God of the land in its entirety. Instead, they combined the two types of worship practice, the worship of the God of the Israelites and that of their gods. Purvis commented, “The Samaritans were understood as the descendants of the half-Yahwistic, half-pagan population of Samaria following the Assyrian colonization of northern Palestine in the late eight century B.C.E.” (1968:84).

Another view with respect to this perspective, though closely related, is attributed to Josephus who claims that the Samaritans are originally from a specific ethnic group – the Cuthah,<sup>112</sup> as

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<sup>111</sup> However, despite the biblical anti-Samaritan spirit, recent archaeological studies on the Mount Gerizim have proved the old paradigm of syncretistic religion in the northern kingdom of Israel to be untrue. According to these archaeological studies, just like the southern Kingdom of Judah, Israel continued to worship Yahweh, as Hjelm (2015:188-189) pointed out, “Yahweh worship is testified as part of the religious identity in the north from the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in the Mesha Stele, the inscriptions from both Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud, Samarian Ostraca, Assyrian inscriptions, Persian documents from Wadi el-Daliyeh and Elephantine, inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim, numismatics, seals and phylacteries.”

<sup>112</sup> This kind of interpretation dominated almost the entire scholarship throughout the ages until the Christian era and even very recently. In fact, Albertz (1994:524) commented, “Certainly in the Christian period the characterization of II Kings 17:24ff. was applied by Josephus and then by the rabbis to the Samaritans, as a result of which the rabbis could describe them in a more or less derogatory way, following v. 24, as Cushites, but this already presupposes final exclusion from the Israelite people and comes at the end rather than the beginning of the development”. See also Purvis (1968:85).

Anderson and Giles (2002:14) have adequately summarized it: “Jewish interpretations of the origins of this proto-Samaritan group, beginning with Josephus, initially focus on 2 Kings 17:25-26, which reflects the devastation of the northern kingdom of Israel at the end of the eighth century B.C.E.” In fact, Kartveit argued that Josephus’ interpretation is more than seeing the Samaritans as semi-pagans or a mixed group in the sense of sharing the same background with the southern Israelites (2009:18-19). Instead, “The king of Assyria brought people from Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites” (2 Kgs. 17:24). In short, Ezra-Nehemiah’s writings and Josephus’ accounts, in particular, have favoured this approach and argued that the Samaritans were a group of political immigrants during the Assyrian assault in the Mesopotamian region. For both Ezra-Nehemiah and Josephus, “the Samaritans form an ethnically mixed population whose origin is foreign to the people of Israel; they are syncretistic in their beliefs and opportunistic in their political choices” (Schmidt, 2001:120).

#### **2.4.4. The Historical-Scientific Perspective**

The third perspective is that of modern scholars who approach the biblical texts critically and attempt to reconcile them with available historical and archaeological finds. Rowley, for example, is one among the scholars who have approached this topic from a historical point of view and acknowledged the unquestionable existence of an anti-Samaritan spirit in the biblical text. He argues that it is true that what makes Assyria different and unique from the regional imperial powers before and after them is the practice of relocating their deportees. However, when one comes to the biblical records, it seems like there is “much evidence in the Old Testament itself to show that the vilification of the Samaritan population in the passage referred to is without justification. This is more remarkable since an anti-Samaritan bias has been imposed upon so much of the Old Testament” (Rowley, 1962:209). According to 1 Macc. 15:33, Simon’s act of conquering the outside territories, including Samaria, and forcing the inhabitants to convert to Judaism was a matter of recovering ancestral properties that were once lost in the midst of the nations. For that reason, with reference to the Samaritans, Schmidt (2001:129) commented, “As for the Samaritans, they did not have to be converted; they were Jews.” Moreover, some archaeological finds have proved the fact that the Samaritans considered themselves Israelites. This is the case of two Samaritan inscriptions that were discovered in 1979 from the synagogue of Delos. One inscription is said to be written in Greek and dated between 250 and 175 B.C.E. and the other between 150 and 50 B.C.E. The content of the two inscriptions is summarized by Schmidt (2001:119) as

follows, “The location of these inscriptions close to the synagogue suggests that Jews and Samaritans were settled in the same quarter. But, in calling themselves ‘Israelites’, the Samaritans define themselves as being descendants of Jacob, the ancestor of the 12 tribes of Israel.”

Other scholars have also addressed this topic from a literary approach by analysing some of the literary works from both within and without the Samaritan community. Two articles will be considered in this study namely, by Lourenço (1985) and by Crown (1991). Lourenço, on the one hand, paid a lot of attention to the internal literature of the Samaritan community and stated, “One of the important sources for an understanding of the history of the Samaritans are their writings, either their holy books, this is the case of the Samaritan Pentateuch, or their chronicles and other literary works” (1985:62). He went on to outline at least five beliefs which constitute the Samaritan’s fundamental articles of faith namely: the belief in Yahweh as the only supreme God, and without him there is no other; the belief in Moses, the author of the only inspired word of Yahweh – the Pentateuch; the belief in the law of Yahweh, which can be found only in the Pentateuch of Moses; the belief in Mount Gerizim as their cultic centre and the only place of inspiration of the Samaritan faith; and the belief in the day of vengeance and reward – an article of faith which is said to have been in a significantly late stage in the history of the Samaritans’ religion (1985:66-67). Crown, on the other hand, focused his attention on the outside literature.

First, Crown analysed tannitic texts found in Talmudic Rabbinic literature of the first two centuries C.E. Despite the fact that these texts are of a very late stage in the history of the ancient Samaritan community, and they accommodate different views, Crown remarked, “The view generally pertaining was that the Samaritans were not Jews by origin but that they were to be considered as true proselytes and therefore Jewish” (1991:22). Consequently, when they come to the application of the law, both Jews and Samaritans were given equal treatment and rights, different from those known as gentiles. Crown illustrated this point by referring to the Mishnaic texts which address cases of seduction of both Jewish and Samaritan girls. The law commands that the seducer of either a Jewish or a Samaritan girl pays a fine of fifty shekels to her, “whereas non-Jewish girls are excluded from this law” (1991:22). Second, Crown collected different viewpoints of important individual personalities from both inside and outside the Jewish community. These personalities are Simeon ben Gamaliel, who maintained that both Jews and Samaritans were equally Israelites, whereas his son R. Judah ha-Nasi contradicted his father’s view, claiming that the two

populaces were completely different; Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, in addressing the issue as to how a Roman citizen in Syria-Palestine colonies should pay his/her tribute, was not sure what should be the status of the Samaritans; R. Akiba categorized the Samaritans as Cutheans but legitimate proselytes; lastly, Simeon ben Yohai took Ezra-Nehemiah's approach and insisted that the Samaritans were the people of the land, who did not go through the exilic experience (Crown, 1991:22-23). Lavee (2010) also approached this topic on basis of the internal literature and analysed the Mishnah literature which talks about prayer after meal. This piece of literature is a prayer after a meal in which both Jews and Samaritans alike are included. According to Gruyter, if this is so, that means up to this point, Jews and Samaritans would come together and do things in common. He stated, "This law assumes a common activity of Jews and Samaritans (having meals together), and permits their collaboration for a liturgical activity. It not only implies an actual social contact, but also shared codes of practice and beliefs" (2010:149). Here one notices that both literary works and individual interpretations were not unanimous in their views about the origin and status of Samaritans.

The next approach with regard to this historic-scientific perspective is the genetic analysis. Scientists such as Shen, Lavi, Kivisild, Chou, Sengun, Gefel, Shpirer, Woolf, Hillel, Feldman, and Oefner (2004) conducted a scientific study on the origins of the Samaritans. As a result of this study, these scholars published an article 'Reconstruction of Patrilineages and Matrilineages of Samaritan and Other Israeli Population from Y-Chromosome and Mitochondrial DNA Sequence Variation', where they stated their hypothesis as follows:

Based on the close relationship of the Samaritan haplogroup J six-microsatellite haplotypes with the Cohen modal haplotype, we speculate that the Samaritan M394 Y-chromosome lineages present a subgroup of the original Jewish Cohanim priesthood that did not go into exile when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, but married Assyrian and female exiles relocated from other conquered lands, which was the typical Assyrian policy of obliterate national identities.<sup>113</sup>

Almost a decade later, another study on genetics was conducted by scholars such as Oefner, Holzl, Shen, Shpirer, Gefel, Lavi, Woolf, Coehn, Cinnioglu, Underhill, Rosenberg, Hochrein, Granka, Hillel and Feldman (2013) in which Y-chromosomal microsatellites of 12 Samaritan individuals, 142 Jews from different places such as Ashkenazi, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Cohen and 57 non-Jews also from different places around the world were scientifically analysed. The final result of this study seemed that it was no longer a matter of

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<sup>113</sup> See Shen (2004:257-58).

speculation, but close to certainty, as is stated, “the estimation of genetic distances between the Samaritans and the seven Jewish and three non-Jewish populations from Israel, as well as populations from Africa, Pakistan, Turkey, and Europe, revealed that the Samaritans were closely related to Cohanim. This result supports the position of the Samaritans that they are descendants from the tribes of Israel dating to before the Assyrian exile in 722-720 BCE” (Oefner, 2013:825). Another study on the topic was conducted by Rosenberg and Weitzmen (2013) and, in their article ‘From Generation to Generation: The Genetics of the Jewish Population’, they indicated that they were in complete agreement with the results published by Oefner and his colleagues and substantiated that “Curiously, each of the Samaritan male lineages – with the single exception of the Samaritans’ own Cohen – possesses a distinctive Y-chromosome lineage closely related to the Cohen modal haplotype, the shared genetic lineage found a high frequency in geographical dispersed Jewish males identifying as Cohen descendants” (2014:818-819).

In summary, from the three perspectives addressed so far, one can notice that some views do not agree with each other, while others do agree. This is also the case with different sources that address the same perspective, as Knoppers, in reference to 2 Kings 17, for example, stated well, “The text of 2 Kgs. 17 does not speak with one voice about the ethnic and cultic life in postexilic Samaria” (2013:57). Firstly, within the biblical corpus there is no consensus as to the origins of the Samaritans. While some witnesses insist that, despite some inconsistencies between the two communities, they are from the same origins, others report that the northern community died off or were absorbed without a trace among regional communities during the Assyrian dominion in the Mediterranean region. In this case the actual biblical Samaritan community is different from the biblical northern kingdom of Israel. Secondly, among the historical sources there is also a sense of contradicting views in three categories, namely positive, negative and neutral. Of utmost importance, however, is the fact that two of the three perspectives addressed above, the Samaritan view and the results from the DNA samples, agree with each other concerning the hypothesis that both biblical Samaritans and Judeans share the same ancestral origins, which date back as far as the Southern Levant settlements in Iron Age I (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.). If this is the case, one is tempted to argue that even the biblical witnesses are in accord with this hypothesis in the sense that they speak of a people from one genealogical origin – a Jacobite family. The only caution one needs to be reminded of when dealing with these data is that some (if not all) of them were adjusted into the realities of their contemporary audiences. Now having arrived at



this hypothesis – “The Samaritans are Yahwists as are the Jews of Judea; like them, they received the Torah from Moses, practice circumcision, observe the Sabbath; like them and with them alone among the nations, they are monotheists. Like them, the Samaritans are sons of Israel” (Schmidt, 2001:20) – the quest in the next paragraphs will show how the two communities were related to each other before the complete parting of the ways that did actually take place.

## **2.5. The Relationship between the Samaritans and Judeans from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E. to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century C.E.**

The starting point in addressing this topic is the assumption that all along the two communities have been in continuous relationship and communication with each other (Lourenço, 1985:59). To illustrate this point, the researcher will consider a couple of incidents where the two communities have been in mutual interaction. In 2 Kgs. 17:24-26 one can read the story about the devouring lions. In response to the religious situation of the foreign deportees in the land of the northern kingdom, it reads that God sent lions to kill those deportees because they did not know what Yahweh, the God of the land, required of them (v. 26). The content of the Assyrian king’s response to the situation, “Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires” (v. 27), may lead one to argue that these deportees did not simply refuse to worship the God of that land, but rather they did not know who that God was and how to worship Him. Moreover, from the human perspective, this is where a question arises, “If the Samaritans are non-Israelites, why should this matter?”<sup>114</sup> (Knoppers, 2013:46).

In 2 Kgs. 23:15-20, another episode occurs– King Josiah’s religious reform. Here one reads that King Josiah’s campaign was not limited only to the kingdom of Judah, but also to the northern kingdom of Israel in Samaria, among the non-Israelite settlers. For Knoppers and many other modern biblical scholars, there would be no point for Josiah to bring a reform where there had never previously been any basis.<sup>115</sup> In other words, if the two communities

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<sup>114</sup> In reaction to this kind of incongruence, Anderson and Giles (2002:15) argued that if this incident reflects something that ever happened in the history of ancient Israel, those who were attacked by the lions might be some of the Israelites who had been spared from the horrible devastation by the Assyrian Sargon II. In agreement with this supposition, Knoppers (2013:59) said, “There is some evidence to indicate that vv. 34b-40 refer to Israelites because the text speaks of the exodus and of Yahweh’s covenant with Israel”. In fact, Lourenço (1985:52-53), Margalith (1991:313) and Albertz (1994:525) agree that the group in question here refers to the minority ‘upper class of the city’ who were brought in from Assyria.

<sup>115</sup> Knoppers (2013:40) commented, “Normally, a reform presupposes the existence of an earlier form; but, in this instance, what is the standard the foreigners are supposed to follow?”



did not share anything in common, Josiah's reform in the northern kingdom would not make sense. Another episode (quite similar to this one) is in 2 Chr. 30:1 where King Hezekiah sends a letter to both northern and southern tribes and invites them to come to the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the Lord. Hezekiah was the king of the southern kingdom from 715 B.C.E., seven years after the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom. In his analysis of Jer. 41:4-5, MacDonald (1964:19) commented, "It is possible, of course, that after the fall of Samaria some 'northerners' turned to Jerusalem as the centre of Yahweh worship, as a result of the invitation of King Hezekiah in 726 B.C.E. to join with his people in celebrating the festival of Passover in Jerusalem."<sup>116</sup> If the Assyrian deportation was total and complete, who were Ephraim and Manasseh in this verse?<sup>117</sup> Still with regard to Jeremiah's ministry, in chapter 30 he gives a promise of restoration to both Israel and Judah. This is what he said, "The days are coming, declares the Lord, 'when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess,' says the Lord" (v. 3). After considering some historical and archaeological finds, Knoppers (2013:44), contended that like the Babylonian assault in the southern kingdom, a century later, the Assyrians did not devastate the entire territory of the northern kingdom. Instead, their major focus was the strategic urban places, leaving a significant number of northerners in their respective settlements.<sup>118</sup> In his article 'The Political Background of Zerubbabel's Mission and the Samaritan Schism', Margalith argues that the Assyrians who were brought in to replace the deportees represented only 5% of the total population, and the possible reason why Hezekiah launched the invitation to the northern population was that the other 95% of the entire population "were Israelites with a strong orientation towards Judah" (1991:316).<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> In their article 'Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology' Finkelstein and Silberman (2006:266) argued that in the late eighth and early seventh century B.C.E. half of the population in the southern kingdom of Judah was from the northern kingdom of Israel.

<sup>117</sup> Oefner (2013:827) pointed out, "Since the Samaritans view themselves as the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, it could be that this verse of Chronicles actually implies that King Hezekiah was trying to contact Israelites from Samaria, and that some Samaritans remained in that area after the Assyrian conquest."

<sup>118</sup> Knoppers and Levinson (2007:247) agree that the biblical records, such as 2 Kgs. 17, could be a reflection of what might have happened and, therefore, could be one of the good places to start this type of reconstruction, but they insist that the references in the biblical texts should not be understood as an instant replacement of the northern population.

<sup>119</sup> In agreement with Margalith, with regard to the myth of the total deportation, Hjelm (2015:188) contended, "The Yahweh worshipping population in the ancient Kingdom of Israel/ Bit Humria did not disappear with the Assyrian conquest. Only a small fraction of the population was exiled and only a minor number of foreigners replaced the exiled part of the population."

Moreover, biblical scholars agree that when the southern kingdom of Judah was vandalized, the temple in Jerusalem destroyed and the upper class (including the priests) deported by the Babylonians, Samaria gained high status in both political and religious realms. Albertz, for example, is one of many scholars who argues that during this period the southerners who remained in the land had been attracted to the Yahweh movement in the north, “even though it was affected by the syncretism of an alien upper class” (1994:529), and that seems to be the dominating socio-religious context of 2 Kgs. 17. However, the situation changed when the southern deportees returned from Babylon and started to reconstruct the temple in Jerusalem. Unhappy with the syncretistic situation in Bethel, the majority of the northern population got attracted to the religious innovations brought about by the returnees in Jerusalem, according to Ezra 4. In Neh. 13:28, there is another dispute, at this time between Nehemiah and Sanballat.<sup>120</sup> However, scholars such as Schmidt (2001:114) have suggested that the marriage between Manasseh and Nicaso might have happened at the end of the Persian period, in 332 B.C.E. Even if this is a later event, the fact that Sanballat III, the governor of Samaria, gave his daughter Nicaso in marriage to Manasseh, grandson of Eliashib the high priest of Jerusalem,<sup>121</sup> scholars such as Knoppers (2013:140) and Lourenço (1985:59) have come to the assumption that there might be “some significant contacts among Samaritans and Judeans, particularly among the elite of the two neighbouring provinces.”<sup>122</sup>

It has also been pointed out by both historians and biblical scholars that Judah was not the only home for all who called themselves Judeans. Besides those who had willingly decided to remain in exile, after the Cyrus edict, there were Jewish centres in other places.<sup>123</sup> The marriage between Manasseh and Nicaso resulted not only in the construction of a temple on Gerizim, but also it turned Shechem into a place where priests who did not agree with the rules imposed by those in Jerusalem, took their refuge (Schmidt, 2001:115). Sacchi describes

<sup>120</sup> Lourenço (1985:59-59) pointed out that Sanballat was a family name of Samaritan governors, and there were at least three Samaritan governors with that name. One is Sanballat I, the first to be appointed by the Persian emperor to govern the Samaritan Satrapy. The second is Sanballat II, the son of Hananiah and whose name is recorded in one of the papyri of Wadi-ed-Daliyeh, dated 353 B.C.E. The third is Sanballat III, who governed Samaria during the reign of Darius III and of Alexander the Great. According to Lourenço, it is this Sanballat III whose daughter married Manasseh, and later he built a temple at Gerizim. See also Albertz (1994:528).

<sup>121</sup> See also Purvis (1968:100) and Nodet (1997:124). It is important to mention here that both the biblical record and Josephus’ account about Manasseh marrying Sanballat’s daughter is under dispute among scholars. Sacchi (2000:155) stated, “There is no trace of the episode regarding Manasseh in the Samaritan sources.”

<sup>122</sup> MacDonald (1964:24) noted, “It is often suggested that Sanballat arranged this marriage in order to gain a foothold, political and spiritual, in the affairs of the Judaist community.” See also Albertz (1994:531) and Knoppers (2013:162).

<sup>123</sup> In his comment about the multiplicity of Yahwistic temples, Becking (2011:71) stated, “Although little is known about the actual cultic practices, the presence of these competing Yahwistic temples in the Persian Period might have been a great threat to the identity of Jerusalem as the centre of ‘real Yahwism’.”

the phenomenon as follows, “A Jewish community was consolidated in the North,<sup>124</sup> here, too, under the guide of the Zadokites, which ended up developing its own worship on Mt. Gerizim, near Shechem, and culminating in the construction of a temple analogous and rival to the one in Jerusalem. The temple was surely completed by 328 BCE” (2000:153).

Another well-known Jewish centre is that in Elephantine. Like those in Babylon and Shechem, the Jews in Elephantine were in mutual interaction with their homeland – Jerusalem. It is said that after the destruction of the temple in Elephantine, presumably in 410 B.C.E. (Brosius, 2006:71), the Jewish community in that settlement wanted to reconstruct it. In this process, one of their priests wrote a letter on behalf of the Elephantine community to Yahohanan, the high priest in Jerusalem, to ask for assistance. After waiting for a response for three years, the priest wrote again. At this time, the priests addressed the letter to both governors of Judea and Samaria (Schmidt, 2001:123). Based on these and other correspondences, Knoppers (2013:120) commented, “All the indications from the letters point to regular relations between the leadership in Jerusalem and Samaria.”<sup>125</sup> Another Jewish community is said to be based at Leontopolis, in Lower Egypt, where it functioned until about 73 C.E. (Schmidt, 2001:124).

Lastly, it is important to mention here that even though the two communities – the Judean and the Samaritan – spent most of their lifetime in an antagonistic relationship, both had a sense of commonness until the time their ways parted once and for all. Crown illustrates how the two communities fought together during their struggle against their oppressors. He wrote, “After the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., they tended to participate with the Judeans in the political struggles against the governing powers even though they were moving apart in religious matters” (1991:21). In fact, Sigal (1988:63) based his argument on the fact that because the Samaritans were not able to accommodate the rabbinic traditions in their writings, the parting of the ways might have taken place in the first century C.E. The mention of the parting of the ways leads to the last question – when did it actually take place? Before addressing this question, the similarities and differences between the two communities will briefly be considered

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<sup>124</sup> It is also said that the Shechem community was not only comprised by priests who were involved in intermarriage situations, but also by other Jews who did not want to divorce their foreign wives (MacDonald, 1964:24).

<sup>125</sup> See also Coggins (1975:101).

## **2.6. Similarities and Differences between Judeans and Samaritans**

The assumption is made that both Judean and Samaritan populaces are from the same ancestral origins and, for the last eight centuries B.C.E., and because of that they experienced quite different socio-historical contexts.<sup>126</sup> These various contexts have significantly influenced what each group claims to be and not to be. Scientific studies on the origins and ethnic formation of both Jewish and Samaritan communities have also dominated modern scholarship. For example, Fishberg wrote about ‘The Jews: a Study of Race and Environment’ (1911); Goldschmidt wrote about ‘The Genetics of the Migrant and Isolated Population’ (1963) and Crown edited a book ‘The Samaritans’ (1989). This is to say that it is not the purpose of this study to address the entire scope of the differences and similarities of these two communities, but the researcher will rather limit himself to what is relevant to the present study – the religious aspect, starting with the differences.

### **2.6.1. Differences**

#### **2.6.1.1. Judah against Joseph**

In his outline of several Pentateuchal traditions one which is called ‘Jacob at Shechem’, Noth pointed out the centrality and superiority of Jacob over other patriarchal figures. He wrote “What has been said up to this point still pertains to the prehistory of the theme ‘promise to the patriarchs.’ This emerged as a theme within the Pentateuchal tradition only when the promise of land and posterity was related to the totality of the Israelites who were led out of Egypt and into the dignity of the father of the twelve Israelite tribal ancestors” (1981:81). However, although both parties have maintained the tradition that their ancestral origins start with Abraham until Jacob, they came to a certain point (probably as a result of the division of the united monarchy) that the emphasis shifted to Judah for the Judeans and Joseph for the Samaritans, as indicated above (cf. 2.3.2).

#### **2.6.1.2. Jerusalem against Shiloh/Shechem**

It is indicated in the previous chapter (cf. 1.8.1-2) that, on the one hand, the Judeans believed and claimed that Jerusalem was the chosen place for Yahweh’s name, and on the other hand, the Samaritans fought for Shechem as the place Yahweh chose and showed their forefathers,

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<sup>126</sup> It has been mentioned above (cf. 2.2) that ethnicity is not a natural, fixed and immutable state of a given individual or community, but rather it is “more malleable, affected by the passage of time and change of historical and cultural circumstances” (Pitkänen, 2004:167). In other words, “Both individual and collective identities are seen as fluid; individuals are said to be able to choose them more or less at will and to instrumentalize them opportunistically for themselves, as well as manipulate the identities of others because they either feel a heightened need for cultural identification or seek to pursue specific political mobilization agendas” (Cordell and Wolff, 2010:15).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later on, in the postexilic period and after the foundation of the temple on Gerizim, these places – Jerusalem and Shechem – came to be known as the background of Zion and Gerizim theologies, respectively. MacDonald (1964:330) said, “As the Judaists, in some of their old traditions, hold that the original streams emanating from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2) are located at Mount Zion, so the Samaritans claim for Mount Gerizim, and it is regarded as the very navel of the world.”

### **2.6.1.3. David against Moses**

The Davidic versus Mosaic perspectives gained great vigour after the division of the united monarchy for the Samaritans and during the pre-exilic and exilic periods for the Judeans. It is held that, on the one hand, the exodus experience, under the leadership of Moses, remains vital in the salvation history of the Samaritans. As mentioned above (cf. 2.3.4), the Samaritans portray Moses as the Law giver, that is, God’s Word (the Pentateuch) came to his people through Moses. In fact, in his study “The Samaritans and Judaism”, Purvis (1968:83) wrote, “Of the two surviving branches of the Israelite nation (i.e., the Samaritans themselves and the Jews), only the Samaritans have remained true to the historic Mosaic faith as set forth in the Torah and as established at Shechem under Joshua.” In fact, a close read of Deut. 34:10 in SP will give the impression that the Samaritans regard Moses’s place as unreplaceable. “ולא־קם עוד נביא בישראל כמשה” (Never again will there arise a prophet in Israel like Moses).

In the literary context of this verse, Moses alone was and will always be the prophet of God (Anderson and Giles, 2012:90). Moreover, according to the Samaritans, just like the history of Jesus in the writings of the New Testament, so is the life (birth, mission and death) of Moses. In fact, MacDonald (1964:215) describes the position of Moses in the beliefs of the Samaritans as follows, “The first thing that has to be said in this connection is that such belief is necessary to salvation. ‘No man’, says the Samaritan, ‘can please God unless he believes with all his heart and soul in Moses the servant and Man of God.’” On the other hand, for the Judaists the return from the exile is the highest moment in their history as people of the promise. In his analysis of the prophecies of Haggai and Zachariah, Albertz (1999:453) pointed out, “We may confidently conjecture that the prophecy of Haggai and Zachariah, who with the rebuilding of the temple in different ways announced a restoration of the Davidic monarchy or the rise of Jerusalem to become a world centre ruled by a priest-king, kindled a powerful mood of national excitement.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Margalith (1991:316-17) contended, “Since the bulk of the people of the former kingdom of Israel still lived

#### 2.6.1.4. The Biblical Canon

It needs to be mentioned here that while the Jewish Bible accommodates various categories of literature, such as the Torah, Prophets, Writings, the Samaritans recognized only one category – the Torah. “For the Samaritans”, pointed out Lourenço, “the books of the Pentateuch are the only inspired writings in the Samaritan Canon” (1985:66).

#### 2.6.2. Similarities

##### 2.6.2.1. Yahwism

In the course of this writing, it has repeatedly been indicated that, from a biblical viewpoint, what makes the Israelites a distinct group of people from others in the Ancient Near East is primarily their belief in Yahweh. While it is true that the schism has to do with political affairs, it remains certain that the belief in Yahweh has played and continues to play a great role in this antipathetic relationship until this day. Although the biblical text accuses the Samaritans of syncretism (1 Kgs. 12:25-33; 2 Kgs. 17; Ezra 3; Neh. 13), they have always identified themselves as Yahwists.<sup>128</sup> In fact, one could argue that the reason for this accusation is because of their identification with Yahweh. This is exactly what the prophets did to the Judeans. Their accusation of being Baal and Asherah worshipers was based on the fact that the Judeans were known as Yahwists. In his analysis of King Josiah’s religious reform, Callaway (1999:87) pointed out that, though the Judeans portray themselves as strictly monotheists – only Yahweh worshipers – “What we seem to have here is a grassroots cultic pluralism that inspired periodic religious reforms throughout Israel’s history.” In his article ‘What names teach us about Iron II society in the Land of Israel’, Golub analysed the theophoric elements from both Judah and Samaria and observed that YHWH was the most used in their inscriptions. She stated, “The predominance of יהוה in Judah and יי in Israel and the scant appearance of divine names other than YHWH indicate that YHWH was the leading national deity” (2016:4). In short, though with some shortcomings perhaps because of their socio-historical contexts, both Judeans and Samaritans have an equally strong feeling of being Yahwists.

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in its country and not in exile, the yearnings and messianic hopes of the later prophets for ‘the Return of Israel’ and its joining Judah cannot have referred to a Return from Exile but rather to a ‘return to Zion’, i.e. the political restoration of the Davidic-Solomonic empire.” See also Zsengellr (2010:80-81).

<sup>128</sup> Hjelm discussed briefly this point from an archaeological view point and observed that different inscriptions have witnessed that the Samaritans were Yahweh worshipers: “Yahweh worship is testified as part of the religious identity in the north from the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in the Mesha stele, the inscription from both Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, Samaria Ostraca, Assyrian inscriptions, Persian documents from Wat el-Daliyeh and Elephantine, inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim, numismatics, seals and phylacteries” (2015:188-189). See also Dusek (2012:79).



### 2.6.2.2. Torah (the Pentateuch)

Enough has been said about the Torah of Moses and needs no repeating, but only to highlight here that it is agreed among scholars that the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) should not be viewed as a mere translation, but a version of the Pentateuch in the Hebrew Bible (Flint, 2013:40). Despite all the internal changes that each party inserted into the text for individual purposes, “The fact is that the Samaritans of the first century, *probably even before that*, spoke the same languages as the Judeans, had similar life-styles based on the commandments and moral values of the Pentateuch” (Crown, 1991:21, emphasis added).<sup>129</sup> Charlesworth (2013:xv) summarized these first two similarities as follows, “Other criteria need to be observed. If the Jews are those who worship only in the Jerusalem temple and are defined by Jewish life in Judea (and Lower Galilee), then the Samaritans are not Jews. If the Jews are defined as those who live in the Holy Land, revere the Pentateuch as God’s word and worship him, then the Samaritans should be included. It is best to consider the Samaritans as ‘People of the Book’ who worship ‘The Lord our God.’”

### 2.6.2.3. Priesthood

With regard to this topic, Knoppers (2013:2) wrote, “Although interactions between Jews and Samaritans had become contentious by the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E, the two major groups actually shared much in common... Both claimed... the same priestly tribe originating in the patriarch Levi, and the same priestly pedigree originating in the succession of Aaron, Eleazar, and Phineas.”<sup>130</sup> Based on this priestly commonality, it is reasonable to argue that one of the major concerns of the Deuteronomistic historians about the fact that Jeroboam and the ten northern tribes deserted from Rehoboam’s leadership was that Jeroboam had founded shrines at Bethel and Dan and “appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites” (1 Kgs. 12:13). It is difficult to take this information at face value, as the text does not mention any names of these priests, not even the tribes these newly appointed priests were from. Further, in 2 Kgs. 17 there is a significantly different scenario from that of Jeroboam’s priests. Although the lineage of these priests is unclear, they know how to

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<sup>129</sup> Knoppers (2015:178) summarizes the role of the Torah in maintain the relationship between the two communities as follows, “Each worshiped YHWH the God of their ancestors, the God of the people of Israel. Each spoke the same language and laid claim to the stories about the patriarchs and matriarchs, the exodus, the wilderness journeys, and so forth as basis for corporate identity and instruction. At this stage before additions to the Samaritan Pentateuch and minor changes to the Judean Pentateuch were made, the Torah served, among other things, as a source of fraternal unity to Judeans and Samaritans.”

<sup>130</sup> MacDonald (1964:310) stated, “The Samaritans claim for their priesthood direct and uninterrupted descent from Aaron (ultimately from Adam) through Phinehas and Zadok, and for them the tribe of Levi is dedicated and consecrated for the office of priests.” This is how Ezra’s priesthood is portrayed in Ezra 7:1-5. See also Dusek (2012:83) and Sigal (1988:62-63).



worship Yahweh and are qualified to teach Yahweh's laws to others (vv. 27-28). During the postexilic period one understands that the priests in Samaria, at least from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, were from the same lineage as those in Jerusalem. Neh. 13:28 states the information that Manasseh, the son-in-law of Sanballat, was from the priestly lineage in Jerusalem. It was this Manasseh who became the first high priest of the temple on Mt. Gerizim constructed by his father-in-law, Sanballat (Louenço, 1985:56). If this literary reconstruction is historically reliable, then one can concur with Knoppers (2013:192) who wrote, "There is important agreement among Jewish and Samaritan traditions on the Aaronide management of both the main temple and the dissident temple. Each places an emphasis on the Aaronide priesthood as the only legitimate priesthood in ancient Israel."

#### **2.6.2.4. Sabbath**

While the origins of the whole ideology concerning the Sabbath still remains unknown (Coggins, 1975:133), both the Jews and Samaritans are known as Sabbath observers. One of the commandments in the Torah of Moses, found in both Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs, was the observance of the Sabbath. All Yahweh's people were commanded to do all kinds of work on any other day, except on the Sabbath, for it was a day of absolute rest (Exod. 20:8-10). With regard to the Jewish people, Becking (2011:118) wrote, "In Judaism the observance of the Sabbath is an important identity marker until this day." The same was with the Samaritans, probably with more vigour and conservatism than their counterparts – the Judeans (Coggins, 1975:135).

#### **2.7. The Parting of the Ways**

To the question as to when the actual parting of the ways did take place, scholars have different explanations. This study will consider at least five different schools of thought. First is the Shechem-Shiloh priestly/cultic controversy. Advocates of this school of thought argue that the two communities experienced a schism when Eli deserted the Phineas priesthood, which was originally ordered by Joshua, and founded a new priesthood in Shiloh (Sacchi, 2000:154). The second school of thought is of the opinion that the schism happened when the northern tribes rebelled against Rehoboam and founded their autonomous dynasty. Scholars of this viewpoint based their arguments mainly on the biblical accounts (1 Kgs. 12) and suggest that there is no way to support the previous thought, given the fact that there is no indication that there was any conflict between the priesthood traditions – the Phineas and the Elide. Moreover, when the cultic centre together with the Ark of the Lord was moved from

Shiloh to Jerusalem, there was no indication of any resistance from the northern tribes.<sup>131</sup> In this sense, this school of thought argues that it is only after the division of the united monarchy that the two communities engaged in socio-political and religious conflicts which exist to this day. The third viewpoint supports the hypothesis that the relationship between the two communities ended in 722/1 B.C.E. when the northern kingdom was invaded and its population deported by the Assyrians, according to 2 Kgs. 17. The fourth school of thought approaches the topic from the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy. In other words, the students of this school argue that the schism did not happen until the foundation of the Gerizim Temple (Schmidt, 2001:118) “and more likely in the second century BCE in connection with the destruction of the temple on Gerizim by John Hyrcanus”<sup>132</sup> (Alberty, 1994:524). The fifth school of thought, however, places the schism forward as far as the second century C.E. According to Crown, “It is only in the generation after Judah ha-Nasi, following the Bar Kokhba revolt, that we see the development of anti-Samaritanism in a series of negative statements by the rabbinic teachers culminating in the ruling (bHul 6a) that the Samaritans are unquestionably to be considered as Gentiles” (1991:23). Taking into consideration all these different views, this study assumes that whether the emerging of the two communities is viewed as a result of Eli’s desertion from the Phineas priesthood, or of the rebellion of the ten tribes against Rehoboam (1 Kgs. 12), or as a direct outcome of the Assyrian assault and the subsequent foreigners’ resettlement in the land of Samaria (2 Kgs. 17 and Josephus’ accounts), the parting of the ways between the Samaritan and Judeans communities seems to be a process. Schmidt (2001:116) noted, “The very notion of schism is itself misleading, as it suggests a historiographical model frequently illustrated in the history of Christianity supposing a brutal separation and frontal clash of normative authorities. Far from being brutal, this separation now appears to be progressive.”

## 2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to reconstruct the history of ancient Israel by addressing at least two fundamental aspects: the origins of both biblical Israel and the Samaritan communities and the relationship between the two until their final parting of the ways. In the quest for the origins of Israel, it is pointed out that, from a biblical viewpoint, the Israelites claim to have come from the patriarchal lineage. In other words, they are descendants of Abraham, Isaac

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<sup>131</sup> This affirmation has to be given with a certain level of sensitivity, because the story is only told by one voice, the Jerusalemites, while the Shilohites keep silent.

<sup>132</sup> See also Dusek (2012:4).

and Jacob, and that means their origin goes as far back as the Middle Bronze Age (2000 – 1550 B.C.E.) (Moore and Kelle, 2011:13-14). According to this view, the Israelites became a nation on their way from Egypt to Canaan, under the leadership of Moses.<sup>133</sup> Another view which seems to be fairly supported by both historical and archaeological witnesses approaches the origins of the Israelites from the Iron Age I (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.) context in which the entire region of the Southern Levant experienced serious settlement and unsettlement phenomena. It is during this period that different, yet probably related tribes/clans come together under the belief of one God – Yahweh. These tribes/clans did not achieve the status of statehood until the 10<sup>th</sup> century when David brought both the northern and southern tribes into one kingdom known as the united monarchy of Israel with her capital in Jerusalem. By the death of King Solomon, the united monarchy experienced a serious political crisis and split into two – the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah. Later on, the two kingdoms were invaded. First, it was the northern kingdom in 722/1 BC by the Assyrians and over a century later, in 587/6, the southern kingdom by the Babylonians.

With regard to the origins of the biblical Samaritans, this study has outlined at least three different perspectives. On the one hand, the anti-Samaritan school of thought argues that Samaritanism started at the birth of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was a direct outcome of the division of the Davidic-Solomonic monarchy. First, the origin of the northern kingdom was seen as provoking religious apostasy. The northern kingdom of Israel had abandoned Yahweh, the God of their forefathers. Second, with the establishment of the capital in Samaria, the northern tribes mixed with other ethnic groups and, therefore, they lost their original ethnic identity. Third, when the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom, they exercised complete deportation and replacement. That means from 722/1 B.C.E. onward those in the northern kingdom were not Yahwists by origin/tradition, but people of mixed races who were later taught the law and the deity of the land. On the other hand, both the Samaritan and scientific perspectives have claimed a different approach. While it remains true that the Assyrians practiced deportation and replacement in the northern kingdom of Israel, it has also been argued historically and archaeologically that the deportation was not complete; about 95% of the population remained in the land. Moreover, recent genetic studies

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<sup>133</sup> The fact that the Bible does not claim to be a historical-scientific document, this view has so far received a less support from both historical and archaeological witness. However, there are a few individual sources that support the fact that some of the events such as migratory movements and both trade breakaway of slaves happened during the Middle Bronze.

have demonstrated that the Samaritans are descendants of the tribes of Israel before the Assyrian exile in 722/1 B.C.E. and, therefore, they share the same ancestral origin with the Jewish populace.<sup>134</sup> This approach justifies two key questions. One is about the relationship between the two communities. This study has argued that despite their antagonistic relationships, the two communities had been in constant contact for a good part of their existence until the first century C.E. The other factor has to do with religious identity. More than any other ancient ethnic groups, both Jews and Samaritans claim to be the legitimate Yahwists and the true owners of the Torah of Moses, despite their choice of different centres of Yahweh worship. It is time now to move on to the next chapter – a textual analysis of the crucial issue of the centralization of Yahweh worship according to Deuteronomy 12.

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<sup>134</sup> This ancestry origin should not be seen as that of Abrahamic as advocated by the Biblical narratives. We have indicated above (cf. 2.2.4.4), that the origins of Israel as a community of twelve tribes goes as far back as Late Bronze and Iron ages and not beyond.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEUTERONOMY 12 AND THE PHENOMENON OF CENTRALIZATION OF WORSHIP: LITERARY AND TEXTUAL ANALYSES

#### 3.1. Introduction

The researcher shall introduce this chapter by reiterating the conclusions he arrived at in the previous discussion, with regard to the origin of the Samaritans and their relationship with the Judeans. It has been emphasized that a topic such as this one has to be addressed from an integrated approach, that is, where the historical, textual, theological and synthetic perspectives have to be taken into account. The analysis thus far delivered the following conclusions: Firstly, the northern Samaritans share the same socio-historical and ancestral origins with their counterparts – the southern Judeans. The biblical narratives about the ‘twelve tribes’ and the ‘military conquest’ have no historical basis; they represent late projections by the Deuteronomist historians (Römer, 2007:82). In this case, the origin of Israel has to be addressed from the Mediterranean region context of the Iron Age I (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.), an era in which the entire region experienced general settlements and resettlements. Moreover, the 722/1 B.C.E. Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom did not mean the end of the existence of the northern Israelite community. While it is true that after this horrific incident, many people, especially the upper class of the northern kingdom, were taken captive and, therefore, the whole northern populace lost their political identity as a kingdom,<sup>1</sup> it is also highly certain that the majority of them remained in the land while others fled to different places for their safety.<sup>2</sup> It is on these bases that, ethnically, the Samaritans claim to be, as the Judeans do, the legitimate offspring of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Secondly, from a religious point of view, the Samaritans, like the Judeans, identify themselves as the true Yahwists and the legitimate keepers of the Torah of Moses. Thirdly, modern research has demonstrated that the Samaritans’ claim of common origin, ancestry and religion with the Judeans is based not only on the fact that the two communities have been in

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<sup>1</sup> This is what scholars such as Myers call a “power vacuum” (1965:xx).

<sup>2</sup> Rofé (2002:8), for example, argued that after the devastation of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian army in 722/1 B.C.E., a group of northerners migrated down to the southern kingdom of Judah. This view is supported by other modern scholars such as Stiebing (2003:286) who commented that after the 722/1 B.C.E. incident the population of the southern kingdom of Judah had doubled because of such massive migration of those from the northern kingdom. The same is said to have happened when the southern kingdom was assaulted by the Babylonians. It is argued that the Babylonian army had deported only the elite, and the ordinary people were left in the land.

amicable relationship throughout their lifetime until the second century B.C.E. but also on the results shown in different genetic analyses conducted by various modern scholars in the field. Different articles published in this regard agree on the fact that the Samaritans are genetically closer to the Jews in Israel than those in other places of the globe.

However, despite all these common identities – ancestral, religious and genetic – the two communities are in great disparity when it comes to the issue of the place of Yahweh worship. While the Samaritans refer to Mount Gerizim in Shechem, as the right place of Yahweh worship, the Judeans point to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. As indicated above (cf. 1.8.1.2.), one of the strong reasons for the Samaritans to choose Shechem as the right place of worship is more historically than politically based. In other words, for the Samaritans, Shechem is the home of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was in Shechem that God revealed himself to these patriarchs many centuries before Jerusalem came to be part of the history of the biblical Israelites. In response to their counterpart's claim, the southern Judeans, while recognizing the place of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their traditions, focused on the Davidic dynasty to argue that Shechem has never been a central site of worship, but Jerusalem was. As to how each community was sure of its conviction, it has been argued above that divine revelation was the major indicator; each community looked at how Yahweh revealed Himself in each of these two particular sites of worship through historical events. On the one hand, the Judeans based their choice on Yahweh's intervention in political affairs when David conquered Jerusalem, brought in the Ark of the Covenant, and his son Solomon built the temple. On the other hand, the Samaritans went as far back as to the patriarchal period to argue that Shechem was the first place that their forefathers built altar to Yahweh.

Having given this historical reconstruction, the present chapter will now address the textual and literary issues of the main text – Deuteronomy 12. Given the fact that the book of Deuteronomy is considered to be the pivotal point between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets (Joshua – Kings), a brief overview of its growth and expansion under the influence of Deuteronomistic historians is an important start for the study. Following this will be textual and literary analyses where the researcher will look at textual and grammatical issues of the Hebrew text of both Judean and Samaritan Pentateuchs. Then he will move on to consider other literary issues such as the genre, theme and the structure of Deuteronomy 12, as well as its intertextuality, followed by some concluding remarks in the fourth subsection.

### 3.2. The Book of Deuteronomy and its Growth and Expansion

This topic is not only one of the most debated among modern scholars, but also is known to be the most complex due to the fact that the relationship between the so-called authors of the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic historians is not obvious. In other words, the dividing line between *Urdeuteronomium* and *deuteronomistisch* is not clear, and scholars such as Person (2002:7-8) have pointed out at least two reasons for this unclear distinction. One is that the two strata seem to have mutually influenced each other and, more importantly, such influence seems to have come from both directions. In fact, after highlighting different passages with reference to the Law Code in the book of Deuteronomy, Römer and de Pury (2000:110) wrote, “Very quickly, it becomes clear that some ‘collections’ (on centralization, war, social issues) were closely connected to Deuteronomistic ideology, which presents difficulties for the idea of a possible pre-Deuteronomistic origin.” The other reason is that although the Deuteronomistic and Deuteronomistic redactors seem to represent different perspectives, it is highly possible that they shared the same socio-historical context and had at their disposal, even if not all, a significant number of the same or similar sources of information. Knoppers (1996:344) summarises this point well as follows, “The Deuteronomist is indebted to *Urdeuteronomium* and is perfectly able to enlist *Urdeuteronomium* to commend certain actions. Yet the Deuteronomist is also an independent author, who can subvert the very code he incorporated and cited within his history.” It is probably on these grounds that Person himself has chosen to use only one term – Deuteronomistic – to mean both the early stratum and the late redactions (Person, 2002:7).

Having acknowledged the complexity of this subject, the researcher shall introduce this brief overview by outlining the three major Deuteronomistic models that have dominated this field in the last few decades. One is the so-called Nothian model which advocates the theory of a single historian (Person, 2002:31-32). According to Noth, because of the literary unity, distinctive vocabulary and themes, and smooth transition from one book to another, the books of Deuteronomy – Kings represent a work of one historian who lived in the exilic period and used existing material to write the history of Israel and Judah (Berquist, 2010:3-5; Person, 2007:315-316).<sup>3</sup> The second model is that of a twofold edition proposed by Cross. According to this school of thought, the first edition also known as *Dtr*<sup>1</sup> was written in the pre-exilic period, during Josiah’s reign. The main purpose of the historians who produced this version was to compile the history of the Judean kingdom in general and of Josiah’s reform in

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<sup>3</sup> See also Collins (2004:184); Noll (2007:312-315).



particular. A second edition, called Dtr<sup>2</sup>, was written during the Babylonian exile, and the main focus of the historians responsible for this version was the exilic event and its major consequences, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (Ceresko, 2001:133-134; Person, 2002:2; Collins, 2004:184). The third model is from the Göttingen School, and it advocates the existence of at least three different editorial layers: the historiographic layer (DtrG) by different historians, the prophetic layer (DtrP) by prophets and the nomistic layer (DtrN) by priests/Levites or, if one would use the modern term, teachers of the law.<sup>4</sup> A close look at these models, however, will show that the last two, but more particularly the very last one, seems to take a diachronic approach and, therefore, gives the impression that the whole work of the so-called Deuteronomistic historians was not merely to write a history per se. It was rather to represent a hermeneutical work in response to socio-historical realities. Levinson (1998:4) reckoned, “Deuteronomy was already a complex hermeneutical work from the beginning; it was the composition of authors who consciously reused and reinterpreted earlier texts to propound and justify their program of cultic and legal reform...” This is the approach that the researcher will consider in this overview of the growth and expansion of the earliest version of the book of Deuteronomy, and the text on cult centralization in its present form – Deuteronomy 12 – will be used to illustrate this threefold redaction theory. Before coming to this, it would be important to look briefly at the origin and scope of that document which is identified with the earliest version of the book of Deuteronomy.

### **3.2.1. The Origin and Scope of the Earliest Version of the Book of Deuteronomy**

Because the biblical text was conceived and nurtured in a socio-historical context, as mentioned above, and there is no sufficient extra-biblical data to reconstruct its world, for centuries biblical scholars have approached this topic primarily from a literary viewpoint and argued that both origin and scope of the earliest version of the book of Deuteronomy should be estimated in reference to the ideology of Josiah’s religious reform in 622 B.C.E. also known as the Josianic cult centralization. Römer (2007:50) has summarized this approach as follows, “Early Jewish commentators, as well as Church Fathers, already identified the book mentioned in 2 Kings 22-23 as the book of Deuteronomy, since the acts of Josiah and the ideology of centralization, which sustains his ‘reform’, seem to agree with the prescriptions of the Deuteronomic Law.”<sup>5</sup> While other scholars start with the Josianic reform in order to

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<sup>4</sup> The DtrN layer was assigned to early postexilic period whose editors’ aim was to incorporate the Mosaic traditions found in the first four books of the present Hebrew Bible (Person, 2002:33).

<sup>5</sup> This is probably what Pitkänen (2000:84) meant when he wrote, “As far as the narrative of Dt 12 is concerned, the chapter begins with the central part of Deuteronomy, chapters 12-26, which contain most of the laws of the

determine the earliest version of the book of Deuteronomy, Levinson (1998:9) approached it the other way around. According to him, there is no way one could understand the Josianic reform without connecting it to the book of Deuteronomy. In agreement with other scholars such as Wright (1996:6), Meyers and Rogerson (1997:103) and Hjelm (2015:185), Levinson and Römer moved further to argue that the earliest version of Deuteronomy should not be limited only to chapter 12, which is an explicit expression of the centralization of cult. Instead, it should at least be considered as part of the first draft of chapters 12-26, which represent the central part of the actual book of Deuteronomy. In short, it is commonly agreed upon by the majority of biblical scholars that the scope of the earliest version of the book of Deuteronomy included what is known today as the ‘Law Code’<sup>6</sup> of the present form of the book of Deuteronomy.

Now, with regard to the origins of this early edition of the book of Deuteronomy, like many other Old Testament texts, it is a matter of at least three assumptions. One is the Northern theory. Students of this school of thought base their argument on Deuteronomy 27 (in its present form), a text which commands that an altar should be built on Mount Ebal<sup>7</sup>, and argue that this account is typically a northern tradition (Meyers and Rogerson, 1997:102).<sup>8</sup> Another hypothesis is the so-called collaborative work. It is argued that the first edition of Deuteronomy was neither exclusively a northern nor a southern project, but rather a participatory literary work of both northern and southern communities (Ceresko, 2001:125; Knoppers, 2015:182-183). Lastly, the third theory is that of the southern origin, which supports the hypothesis that this document originated in Jerusalem and, therefore, students of this school identify the ideology of centralization formula in Deuteronomy 12 with the Jerusalem Temple. Schorch (2013:24) stated, “Accordingly, most reconstructions of the literary and religious history of ancient Israel regard the demand for the centralization of worship as originating in Jerusalem, and as referring to Jerusalem from the very beginning.”

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book.” See also Miller (1990:13), Keck (1998:272), Clement (2001:52), Zevit (2009:213-214) and Grisanti (2012:608).

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted here that not all biblical scholars are followers of the law collections hypothesis. Levinson (1998:8) has highlighted two more hypotheses. One suggests that in addition to the law collections, the discovered document included the law covenant in Exodus 34:10-26. The other hypothesis tends to limit the Josianic scroll to cultic matters only in Deuteronomy 12:1-16:17.

<sup>7</sup> It is argued that the originally it was Mount Gerizim, and later it was changed to Mount Ebal (cf. 3.4 below).

<sup>8</sup> The weakness of this hypothesis is that Deuteronomy 27 seems to be the work of the Deuteronomist historians (Meyer and Rogerson, 1997:103-104). In fact, some modern scholars have questioned the relationship between the book of Deuteronomy and the so-called Josiah’s religious reform (Nihan, 2016:256). For more details, see Finkelstein and Silberman (2006:266), Rofé (2002:8), Knight (2011:22) and Hjelm (2015:184).

In addition to this last hypothesis, there is the so-called ‘foundation myth’<sup>9</sup> theory (Römer, 2007:50). According to this theory, it was common in the ancient Near East that when a king or emperor wanted to implement major reforms in his kingdom, he would ask his wise men to go to the national shrine and look for the ancient ‘foundation-stone’ which was hidden by his predecessors.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore suggested that King Hezekiah, influenced by some nationalists, might have used the same model to introduce reform in Judah (Ceresko, 2001:125; Römer, 2007:52-53). Approaching this issue from this perspective, some have argued that instead of a ‘foundation stone’, it was a ‘foundation book’. This last hypothesis and its additional theory of the ‘foundation myth’ seem to be more integral and contextual than the previous two when one considers the possible motives behind the authors/redactors of the earliest version of Deuteronomy.

Levinson (1998:3) stated, “The authors of Deuteronomy sought to implement a far-reaching transformation of religion, law, and social structure that was essentially without cultural precedent.”<sup>11</sup> In this case, one can agree with modern scholars in proposing that the earliest version of Deuteronomy was possibly introduced during Hezekiah’s reign, and its late editions started during Josiah’s jurisdiction, given the assumption that 2 Kings 22-23 is a work of the Deuteronomistic historians (Römer, 2007:69).<sup>12</sup> Having gone through these different and speculative assumptions with regard to the scope and origin of the earliest version of Deuteronomy, the next section is the main heading – the growth and expansion of

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<sup>9</sup> After outlining what he calls five attitudes about this topic, namely the blind acceptance, defended acceptance, unconcerned, dubious, and reflexive rejection, Henige (2008:19) stated his position as follows, “The story of the finding of the ‘book of the law’ in the Temple during the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah of Judah was a post-facto fabrication designed to lend legitimacy to the reforms being carried out at the time or to justify them retrospectively.”

<sup>10</sup> Weinfeld (1972:62) outlined at least four treaty features practiced in the ancient Near East. One of them is the practice of depositing an inscription in the sanctuary. In fact, Niehaus (1992:27) stated, “There is good evidence from the Ancient Near East for this practice of depositing written material in the temples, as well as evidence for their discovery, and the re-use of stock phraseology stimulated by that discovery.” Niehaus went on to give an example of the Assyrian king, Shamshi-Adad I (1814-1782 B.C.E.) who deposited an inscription in the temple of his god, Enlil, hoping that at the time of the temple’s dilapidation and its subsequent renovation by one of his successors, the document would be discovered and rituals would be performed. See also Römer (2007:51-53).

<sup>11</sup> This is also known to be the motives for the expansion of the book of Deuteronomy, which is the work of the Deuteronomist historians and, because of that, it is noted that the distinction between the earliest edition of the book of Deuteronomy and the late editions by the Deuteronomist historians is unclear (Römer, 2007:104-105).

<sup>12</sup> It is argued that to push Deuteronomy 12 and its related texts back to pre-exilic period in general and to Josianic religious reform in particular would be a misrepresentation of their historical context. Gertz, Berlejung, Schmid and Witte (2012) are among other biblical scholars who have found it problematic to estimate the date of Deuteronomy 12, for example, based on the account of Josiah’s reform in 2 King 22-23 simply because, according to them, the narrative in 2 Kings 22-23 seems to prove itself to be part of Deuteronomist history (2012:317). In fact, Römer (2007:161) stated, “The story of book-finding belongs to the last version of this account, which was made during the Persian Period, in order to present the ‘Book’ as a substitute for the temple.”

the book of Deuteronomy under the influence of the Deuteronomistic historians – and the researcher will consider the threefold redaction theory (already mentioned above) which classifies the history of ancient Israel into three major periods: the Assyrian/Pre-exilic, Babylonian/Exilic and the Persian/Postexilic periods.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2.2. Assyrian/Pre-exilic Editions

Starting with the Neo-Assyrian period, the researcher will look at the period between the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/721 B.C.E. and the Babylonian exile in 587/6 B.C.E., and he shall highlight at least three important socio-political implications for the southern kingdom of Judah. When the northern kingdom of Israel finally fell under the Assyrian destruction and its capital city Samaria was besieged in 722/721 B.C.E., King Ahaz of the southern kingdom of Judah and those after him, specially Manasseh (696-642 B.C.E.) and Amon (642-640 B.C.E.) had no choice but to submit themselves and the kingdom to the Assyrians' harsh and brutal treatment, including heavy taxes and tribute, at the same time allow their cultural and religious influences into the Judean society (Römer, 2007:159; Ceresko, 2001:125). This was the only way that these kings could avoid catastrophic destructions of the kingdom of Judah.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, at a certain point (probably before or during Ahaz's reign) Judah was incorporated into the regional economic affairs, which contributed significantly to the kingdom's economic efficiency (Finkelstein and Silberman, 2006:279-280). As has always been the case in the history of human society, such economic growth brought to the Judeans at least one major social consequence – the elite and the rich became the new land owners, leaving the families and the ordinary people without the land and, consequently, in extreme poverty.<sup>15</sup> Römer (2007:70) pointed out, "The traditional system of clan-based and agricultural economics was opposed to a more and more centralized state power."<sup>16</sup> In response to these two innovations was the emergence of a nationalistic

<sup>13</sup> It is important to mention here that there is another theory that supports a four period history of Israel. Collins (2004:183), for example, noted that the school of Noth divides the history of Israel into four major periods: the Mosaic, conquest, judges and monarchy.

<sup>14</sup> Liverani (2003:147) describes some practical actions taken by King Ahaz in order to gain favour before the Assyrians, as follows, "Ahaz went to Damascus to pay Tiglath-Pileser his respect and tribute (ITP, 107-71); on his return he introduced some changes in the layout of the Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs. 16:10-18), in particular abolishing the symbols of royalty to adapt the cult to the new political subservience and its ideological implications."

<sup>15</sup> An additional effect to this one is described as follows, "The state was now fully involved in international trade, diplomacy, and war, which was expensive. Since the major source of wealth was agriculture, the peasants bore the brunt of the new expenses" (Murphy, 2002:28).

<sup>16</sup> This is what Murphy (2002:28) meant when he referred to this as "the breakdown of old tribal divisions and weakened old institutions and social structures that embodied different, more egalitarian values based on tribal autonomy". And Kessler (2008:59) commented about the economic system of ancient Israel as follows: "We need not waste many words explaining that the dominant economic system of pre-state Israel was farming

movement.<sup>17</sup> It is possible that it was this movement that collected the earliest edition of Deuteronomy (D Code) and also motivated King Hezekiah (supposedly 715-686 B.C.E.) and later King Josiah to undertake their respective reforms, using the D Code as a literary tool to claim justice and national identity against those imperialistic oppressive actions. Rogerson (2002:154) pointed out that at that time Judah was still under the Assyrian jurisdiction, and the desire to express independence was done out of loyalty to YHWH found in Deuteronomy 5-26. He reckoned, “It may be that these chapters formulated a treaty between Yahweh and Judah which was meant to replace the vassal treaty that Judah had been forced to make with the Assyria.”<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, still in this period Jerusalem grew from a small town of about ten to twelve acres to a big city of about 150 acres and demographically from a thousand to fifteen thousand inhabitants (Römer, 2007:69-70).<sup>19</sup> Although it is always suggested that this demographic growth was a legitimate outcome of Judah’s integration into the regional economic network, it is also noted that when Samaria was devastated, a big number of people from the southern region of Samaria, more specifically around Bethel, including some personalities from the priestly and scribal circles, took refuge in Jerusalem and settled there permanently.<sup>20</sup> The presence of the northern Israelites was not an easy issue for the Judeans, due to basically one challenging factor – to integrate the northerners into their political system in order to strengthen their kingdom, but doing so carefully in a way that would not compromise the whole political system. Finkelstein and Silberman (2006:269) have summarized it as follows, “The presence of substantial numbers of northern immigrants in Judah – and the new demographic situation it created – must have presented a challenge to the southern leadership and created an urgent need to unite the two segments of the new Judahite society – Judahites

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combined with animal husbandry on site.” If this was the case, how can one justify the loss of the land where everybody depends on agriculture for survival?

<sup>17</sup> Given the assumption that in situation that a king in the ancient Near East was illiterate, his scribes influenced significantly in decision making (Römer, 2007:47), it is argued that if it is true that Josiah became king at the age of eight, his executive board (supposedly comprised of scribes, priests and some members from important families) might have “allowed the kingdom of Judah to aspire to a certain political autonomy, or at least to encourage nationalistic dreams among certain circles” (Römer, 2007:70-71).

<sup>18</sup> Still in this regard, Römer (2007:68) commented, “There was still such overwhelming Assyrian pressure during Hezekiah’s time, that it seems more appropriate to locate the beginning of the Deuteronomistic literature under Josiah, unless one wants to make of the Deuteronomists an ‘underground movement.’” See also Person (2002:24-25).

<sup>19</sup> See also Person (2002:24-25) and Liverani (2003:152).

<sup>20</sup> With reference to this migratory phenomenon, Ceresko argues that it was not only the ordinary people who migrated to the southern kingdom, but also Levites and prophets, such as Jeremiah who claimed to be a descendent of priestly family from the northern kingdom (2001:277).

and Israelites – into a single national entity.” This is probably what Schorch (2011:31) meant when he spoke of de-contextualization and re-contextualization of both northern and southern traditions. In other words, the northern tradition (perhaps the earliest oral or written Deuteronomic narratives) was mingled with the southern tradition (perhaps the oral or written narratives in the books of Samuel and Kings) to form one tradition known today as the Deuteronomistic history (Ceresko, 2001:132).

The creation of one national entity, however, brought about another challenge to the Judeans – should the northerners that were already integrated into the Judean society go back to Bethel and offer their burnt offering or not, as Bethel seemed to be still active even after the destruction of the northern kingdom (Nelson, 2002:148)? Since there was a sense of national identity, it would make more sense if all the citizens went to the national shrine to worship the national deity.<sup>21</sup> This is also shown in Deuteronomy 12. Scholars such as Levinson (1998:28), Nelson (2002:147) and Römer (2007) who advocate a threefold redaction of Deuteronomy 12 suggest that the earliest edition of cult centralization is found in vv. 13-18.<sup>22</sup> According to this assumption, the addressees in these verses seem to be “wealthy landowners who possess slaves and cattle” (Römer 2007:56). The persuasive language implied here – be careful not to sacrifice burnt offering anywhere else but the place the Lord will choose; eat the tithes, freewill offering as well as special gifts in the presence of the Lord and so on (vv. 13-18) – tempts one to propose that one of the purposes of the redactors/collectors was possibly to encourage the northerners to engage only at the national cult site and not Bethel. This is also what Levinson (1998:30) calls ‘rhetorical formulae’ and argues that as it is obvious that at this point the Judeans seem to be familiar with the places they offer sacrifices, this prohibition of sacrificing “in every place you see” (12:13) “erects a rhetorical straw man. It conceals the actual object of concern as something self-evidently to be rejected.” This leads to the next editorial phase.

### **3.2.3. Babylonian/Exilic Editions**

In 587/86 B.C.E. the Babylonians devastated the kingdom of Judah (captured the city, deported the royal court and its elite, and burnt down the temple). This catastrophic incident did not mean a mere destruction of physical properties and relocation of the Judeans from their homeland to a strange land, but rather a complete loss of group identity (Römer,

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<sup>21</sup> It is also suggested that the agenda behind Hezekiah and Josiah’s socio-religious program was to revive the united kingdom of their forefathers David and Solomon (Ceresko, 2001:125).

<sup>22</sup> See also in Richter (2002:58).



2007:111). The kingdom of Judah was left without an administrative system to rule the kingdom and maintain order in the land. However, unlike those who remained in the land, the deportees were not only skilled people (scribes, craftsman, and artisans), but also religiously sound and socio-economically stable. Because they were reasonably skilled and literate, they came to a certain point where they served alongside the Babylonian government as scribes, sages, cupbearers, priests and governors.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in their settlements, they had the opportunity to reason together and talk about their past experience and the future of their identity. To this end, it is pointed out that together with the scribes and priests who had been also exiled, such as Ezra, Jeshua and some prophets, the deportees had instituted their religious centre in Babylon where they collected and interpreted their lost traditions into their contemporary situation (Levin, 2005:96).<sup>24</sup>

Among many other issues which were reflected upon, at least two were prominent. One was about the identity of the deportees in relation to those who remained in the land, and the other was Yahweh's position in relation to the Babylonian deities.<sup>25</sup> With regard to the first point of reflection, it is always pointed out that for the deportees the exilic experience was both an end of an era and the beginning of a new era, an ideology based on the myth of empty land.<sup>26</sup> It was then the responsibility of the Deuteronomistic historians to compile, edit and contextualize the previous traditions about their origin (Ceresko, 2001:132). In this new origin, the land still remains the hub of their history, as Römer (2007:116) pointed out, "The book of Deuteronomy constantly repeats Yahweh's promise to give the land; the book of

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<sup>23</sup> If some of these narratives would be regarded as back projections of historical events in Babylon, one could refer to figures such as Esther who was taken queen by King Xerxes; Daniel (Balteshazzar), Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego) were appointed governors by King Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>24</sup> With regard to the collected material, Person (2002:28) wrote, "As a guild of at least some of these exiled scribes, the Deuteronomic school collected, preserved and redacted the pre-exilic sources that they and others brought to Babylon as well as additional material concerning the period following the destruction of Jerusalem." It is important to mention here that Person uses the term 'Deuteronomic' to mean both earliest version of Deuteronomy and its later editions. According to him, it is not easy to distinguish between the two, since they seem to influence each other simultaneously and reciprocally (2002:7).

<sup>25</sup> In the ancient world it was believed that the victory of one group of people over another depended on how strong or weak their national deity was. In this case, the defeat of the Judeans was interpreted as a direct outcome of the victory of the Babylonian deity over Yahweh. This is clearly seen from Cyrus interpretation when he conquered the Babylonians. He believed that he was chosen by the chief deity, Ahura Mazda, to assume the kingship office, and his political success depended on his positive attitude towards his god (Gerstenberger, 2011:46).

<sup>26</sup> According to this ideology, the deportees were the true and legitimate children of the forefathers (Farisani, 2003:36). These were the ones called to possess the land which had been promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were the ones to go back to Jerusalem and be the kingdom of priests and the holy nation. As to those who were left in the land during the deportation, the argument is based on the hostage relocation assumption. When the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the city, they took all the inhabitants captive and quickly repopulated the land with other subjects from the neighboring nations.



Joshua relates the total conquest of the land, and the final chapters of Kings the loss of the land, which is announced in the Deuteronomistic speeches that structure the whole history.”<sup>27</sup>

Now, if Yahweh had promised the land to His people, and He finally gave it to them, where was He when they lost it?<sup>28</sup> The prophets attempted to address this question and maintained that even though Yahweh’s land was desolate and His people deported, He was still greater and more powerful than all the Babylonian gods and, most importantly, He was still in control of His people’s history. This is probably the function of the narrative about the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17-18.<sup>29</sup> Because Yahweh was still in control, the deportation was an immediate and practical consequence of the people’s disobedience to His statutes and ordinances (Ceresko, 2001:130-131). The prophet cried out, “Therefore, the Lord Almighty says this: ‘Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin’” (Jer. 25:8-9)<sup>30</sup>. However, according to the prophet, the exile was a temporary experience; it was a lesson that the deportees had to learn and, thereafter, Yahweh would take them back to the land He promised to their forefathers, “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from the captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess, says the Lord” (Jer. 30:3). Person (2002:50) suggests that the message of hope is one of the major themes in the exilic period. This theme is also reflected in Deuteronomy 12:8-12 which, according to Römer (2007:61) represents the exilic edition. Verse 9, for example, talks about a resting place prepared for the “generation of the desert” (Römer, 2007:183).<sup>31</sup> According to modern scholars, this hope for a resting place was fulfilled in 1 Kings 8. Although the content of 1 Kings 8 seems to reflect a pre-

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<sup>27</sup> In fact, Rogerson (2002:154) proposes that for the exilic Deuteronomistic historians, the book of Deuteronomy became an introduction to the history of Israel in the books of Joshua – Kings and, in order to make that history legitimate, they had to bring Moses in by adding Deuteronomy 1-4 and 29-30.

<sup>28</sup> The source of this question is summarized by Römer (2007:111) in the following terms, “It was quite logical to explain this situation by the defeat of the national deity Yahweh by the more powerful Babylonian gods.”

<sup>29</sup> However, it has been argued that the narratives about prophets Elijah and Elisha represent a very late insertion, probably “after the Deuteronomistic History split off” (Römer, 2007:183).

<sup>30</sup> This is what Nehemiah (9:43) meant when he prayed after the return to Jerusalem, “Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the warnings you gave them.”

<sup>31</sup> The idea of looking forward to getting into the resting place continues in verse 10. “But you cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around, so that you will live in safety.”

exilic context, from both literary and historical points of view, it is actually either an exilic or a postexilic work of the Deuteronomistic historian (Person, 2002:53). This is the third phase of Israel's history that shall be look at in the next few paragraphs.

#### **3.2.4. Persian/Postexilic Editions**

From what has been identified as the driving motives for the exilic Deuteronomistic redactions – a new beginning – now it becomes the responsibility of the postexilic Deuteronomists to negotiate the identity of this new born community, based primarily on the exclusive worship of Yahweh, the obedience of the Torah and the Temple ideologies, also known as the beginning of Judaism. In 539 B.C.E. the deportees, were freed to go back to their homeland in fulfilment of the prophetic message of hope which was announced in exile. Cyrus, king of Persia, is now the servant of Yahweh, who is called to accomplish this mission. He was commissioned to build a temple for the Lord of heaven at Jerusalem in Judea, as is explicitly stated in 2 Chronicles 36:23 and repeated in Ezra 1:2, “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says, ‘The Lord, God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.’” Cyrus and his successors used their political power to order the Judean exiles to go up to Jerusalem and build the temple. Whether this imperial document, also known as the Cyrus edict is viewed as historically reliable or not, the point this study wants to make here is that the temple ideology stands as an important area of identity negotiation for the postexilic community. On the one hand, the temple plays a significant role in the shift of both political and religious powers from the royal court to the temple people, as Römer (2007:168) commented, “The temple was invested by priestly and lay members of the Golah and became the religious and probably also administrative centre.” At least two preliminary actions were taken in this regard. The first action was the transfer of the provincial capital of Yehud from Mizpah to Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> The second action was the removal of Zerubbabel from the governing office in Judah.<sup>33</sup> If it

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<sup>32</sup> As to the exact time and specific reasons for this transfer, Römer (2007:167) wrote, “We do not know when and why Jerusalem became again the capital of the province of Yehud. It is quite clear that the rebuilding of the temple and other building activities in Jerusalem under Nehemiah reflected its rising importance during the first part of the Persian period.”

<sup>33</sup> From the biblical and extra-biblical sources, it is understood that Zerubbabel was a legitimate descendent of the Davidic lineage and one of the first governors of the Persian province of Yehud. He exercised his leadership at least from the second return to the completion of the building of the temple and, from there on, his name disappeared from the records. Even in narrating how the reconstruction was completed, the editor of Ezra's writings omits Zerubbabel's presence, and maintains that the work was completed by the elders of the Jews under the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 6:14-15). There are, however speculations around Zerubbabel's disappearance in the biblical narratives. Some scholars suggest that he was dismissed by the Persian authorities with the fear that he would start a messianic movement, which would function against the Persian governing principles (Ceresko, 2001:273; Römer, 2007:167). Other scholars suspect that he might have

is true that “The Deuteronomistic criteria for assessing royal conduct are predicated upon pervasive royal supervision and control of worship” (Knoppers, 2001:407),<sup>34</sup> one would expect to hear that Zerubbabel was the leading figure for both the dedication of the temple and the celebration of the Passover. Instead, according to Ezra 6:16-22, both these important cultic events seem to be led by the priests and Levites. On the other hand, the temple became one of the identity boundaries between the returnees and those known as the peoples of the land. Besides that, the writings of Ezra-Nehemiah represent a good example to illustrate this point. This ideology of separation is also evident in Deuteronomy 12:2-7; 29-31. Römer (2007), Levinson (1998) and many other modern scholars have categorized these two portions of Deuteronomy 12 as typically postexilic redaction, mainly because of the “theme of unique sanctuary” and the “ideology of strict separation from the ‘nations’ dwelling in the land” (Römer, 2007:63, 170).

After the reconstruction of the temple for Yahweh in Judea and the worship of Yahweh resumed there, King Artaxerxes, one of Cyrus successors, commissioned Ezra to go and teach the law of God to the returnees, “You are sent by the king and his seven advisors to inquire about Judah in Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand” (Ezra 7:14).<sup>35</sup> The introduction of the Torah in the new community marked the end of the Deuteronomistic and the rise of the priestly school. It should be mentioned here that this phenomenon of one school ending and another one emerging should be looked at from a historical point of view. In normal circumstances, the rise and fall of a given movement is always a process. This is what happened with these two schools. In fact, Römer (2007:179) is of the opinion that whether intentionally or not, the two schools functioned side-by-side for quite a long period of time and in the end they formed one joint school. This happened along with the transition of power from the Davidic monarchy to the Aaronid priestly circle. According to this hypothesis, while the Deuteronomistic historians came up with the history of Israel (Deuteronomy – Kings), which covers the period between Neo-Assyrian to early Persian, the priestly school was responsible for the collection of the traditions that comprise

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died (Margalith, 1991:321).

<sup>34</sup> This is not to suggest that Ezra-Nehemiah’s writings are part of the Deuteronomistic corpus, but it is simply an acknowledgment of the fact that both postexilic historians and Ezra-Nehemiah redactors might have shared the same ideologies.

<sup>35</sup> As to whether the law Ezra took along with him to Jerusalem was the complete Pentateuch or only a portion of it still has no clear and straight-forward answer. What seems to be certain to modern scholars is that it was directly identified with the Pentateuch. “This Law-book has often been identified with a Proto-Pentateuch of a sort and this might well be the case” (Römer, 2007:179). Whatever case it might be, the Torah is said to have shaped the behaviour of the new community, the returnees (Lasor, Hubbard and Bush, 2003:254).

the books of Genesis – Leviticus. Fretheim (1968:314) wrote, “The history which provides the setting for the programme of the Priestly writers is that which extends from the creation to the eve of the entry into the land. This period was no doubt chosen because of the conviction that Israel must return to the real basis of her existence; this period was constitutive for the life of the nation.” In this case, Deuteronomy has a double function. It closes the Pentateuch, at the same time it introduces the DtrH<sup>36</sup> (Ceresko, 2001:277). The two corpuses were brought together and became the work of one joint school called the ‘Deuteronomistic-priestly’ school.<sup>37</sup> According to biblical scholars, this is partly due to “the constitution of a library in Jerusalem during postexilic times and the rise of elite scribal culture specifically dedicated to writings down the most important traditions of Israel” (Knoppers and Levinson, 2007:12).

To summarize, the driving motive for the origin and expansion of the book of Deuteronomy under the influence of the Deuteronomistic historians was to maintain group identity in the context of socio-economic, religious and political circumstances for hopeless and helpless people. The social structure of Judah based on tribal divisions and egalitarian values had been weakened by the Assyrians. As if all this was not enough, the Babylonians came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple and deported the people into exile. The reaction of the Deuteronomistic historians (DtrG) towards these realities was to look at them optimistically and interpret them as an opportunity to write their history. On the one hand, the DtrP emphasized that the exilic experience, in particular, was not only an outcome of Yahweh’s punishment for His people’s disobedience but, most importantly, it was the beginning of a new era.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, DtrN went beyond both the writing of history and the prophetic messages of hope to the very beginning of creation of the world and humanity, to craft the history of creation and to state that the creator was above all the kingdoms on earth. Then the three attitudes were mingled together to constitute the history of Israel whose ultimate means of survival from the exilic period onwards was based on ideology of complete obedience to the Torah of Yahweh, as they exclusively worship Him in

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<sup>36</sup> See also Knight (2011:22).

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted here, however, that the biblical Hebrew text is a veritable “wax nosed” virtual reality, shaped by the speculative hypotheses of any given scholar who happens to be making assertions about its current shape and historical development. This is because there is no concrete evidence with regard to how this alleged joint school worked together, decided differences of opinion, or combined different textual traditions. Therefore, no current theory about the text’s development can be either proven or disproved.

<sup>38</sup> Isaiah 43:18-21 reads “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praises.”

the temple of Jerusalem, the place of rest. Having gone through this overview, the next topic is the textual and literary analyses of Deuteronomy 12 – to look at textual and grammatical issues of the Hebrew text, both the Judean and Samaritan Pentateuchs.

### **3.3. Textual and Literary Analyses of Deuteronomy 12**

The researcher of this study shall start this section by reiterating briefly the objective of this chapter and by stating the approach that will be employed in the analyses that follow. In the first chapter, an effort has been made to state, as clearly as possible, the objective of the present chapter – to identify the differences in wording between the two textual representatives (the Judean and Samaritan Pentateuchs) with regard to the centralization of Yahweh worship, in order to understand the theological significance represented by those different wordings. To accomplish this purpose, it is important that, in this section, this study will address issues related to the composition of the text by raising questions as to how the wording developed in the different readings; what could be the factors that contributed to the development of these differences; and to what extent these different wordings can be attributed to different ideologies. This is due to the fact that, as mentioned repeatedly in this study, the biblical text, although predominantly theological, was conceived and developed, until its authoritative status, in a real socio-historical context. This has been demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter, where the researcher traced the growth and expansion of the book of Deuteronomy under the influence of the Deuteronomistic historians and observed that during its transmission the biblical text was used as a literary tool to address not only relevant religious issues, but also to engage other areas in life of the contemporary historians and their respective audience. Being a literary tool, it may be argued that a careful selection and composition of certain words played a great role. It is in this sense that the following analyses will be limited to textual and grammatical issues. The question as to what version seems to fit better in the big picture of the editorial activity, more particularly of the Persian era onward will be within the scope of this section. The next point undertaken will be the approach that will be employed in the following analyses.

The book of Deuteronomy in particular has been regarded as the most copied and edited book in the Pentateuchal corpus (Callaway, 2011:80), and for centuries this phenomenon has been regarded exclusively as the work of the northern kingdom community; therefore, the SP came to be known as a sectarian reading in relation to the Jewish Pentateuch (Schorch, 2013:4-5; Knoppers, 2013:184). In what follows, the two versions will be compared by bringing them

side-by-side and each verse with its respective translation in English.<sup>39</sup> The comparison will include the whole chapter, but special attention will be given to verses 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 26, 28 and 30, as they seem to be the highlights of the major differences between the two versions.<sup>40</sup> Following this, the differences in wording and/or composition will be identified as represented in each of the two versions and then analysed. After that, there will be a brief explanation of how those differences in wording and/or composition were created in the process of textual transmission.

Verse 1	
MT	<p>אלה החקים והמשפטים אשר תשמרון לעשות בארץ אשר נתן יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך לרשתה כל-הימים אשר-אתם חיים על-האדמה</p> <p>These are the decrees and judgments that you shall observe to do in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers has given you to possess all the days you live in the land.</p>
SP	<p>אלה החקים והמשפטים אשר תשמרו לעשות בארץ אשר נתן יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך לרשתה כל הימים אשר אתם חיים על האדמה</p> <p>These are the decrees and judgments that you shall observe to do in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers has given you to possess all the days you live in the land.</p>

תשמרון [MT] תשמרו [SP] = differ in morphology

<sup>39</sup> The researcher of this study will provide his own translation into English. Otherwise, it will be indicated. It should also be mentioned that for economic purposes, verses that seem to have no difference between the two readings will not be included in the diagrams below.

<sup>40</sup> In the analysis below, terms such as ‘minus’ and ‘plus’ will be employed, and the MT will be the reference text. By minus (<) I mean cases where the wording of the MT is shorter than that of the SP, and by plus (>) the researcher means cases where the wording of the MT is longer than that of the SP. The choice of the MT reading as a reference text is not based on any particular reason. It is rather a deliberate preference of the writer of this study.

Verse 3	
MT	<p>ונתצתם את־מזבחתם ושברתם את־מצבתם ואשריהם תשרפון באש ופסילי אלהיהם תגדעון ואבדתם את־שם מן־המקום ההוא</p> <p>You must break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles with the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.</p>
SP	<p>ונתצתם את מזבחתיהם ושברתם את מצבתיהם ואשריהם תשרפון באש ופסילי אלהיהם תגדעון ואבדתם את שם מן המקום ההוא</p> <p>You must break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles with the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.</p>

מזבחתם [MT] מזבחתיהם [SP] = differ in morphology

מצבתם [MT] מצבתיהם [SP] = differ in morphology

ופסילי [MT] ופסילי [SP] = differ in orthography

Verse 4	
MT	<p>לא־תעשון כן ליהוה אלהיכם</p> <p>You must not serve the Lord your God the same way.</p>
SP	<p>לא תעשו כן ליהוה אלהיכם</p> <p>You must not serve the Lord your God the same way.</p>

תעשון [MT] תעשו [SP] = differ in morphology

Verse 5	
MT	<p>כי אם־אל־המקום אשר־יבחר יהוה אלהיכם מכל־שבטיכם לשום את־שמו שם לשכנו תדרשו ובאת שמה</p> <p>But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name there as his dwelling, and there you must go.</p>



SP	<p>כי אם אל המקום אשר בחר יהוה אלהיכם מכל שבטיכם לשים את שמו שם לשכנו תדרשו ובאתם שמה</p>
	<p>But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God has chosen from all your tribes to put His name there as his dwelling, and there you all must go.</p>

בַּחַר [MT] יבַּחַר [SP] = differ in grammar  
 ↓                      ↓  
 yiqtol                  qatal

לְשׁוֹם [MT] לְשִׁים [SP] = differ in orthography

וּבֵאתָ [MT] וּבֵאתֶם [SP] = differ in grammar  
 ↓                      ↓  
 2 m sg                2 m pl.

Verse 6	
MT	<p>והבאתם שמה עלתיכם וזבחיכם ואת מעשרתיכם ואת תרומתיכם ונדריכם ונדבתיכם ובכרת בקרכם וצאנכם</p>
	<p>And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the gift of your hand, the things you vowed, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.</p>
SP	<p>והבאתם שמה עלתיכם וזבחיכם ואת מעשרתיכם ואת תרומתיכם ונדריכם ונדבתיכם ובכרת בקרכם וצאנכם</p>
	<p>And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your gifts, the things you vowed, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.</p>

יִדְכֶם [MT] > [SP] = plus

תְּרוֹמַת יִדְכֶם [MT] תְּרוֹמֹתֵיכֶם [SP] = differ in content  
 ↙                      ↓  
 f sg cs                f pl cs + 2 m pl suffix

Verse 7	
MT	ואכלתם שם לפני יהוה אלהיכם ושמחתם בכל משלח ידכם אתם ובתיכם אשר ברכך יהוה אלהיך
	And there in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your household shall eat and shall rejoice in all that you put your hand to, which the Lord your God has blessed you.
SP	ואכלתם שם לפני יהוה אלהיכם ושמחתם בכל משלח ידיכם אתם ובתיכם אשר ברכך יהוה אלהיך
	And there in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your household shall eat and shall rejoice in all that you put your hands to, which the Lord your God has blessed you.

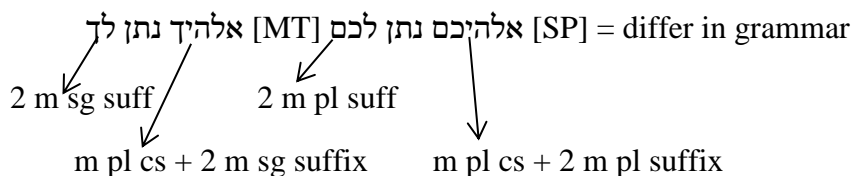
ידיכם [SP] ידיכם [MT] = differ in grammar

f sg cs + 2 m pl suffix      f dual cs + 2 m pl suffix

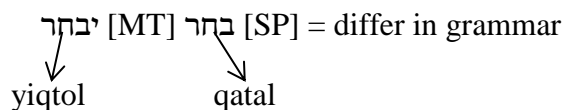
Verse 8	
MT	לא תעשון ככל אשר אנחנו עשים פה היום איש כלהישר בעיניו
	You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit.
SP	לא תעשו ככל אשר אנחנו עשים פה היום איש כל הישר בעיניו
	You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit.

תעשו [SP] תעשון [MT] = differ in morphology

Verse 9	
MT	כי לא־באתם עד־עתה אל־המנוחה ואל־הנחלה אשר־יהוה אלהיך נתן לך
	For you have not yet come to the resting place and to the inheritance which the Lord your God is about to give you.
SP	כי לא באתם עד עתה אל המנוחה ואל הנחלה אשר יהוה אלהיכם נתן לכם
	For you have not yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is about to give you all.



Verse 11	
MT	<p>והיה המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם בו לשכן שמו שם שמה תביאו את כל אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם עלתיכם וזבחיכם מעשרתיכם ותרמת ידכם וכל מבחר נדריכם אשר תדרו ליהוה</p> <p>Then to the place which the Lord your God will choose for the dwelling of his name, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt-offerings, your sacrifices, and your tithes and the gift of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to the Lord.</p>
SP	<p>והיה המקום אשר בחר יהוה אלהיכם בו לשכן את שמו שם שמה תביאו את כל אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם עלתיכם וזבחיכם ומעשרתיכם ותרמתיכם ונדבתיכם וכל מבחר נדריכם אשר תדרו ליהוה</p> <p>Then to the place which the Lord your God has chosen for the dwelling of his name, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and your gifts, and your donations and all your choice vows which you vow to the Lord.</p>

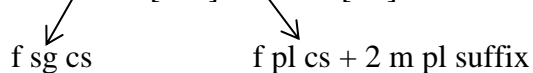


[MT] < את [SP] = minus

[SP] > conjunction [MT] = minus

[MT] > [SP] = plus

ותרמת ידכם [MT] ותרמתיים [SP] = differ in content

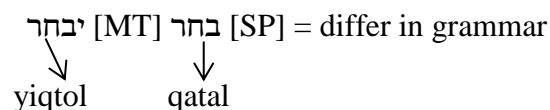


[MT] < ונדבתיכם [SP] = minus

Verse 12	
MT	<p>ושמחתם לפני יהוה אלהיכם אתם ובניכם ובנותיכם ועבדיכם ואמהתיכם והלוי אשר בשעריכם כי אין לו חלק ונחלה אתכם</p> <p>And you shall rejoice in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.</p>
SP	<p>ושמחתם לפני יהוה אלהיכם אתם ובניכם ובנותיכם עבדיכם ואמהתיכם והלוי אשר בשעריכם כי אין לו חלק ונחלה אתכם</p> <p>And you shall rejoice in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your sons, and your daughters, your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.</p>

ועבדיכם [MT] > conjunction [SP] = plus

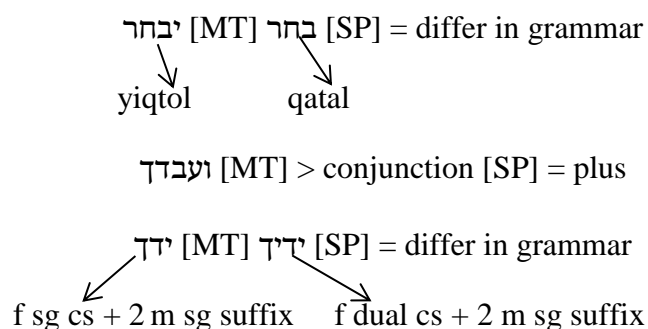
Verse 14	
MT	<p>כי אם־במקום אשר־יבחר יהוה באחד שבטיך שם תעלה עלתיך ושם תעשה כל אשר אנכי מצוה</p> <p>But only in the place which the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall observe all that I command you.</p>
SP	<p>כי אם במקום אשר בחר יהוה באחד שבטיך שם תעלה עלתיך ושם תעשה את כל אשר אנכי מצוה</p> <p>But only in the place which the Lord has chosen in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall observe all that I command you.</p>

יבחר [MT] בחר [SP] = differ in grammar  


[MT] < את [SP] = minus



Verse 18	
MT	<p>כי אס־לפני יהוה אלהיך תאכלנו במקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיך בו אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך והלוי אשר בשעריך ושמחת לפני יהוה אלהיך בכל משלח ידך</p> <p>But you shall eat them in the presence of the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God will choose, you and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you put your hand to.</p>
SP	<p>כי אס־לפני יהוה אלהיך תאכלנו במקום אשר בחר יהוה אלהיך בו אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך והלוי אשר בשעריך ושמחת לפני יהוה אלהיך בכל משלח ידיך</p> <p>But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God has chosen, you and your son, and your daughter, your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite who is within your gates. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all you put your hands to.</p>



Verse 21	
MT	<p>כי־ירחק ממך המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיך לשום שמו שם וזבחת מבקרך ומצאנך אשר נתן יהוה לך כאשר צויתך ואכלת בשעריך בכל אות נפשך</p> <p>If the place which the Lord your God will choose to put His name there is too far from you, you may slaughter any of your herd and of your flock, which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you. And you may eat within your gates whatever you desire.</p>
SP	<p>כי־ירחק ממך המקום אשר בחר יהוה אלהיך לשכן את שמו שם וזבחת מבקרך ומצאנך אשר נתן יהוה לך כאשר צויתך ואכלת בשעריך בכל אות נפשך</p>

	If the place which the Lord your God has chosen for the dwelling of His name is too far from you, you may slaughter any of your herd and of your flock, which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you. And you may eat within your gates whatever your desire.
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יבחר [MT]    בחר [SP] = differ in grammar  
     ↓            ↓  
 yiqtol        qatal

לשום [MT]    לשכן [SP] = different verbs

[MT] < את [SP] = minus

צויתך [MT]    צויתך [SP] = differ in orthography

Verse 22	
MT	אך כאשר יאכל את הצבי ואת האיל כן תאכלנו הטמא והטהור יחדו יאכלנו Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, so you may eat of it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.
SP	אך כאשר יאכל את הצבי ואת האיל כן תאכלנו הטמא בך והטהור יאכלנו יחדו Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, you may eat of it. The unclean among you and the clean shall eat of it.

[MT] < בך [SP] = minus

יחדו יאכלנו [MT] – יאכלנו יחדו [SP] = difference in word order

Verse 26	
MT	רק קדשיך אשר־יהיו לך ונדריך תשא ובאת אל־המקום אשר־יבחר יהוה You shall take only the holy things which you have, and your votive offerings and go to the place which the Lord will choose.
SP	רק קדשיך אשר יהיו לך ונדריך תשא ובאת אל המקום אשר בחר יהוה You shall take only the holy things which you have, and your votive offerings and go to the place which the Lord has chosen.

יבחר [MT]    בחר [SP] = differ in grammar  
     ↓            ↓  
 yiqtol        qatal



Verse 28	
MT	שמר ושמעת את כל־הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך למען ייטב לך ולבניך אחר־ך עד־עולם כי תעשה הטוב והישר בעיני יהוה אלהיך
	Be careful and observe all these words which I am commanding you so that it may go well with you, and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.
SP	שמור ושמעת ועשית את כל הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום למען ייטב לך ולבניך אחר־ך עד עולם כי תעשה הישר והטוב בעיני יהוה אלהיך
	Be careful and observe and do all these words which I am commanding you today, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord your God.

שמר [MT] שמור [SP] = differ in orthography

[MT] < ועשית [SP] = minus

[MT] < היום [SP] = minus

שמר [MT] הישר והטוב [SP] = difference in word order

Verse 29	
MT	כי־יכרית יהוה אלהיך את־הגוים אשר אתה בא־שמה לרשת אותם מפניך וירושת אתם וישבת בארצם
	When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations to whom you are about to come and to dispossess them, and you dispossess them and settle in their land
SP	כי יכרית יהוה אלהיך את הגוים אשר אתה בא שמה לרשת אתם מפניך וירושת אתם וישבת בארצם
	When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations to whom you are about to come and to dispossess them, and you dispossess them and settle in their land

אתם [MT] אתם [SP] = differ in orthography

Verse 30	
MT	<p>השמר לך פן־תִּנְקֹשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵי הַשְּׂמִדִּים מִפְּנֵיךָ וּפְנֵי־תִדְרֹשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר אֵיכָּה יַעֲבֹדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵעֲשֶׂה־כֵּן גַּם־אֲנִי</p> <p>Be careful that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying: “How do these nations serve their gods that I also do likewise.”</p>
SP	<p>השמר לך פן תִּנְקֹשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵי הַשְּׂמִידִים מִפְּנֵיךָ וּפְנֵי תִדְרֹשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר אֵיךְ יַעֲבֹדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵעֲשֶׂה כֵּן גַּם אֲנִי</p> <p>Be careful that you are not ensnared to follow them, after He has destroyed them before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods that I also do likewise.”</p>

[MT] השמדם [SP] השמידם = Differ in stem formation (Niphal versus Hiphil)

[MT] איכה [SP] איך = differ in morphology

Verse 31	
MT	<p>לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָל־תּוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵא עֲשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי גַם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם</p> <p>You must not serve the Lord your God in their way, because in serving their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters with fire to their gods.</p>
SP	<p>לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי אֶת כָּל תּוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵא עֲשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי גַם אֶת בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת בְּנֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם</p> <p>You must not serve the Lord your God in their way, because in serving their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters with fire to their gods.</p>

[MT] < את [SP] = minus

In the comparison of the two versions above, this study has identified at least six categories of textual differences between the two readings. Starting from the least to the most heavily debated category, the researcher shall outline as follows: 1) orthography; 2) morphology; 3) shift of order; 4) pluses and minuses; 5) plural versus singular forms; and 6) qatal versus yiqtol of the verb בחר. Having examined these differences in the diagrams above, he will attempt to explain and evaluate them in the next few paragraphs, according to the same order presented here.

### **3.3.1. Difference in Orthography**

A number of instances with orthographic differences have been identified. One is found in verse 5 and is with regard to the verb put; the place of a waw in the MT, the SP uses a yod. Other instances, in which orthographic differences are found, are in verses 3, 17, 21 and 29. The difference is in reference to the object marker plus suffix. In some of these instances, in the MT the object marker is written with a vowel indicator, while in the SP, it is written without vowel indicator or the other way round.

### **3.3.2. Morphology**

The difference in morphology is found in seven instances. The first instance is right in verse 1, and it is with the verb 'שמר' ("observe"). In the MT, the yiqtol 2 m pl form has a paragogic nun, which is not on the SP reading. Yiqtol verbs are also found in verses 4 and 8. The second and third instances come in verse 3 where the words 'מזבח' and 'מצב' in the MT have the short form of the 3 m pl suffix added to a feminine plural word, while the SP has the long form of the suffix. The last difference of this category is in verse 30 and is with the interrogative "how"; it appears איכה (how) in the MT and איך (how) in the SP. In the past, this type of difference has been regarded as a distinctive linguistic structure between two dialects. In modern languages, for example, one would think of the word "act". In Portuguese, it is spelled differently, according to each variant. The Portuguese community of Portugal spells it "acto" while the Brazilian community omits the 'c' and spells it "ato". The same can be said with the word "honour", which in other English speaking community is spelled differently – "honor" – in this case, without 'u'.

### **3.3.3. Different verbs, Stem formation and Interchange of Word Order**

Another set of differences of great interest is the use of different verbs in verse 21; the use of different stem formations of the same verb in verse 30; and the interchange of order in verse

28. While the MT employs the verb שים (“put”), in verse 21, the SP has the verb שכן (“dwell”) instead. Although the two verbs have the same object, שמו (his name) and semantically seem to have the same function, ideologically they have different implications. In his concept of ‘name phraseology’, for example, Niehaus (1992:20) argued that the phraseology changed according to the contemporary circumstances of the editor. In this case, the ideology behind the ‘dwelling of his name’ represents an earlier version, as it reflects Deuteronomy 12:5, while the ‘putting his name’ suggests to be a later edition which refers explicitly to the Temple of Jerusalem, as it reads in 1 Kings 8:16ff and 9:3. In verse 30, we find another difference. One is the use of different stem formations. In the MT version the verb שמד is rendered in the Niphal (השמדם), which puts the verb in the passive voice, while in the SP is employed in the Hiphil (השמידם) and, consequently, the verb is in the active voice. One thing that needs to be pointed out here is that the two readings intend to communicate the same information but with different emphases. On the one hand, the MT version seems to pay more attention to the consequences endured by the object than on the one who performs the action, while the SP seems to be more interested in the subject rather than the object. The last two differences in this category are the interchange of order. One is found in verse 22 where in MT the word יחדו (“together”) comes before the verb ‘eat’, while in the SP it comes after the verb. The other difference is with reference to the adjectives הטוב and השיר (good and right), in verse 28. The MT reads, תעשה הטוב והשיר (“doing good and right”), while the SP reads, תעשה הישר והטוב (“doing right and good”).

#### 3.3.4. Pluses and minuses

The third category of differences is the pluses and minuses. In verse 11, there are four cases. The first one is a minus of the object marker את in the MT. The second case is ומעשרתיכם, which in the MT reading does not have the conjunction. The third difference is a plus of the construct noun יד (“hand”) and its second person plural suffix כם. A fourth difference is also found in verse 11. In the Samaritan version, it reads, ותרמתיכם ונדבתיכם (“and your contributions, and your donations”). On the other hand, in the Judean reading, it simply renders, ותרמת ידכם (“and the contributions of your hands”). Scholars have addressed this difference taking the MT reading as the starting point and suggesting at least one reason why the expression “of your hand/s” is omitted in the SP. This is probably due to the fact that out

of all instances where this expression occurs in the book of Deuteronomy, namely 12:11, 17, 18; 15:10; 23:21; 28:8, 20, it is only in verse 11 that the SP reading omits it. Accordingly, the one reason might be a matter of simplification or assimilation to synchronise with other similar expressions elsewhere in the book of Deuteronomy “which do not feature ‘hands’ in conjunction with offerings” (McCarthy, 2007:86\*). In verses 12 and 14, there is a plus of the conjunction ו (and) and a minus of an object marker את, respectively. More minuses are found in verses 22 and 28. In verse 22 the MT, omits the expression בך (among you) and, by so doing, the verse remains unclear whether the pure and impure refer to the meat or the people who are supposed to eat the meat. To avoid this ambiguity, both the SP and LXX opted to include this expression “to show that ἀκάθαρτος refers, not to the animals, but to the Israelites”<sup>41</sup> (Wevers, 1995: 219). Lastly, in verse 28, the MT does not have the equivalents for the words ועשית and היום in the SP. The manner in which this omission is represented is not easy to tell whether it is an unintentional or intentional scribal change, since it does not affect the meaning as both “do” and “obey” may carry almost the same meaning. However, if the argument presented by scholars such as McCarthy (2007:89\*) is to be taken into consideration that in the book of Deuteronomy, the use of שמע followed by עשה is very frequent and, therefore, the inclusion of the letter in the SP could be viewed as an “assimilation”, then the possibility of it being an intentional inclusion could be considered. More differences are in reference to conjunctions in verses 17 and 18 which represent a plus in the MT and verses 21 and 31 where the SP comes with an object marker.

### 3.3.5. Singular versus Plural Forms

The fourth type of difference is the use of singular versus plural forms. As shown in the diagram above, in some verses the MT reading employs singular form, while the SP text has the plural. Starting with verse 5, the MT renders the verb בוא (“go”) in the second person singular (ובאת), while the SP has the same verb in the second person plural (ובאתם). In verses 6 and 11, the MT reading has the noun תרומה (“contribution”) in the singular form (תרומה); the SP reading has it in the plural form. On the one hand, in verse 9 of the MT version one reads, אשר־יהוה אלהיך נתן לך (“which the Lord your God gives you”); both pronominal suffix ‘your’ and indirect object ‘you’ are in the singular form. The SP text, on the other hand, reads, אשר יהוה אלהיכם נתן לכם (“which your God gives you”); both pronominal suffix ‘your’

<sup>41</sup> See also McCarthy (2007:87\*).

and indirect object ‘you’ are in the plural form. Moreover, in verse 16 the verb אכל (“eat”) in the MT reading is in the second person plural (תאכלו), while in the SP it is in the second person singular (תאכל). Related to this type of difference is the use of singular form for dual nouns. This is found in verses 6, 7, 11 and 18 where the MT reading presents the noun יד (“hand”) simply in the singular form, while in the SP text it is rendered in the dual form, except in verses 6 and 11 as shown above, where the noun יד is omitted and simply put תרומתיכם (your contributions).

There are at least two different opinions with regard to this difference. Scholars such as Thompson (1974:21-22), argue that despite the fact that the plural form represents an earlier edition while the singular reflects a later edition,<sup>42</sup> these differences have theological implications. According to this perspective, the theology of the plural form seems to be different from the theology of the singular form. Other scholars have approached this difference from the editorial point of view and argued that the use of plural and singular has nothing to do with a particular ideology. This group of scholars have argued that one way of viewing this category of differences from a technical viewpoint, that is, *matres lectionis* (McCarthy, 2004:120), as “the versions fluctuate between sg. and pl. nouns” (McCarthy, 2007:86\*).

### 3.3.6. Qatal versus Yiqtol of the Verb בחר (choose)

Lastly, the fifth difference between the two textual witnesses is the qatal versus yiqtol forms of the verb בחר. It has been repeatedly mentioned in the course of this study that one of the major textual differences between the Jewish and Samaritan versions is found in the centralization formula mostly dominated by the verb בחר “choose”. In the diagrams above one can observe that the Judean reading consistently employs the yiqtol form יבחר (“will choose”), while the Samaritan version has employed the qatal form בחר (“has chosen”). For many centuries this difference stood at the centre of heavy debates among biblical scholars and theologians. The question most frequently asked has been which of the two forms should be considered earlier than the other as far as the centralization formula is concerned, the

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<sup>42</sup> Other scholars have proposed the opposite, they argue that “the original Deuteronomy used the singular, and that the plural was a sign of later accretion” (McConville, 1984:5).

yiqtol form in the Judean version or the qatal form in the Samaritan. In an attempt to address this question, two completely opposing approaches emerged.

### 3.3.6.1. Position 1: The Qatal is More Original

Some scholars are of the opinion that the qatal (בחר) form of the Samaritan version represents the earliest and most authentic form and, therefore, the yiqtol form (יבחר) of the MT remains a secondary reading. Schenker and a few other modern biblical scholars and advocates of this view have observed that the Samaritan reading is supported by some-independent textual witnesses, such as: a) *the Greek manuscripts*: Deuteronomy 12:5, 14:23(22); 14:24(23); in the manuscript number 72 in Wevers edition (a 12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript); 16:2 in number 16 in Wevers' edition (an 11<sup>th</sup> century manuscript); b) *Old Latin Witnesses*: Deuteronomy 16:2; 16:7 in manuscript Lugdunensis 100; 17:10 in a citation of Lucifer of Cagliari, *De Sancto Athanasio*; and c) *Bohairic manuscript*: Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, and 21. Having made this observation, Schenker concluded that the qatal form of the SP is older than the MT version in its yiqtol form.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Schorch (2011:32) summarized Schenker's conclusion as follows, "Adrian Schenker has pointed out in two recent articles that the reading בחר is not only found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, but is attested by some Greek Septuagint manuscripts of the Old Greek text of the Pentateuch. This indicates that the Hebrew Vorlage of the Old Greek translation of Deuteronomy read בחר, and in terms of textual criticism בחר is therefore certainly the original reading, while the Masoretic reading יבחר is secondary, being an ideological and maybe even an anti-Samaritan correction."

Schenker's approach deserves some degree of appreciation due to the fact that it gives other textual witnesses the opportunity to be heard, but when the topic is approached from the big picture, it may prove that the evidence is more complex than this. In their studies, modern scholars such as Barthélemy (2012: 131-132) talk about pluralism and a favoured text and argue that to think of one linear textual form throughout centuries of transmission can be misleading, simply because the biblical texts had several different textual forms which constantly went through literary innovations. In fact, in his discussion about the Masoretic Texts, Tov (1992:22-23) argued that it would be unrealistic to advocate the existence of a single text that served as the archetype of Masoretic Text. This is probably what Schmid

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<sup>43</sup> See also in Schorch (2013:5-7); Gallagher (2014:565), Edenburg and Müller (2015:159) and Nihan, (2016:254-257).



meant when he stated, “The diversity of the textual traditions around the turn of the era can be imagined as something like the current existence of numerous translations of the Bible alongside one another; they are recognizable editions of the same books, but they are not always identical in their wording and arrangement” (2012:20-21). Fernández Marcos (2006) is another scholar who acknowledges this complexity by pointing out what he calls “*imitatio*” phenomenon among ancient scribes. Among other characteristics of this phenomenon, Fernández Marcos observed that the credibility, authenticity and authority of an author/scribe’s work depended on how faithful the author/scribe was to the spirit of the past and not on the words and compositions. He reckoned, “The spirit rather than the letter had to be reproduced, the content had to be transformed into a new, personal composition, and the imitator had to be aware of being in competition with the model in order, if possible, to improve or surpass it” (2006:322). One clear example is Nehemiah 1:9, which reads, “But if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them אל־המקום אשר בחרתי לשכן את־שמי שם (to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name).” Here the redactor seems to preserve the spirit of the past but applies it into his contemporary context. Now the place was no longer a dream; it was a reality. For that reason, he changed the verb בחר from the yiqtol form to qatal.

### 3.3.6.2. Position 2. The Yiqtol is More Original

The other scholars approached the topic from the editorial perspective and argued that the MT form of בחר represents the earliest reading, and the reason why it appears in this form is that “from the Deuteronomist perspective, Jerusalem [in this case, the place the Lord would choose] could not be named since it had not yet been conquered at the time of Moses’ address” (McCarthy, 2007:84\*).<sup>44</sup> According to both Deuteronomic and Deuteronomist historians, the people of Israel are not yet in the Promised Land, and it is Moses addressing the people about their future (Brooke, 2008:79). Even for both the exilic and postexilic Deuteronomist historians, the returning to the ‘once lost and now recovered land’ was a fulfillment of the promise given to the forefathers many centuries before. The mention of Jerusalem and its famous Solomonic Temple was to match with the competitive standard of

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<sup>44</sup> Tov (1992:95) commented, “This reference to an anonymous site in Palestine actually envisioned Jerusalem, but its name could not be mentioned in Deuteronomy since that city had not yet been conquered at the time of Moses’ discourse.” This hypothesis is also seconded by Bultmann. In his Commentary of the book of Deuteronomy in general and chapter 12 in particular, he wrote “Deut. 12 clearly has Jerusalem in view.” (2001:144). See also in Bakon (1998:31).

the contemporary world of the monarchic scribes. Consequently, for these exilic and postexilic historians who desired to reconstruct the history and identity of ancient Israel, Jerusalem was a dream to come true; a future place of rest. Approached this way, the *yiqtol*, rather than the *qatal*, seems to serve well this purpose.

### 3.4. The Factors for the Editorial Changes

If it is assumed that the Pentateuch served as a common tradition for both Judeans and Samaritan until a late stage, probably late Persian and early Hellenistic periods (cf. 1.6 above), the question one may ask is as to how the *qatal* form came to be represent in other textual witnesses, in this case, the SP. Scholars such as Knoppers addressed this topic from a literary point of view and targeted two passages, Deuteronomy 11:26-30 and 27:1-26 which he described as “two directions of public liturgies that bracket the central law collection in Deuteronomy 12:2-26:15” (2015:162). After a thorough analysis, Knoppers agreed with other biblical scholars on the assumption that the tradition recorded in these two passages is typically a northern one. Right before the law code, Moses directs the Israelites to stop in Shechem and conduct a liturgical ceremony. “When the Lord your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, ונתתה את־הברכה על־הר גרזים ואת־הקללה על־הר עיבל (you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curse)” (Deut. 11:29). The same command is repeated at the end of the law code in Deuteronomy 27:12-13 “When you have crossed the Jordan... לברך את־העם על־הר גרזים (on Mount Gerizim to bless the people)... ואלה יעמדו על־הקללה בהר עיבל (and these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse)...” According to Knoppers, the two passages are quite problematic when approached from a literary and thematic point of view. In his analysis of the first passage (Deut. 11:26-30), he observed that it interrupts the natural flow of the entire chapter. According to him, the chapter’s central theme is obedience. The people of Israel must obey the law of the Lord their God as long as they will live in the land. All of a sudden, however, a new theme is introduced – blessing and curse. Here, Moses is casting blessing and curse over the people even though they had not yet entered into the land. Moreover, Moses also commands the Israelites that at their arrival at Shechem they must proclaim this blessing and curse on Mounts Gerizim and Ebal respectively.

Knoppers moved on to analyse the second text (Deut. 27:1-26) and identified almost the same problem as in the previous text. He observed that the chapter had “several sections of uneven

length” (2015:171). In fact, Kartveit (2015:215) has argued that just like Deuteronomy 11:26-30, the text (Deut. 27:1-26) also interrupts the thematic smoothness between chapters 26:16-19 and 28. The central and common idea between these two chapters is about the reward of those who obey the law of the Lord and the punishment of those who disobey the law. But when one comes to chapter 27, the scenario is quite different. The theme about blessing and curse comes again – the Israelites are to bless and curse the people. Moreover, according to Kartveit (2015:211), chapter 27:1-26 is characterized by at least four different redactional layers. This is probably what Knoppers calls ‘sections of uneven length’. The first layer comprises a command given to the people to get large stones, write the laws of the Lord on them, and build an altar with them (vv. 1-8); in the second layer Moses is joined by the priests, and together they tell the people to keep quiet and listen to the words of the Lord (vv. 9-10). In the third layer, Moses is represented by a third person (supposedly the narrator) and commands the people to stand on Mount Gerizim and bless the people and to pronounce the curse from Mount Ebal (vv.11-13), just as it is stated in Deuteronomy 11:26-30. Lastly, in the fourth layer the elders are heard, also represented by the narrator in the third person, uttering the twelve anathemas (vv. 14-26). Having encountered this and other literary and thematic mismatches in both Deuteronomy 11:26-30 and 27:1-26, scholars such as Wenham (1971:117) and Knoppers (2015:169) noted that the two passages might represent a late insertion into an early Deuteronomic text. Now, if this argument is accepted, one can understand and consider Knoppers’ crucial concerns – “the significance of inserting the two passages at strategic points in the larger narrative complex of Deuteronomy...” (2015:177).

As an attempt to address these and other related concerns, scholars have outlined various factors that seem to have contributed to these controversial issues. Hjelm (2015:203-204) based her argument on Deuteronomy 11:29; 12 and 27:12-14, especially where both Jewish and Samaritans Pentateuchs agree on proclaiming blessing and cursing on Gerizim and Ebal respectively, and deduced that neither of the two communities had the right to claim an exclusive ownership of the Pentateuch. With regard to Deuteronomy 12, Hjelm also noticed that neither the MT nor the SP gives a specific name of the site the Lord would choose for the dwelling of His name. In agreement with Hjelm, Knoppers (2015) strongly believes that one should not underestimate the fact that the first five books of the Hebrew Bible – also known as the Torah – belonged to both Jews and Samaritans, although, up to some point, each community received and read them with a different perspective in many respects. For example, the Judeans, on the one hand, read these two passages with the concept that the

ceremony/ritual that the whole community of exodus was ordered to perform in these two mountains was simply inaugural – “a one-time event in the life of Israel” (2015:179), as they enter the land for the first time to possess it. If this was the case, then one could legitimately argue that the *yiqtol* form in the centralization formula of the Judean version made a lot of sense. On the other hand, the Samaritans approached the same texts hermeneutically. The Deuteronomists introduced the so-called law collections with a command to perform a national ceremony on the mountains Gerizim and Ebal. Immediately after this command comes the centralization law, in chapter 12, followed by other religious festivals and social laws, in chapters 13-26. Lastly, they closed this section with the same command for a national ceremony/ritual and the ordinance to erect an altar on the very mount where the national ceremony/ritual of inauguration was to take place. For the Samaritan, this inaugural national ceremony/ritual on Mt Gerizim was, as Knoppers put it, “interpreted as a harbinger of the practice of centralized sacrifice to take place at the same site” (2015:181). Likewise, if the Samaritans understood this command as habitual, to maintain the *yiqtol* form was inappropriate. Consequently, as Tov (1992:95) has rightly stated it in his analysis of the ideological changes in the Hebrew Bible, from the Samaritan point of view, “the future form ‘will choose’ needed to be changed to the past form בחר ‘has chosen’”.

Kartveit (2015) also welcomed this hypothesis, though his argument goes as far as the Persian period and not beyond. For example, he suggested that Deuteronomy 12:1-7, 29-31; Psalms 78 and Nehemiah 1:8-9 should be addressed from early Persian period context. By that time the temple in Gerizim was already erected and was in full operation. This is, according to Kartveit, attested by archaeological finds and inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim. In those inscriptions one gets a clear understanding that the two temples – Gerizim and Jerusalem – were in quite strong opposition to each other (2015:211). With regard to Mt. Ebal in Deuteronomy 27:4, Kartveit argues that the earliest manuscripts read Mt. Gerizim instead of Ebal, as witnessed in other manuscripts such as *Vetus Latina* and Old Greek translations. As to when, how and why Gerizim was removed and replaced with Ebal, Kartveit asserted, “As long as no sanctuary stood on Mount Gerizim, the scribes behind Deuteronomy could leave the mountains and the altar on Mount Gerizim as they were in the text, but in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. when an altar was actually built upon Mount Gerizim, Gerizim was changed into Ebal, which associated the altar with the curse” (2015:217). Schorch (2011) thinks the approximate date of actual changes is around second half of the second century B.C.E., a period in which exegetical studies on centralization of

worship had a very high level of interest among both Judean and Samaritan communities. The outcome of these exegetical studies was that for the Judeans the unidentified place in Deuteronomy 12 came to be revealed as the city of Jerusalem and its temple, as attested in 4QMMT,<sup>45</sup> but for the Samaritans it was the city of Shechem and its temple on Mt. Gerizim (2011:35).

In short, in this section the researcher has identified at least six categories of differences between the two readings – the MT and the SP. The first is the orthographic difference which seems to be a matter of language dynamics. The second is morphological difference. The third category consists of differences in verbal forms and word order. The fourth comprises pluses and minuses. The fifth is about the change from singular to plural and vice-versa. While some scholars regard this as an ideological issue, others approach it as simply a change without ideological implications. Finally, the fifth difference is between the qatal and yiqtol of the verb בָּחַר and is noted that it represents an intentional scribal ideological change due to different views with regard to the place of worship. Approached from the editorial perspective, different verbal forms seem to fit well in the exilic and postexilic contexts of both Judeans and Samaritan communities.

### **3.5. Other Literary Issues in Deuteronomy 12**

Having given these analyses, the researcher shall now turn to other literary issues such as genre, theme, structure and internal coherence of Deuteronomy 12. These issues need to be addressed because, like any other Biblical Hebrew text, Deuteronomy 12, in its present form, is not only an ancient text, but it is also an artistic work. This is probably why modern scholars such as Jonker and Lawrie (2005) have advocated greater literary consciousness among biblical scholars and exegetes, as they strongly believe that the knowledge of the way in which the language is deployed by the biblical authors is one of the keys “to achieve a variety of ‘meaning effects’” (2006:237). This is the search in the following paragraphs.

#### **3.5.1. Genre**

The place of departure in this inquiry is the first verse where the author/editor introduces the chapter with the statement אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁבָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ (“These are the statutes and judgements which you shall observe to do in the land”). Scholars have argued that this verse not only introduces chapter 12 but also the entire section of the law code –

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<sup>45</sup> For more about how highly and spiritually regarded the city and the temple of Jerusalem have been even after the destruction of the Second Temple, read the Talmudic statement in Bakon (1998:32-33).

chapters 12-26 (Rogerson, 2002:158-159). For instance, Gertz, Berlejung, Schmid and Witte (2012:321) noted that the whole section (Deut. 12-26) features judicial terminology. Whatever the case, because these terms החקים (“statutes”) and המשבטים (“judgements”) appear right at the beginning of chapter 12 in particular and chapters 12-26 in general, the aim of this section is to look at their meaning from the viewpoint of both ancient and modern societies. On the one hand, in modern society these terms have mainly to do with a written legislation created by a sovereign authority, expecting absolute obedience from their subjects.<sup>46</sup> The author/editor of Deuteronomy 12 stated it clearly that his audience should observe/obey these החקים (“statutes”) and המשבטים (“judgements”) in the land they were about to possess, as Grisanti (2012:611) asserted, “Moses exhorts God’s covenantal nation to obey wholeheartedly Yahweh’s covenantal stipulations.” In the following verses (2-31) the author outlines some of those statutes and judgements that the audience is supposed to obey. In short, in modern society these terms carry the connotation of legal laws and regulations of which, in normal circumstances, are to be obeyed.

On the other hand, given the fact that Deuteronomy 12, like any other Hebrew Scriptures, is not just a literary work but is also an ancient text, one is faced with the challenge of looking at these two terms (החקים and המשבטים) differently. In other words, the question should be asked as to what ancient authors meant when they used these terms in their communication, and how their intended audience understood them. Recently, Leach (2015:2-6) wrote an article in which he analysed what he called the eight legal terms in the Hebrew Bible of which החקים and המשבטים are included. The first question he addressed with regard to these legal terms is about their contextual meaning. According to him, החקים “is the revelation of God’s authority and of the permanent provisions which he has made for his people to give them life and enable them to live in covenantal relationship with himself”, and המשבטים “is the revelation of God’s justice, his judgements and his just laws on which his people depend for their deliverance, vindication, protection and hope”. At the end of his definitions, Leach

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<sup>46</sup> Gertz, Berlejung, Schmid and Witte (2012:312) have pointed out that the terminology in Deuteronomy 12-26 has judicial features. However, while admitting the existence of these features, Biddle (2003:202) disagrees with the assertion that these collections should be called law code. He stated, “The title ‘Deuteronomic Code’ implies an inaccurate categorization of the nature of this collection. In modern societies, law codes, enacted in democratic societies by legislatures, seek as far as possible to completely delimit and regulate civil interactions among citizens (i.e., contract law or family law) or to proscribe criminal behavior and provide for penalties against infringements.”

argues that these two and other related terms come under the umbrella of the main legal term known as torah which, according to him, “is the revelation of God’s covenant; his calling of a people to be united with himself”.<sup>47</sup> In other words, this תורה should not be understood as a law code in the real sense of the word. Rather, “It should be regarded as instruction in the sense of hortatory or parenetic material, ‘preached law’ as it is often termed” (Biddle, 2003:203),<sup>48</sup> which brings God and his people into good harmony. This is probably why Thompson calls the torah a comfortable home and not a strange land for God’s people (1974:24).<sup>49</sup> In short, if these two terms החקים and המשבטים were to introduce a series of both religious and social instructions in a given society, then one could propose that the predominant genre in Deuteronomy 12, in its larger literary context, is divine instructions or exhortations and not law code in the modern sense of the word. This leads to the central theme of the chapter.

### 3.5.2. Central Theme

As mentioned previously, from a narrative point of view, Deuteronomy 12 is known as the beginning of the Deuteronomic law code or divine instructions, which includes chapters 12-26 and, because it is exclusively about ‘worship of Yahweh alone’ at המקום (“the place”) he will choose/has chosen, this chapter is known as one of the main texts of cult centralization in the Hebrew Scriptures. In his commentary on the book of Deuteronomy, Blenkinsopp (1968:110) identified as the heading of chapter 12:1-14 as “The Place of Worship”. In his outline of what he understood to be the “Central Law Code”, Clements called Deuteronomy 12:1-32 “The Law of the Central Sanctuary” (1989:23). In his analysis of Deuteronomy 12, Vogt (2006:160) stated that it is in this chapter of the book that cult centralization is explicitly commanded. Niehaus (1992:3) and Römer (2007:3) have also noted that for many decades Deuteronomy 12 has always been attached directly to the ideology of centralization of worship due to the fact that almost the entire chapter is devoted to המקום (“the place”) where

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<sup>47</sup> In fact, modern scholars have addressed this topic from the literary point of view of the word תורה (Torah/torah) which seems to be an inclusive term as far as legislation in the biblical sense is concerned, and came to a consensus that it can mean either law or the first five books of the Hebrew Bible known as the Pentateuch. For example, to differentiate the two, Cook (2015:4) preferred to write with ‘T’ (Torah) to mean the Pentateuch and with ‘t’ (torah) to refer instructions/teachings.

<sup>48</sup> Clements, a decade before Biddle published his book, had come to the same conclusion, when he wrote, “In many ways it is this strong homiletical and admonitory material that is most typical of Deuteronomy” (1989:34). In relation to chapter 12, Pitkänen (2000:85) supported this way of reading when he wrote, “Seeing Deuteronomy 12 as didactic fits well with the rest of the book of Deuteronomy.” See also Schaper (2013:120).

<sup>49</sup> See also Keck (1998:278; 378), Miller (1990:12), Christensen (2001:vii), Biddle (2003:202) and Cook (2015:5).



the people of Israel should go and worship Yahweh.<sup>50</sup> In agreement with the above mentioned and other modern biblical scholars, Pitkänen included in his doctoral thesis a topic on cult centralization and chose to focus on Deuteronomy 12. According to him, it “contains the most explicit injunctions for the centralization of sacrifices” (2000:84). Moreover, Knoppers (2013:194) whose work focuses on the reconstruction of the history of both Jews and Samaritans, stated, “The Deuteronomic laws of centralization mandate both cultic unity, involving only one sacred site, and cultic purity throughout the entire land (Deut. 12:1-13:1).” There are three more scholarly references. One is found in Arnold’s article in response to Greenspahn’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 12.<sup>51</sup> After a significant critique of Greenspahn’s conclusions, Arnold (2014:244) contended, “No convincing evidence has been presented against the interpretation of Deuteronomy 12 as establishing a central sanctuary, while the cumulative evidence tends to support it.” At the end of his detailed analysis of Deuteronomy 12, Cook wrote, “Deuteronomy 12 associates yet more themes with its command limiting Israel to one sanctuary.” (2015:115). Lastly, Nihan significantly discussed this topic from the point of view of the Chronicles and, in the introductory part of his discussion, he contended, “Since the nineteenth century, the discussion of cult centralization in the Torah as long been focused primarily – at times even exclusively – on the book of Deuteronomy, specifically the law of Deut. 12 and related passages” (2016:253). In short, one could probably come up with a different theme, but here this study maintains the hypothesis that centralization of worship at ‘the place Yahweh will choose/has chosen’ represents the central theme of Deuteronomy 12. Now the question is how the final redactor(s) structured the chapter.

### 3.5.3. Structure and Internal Coherence

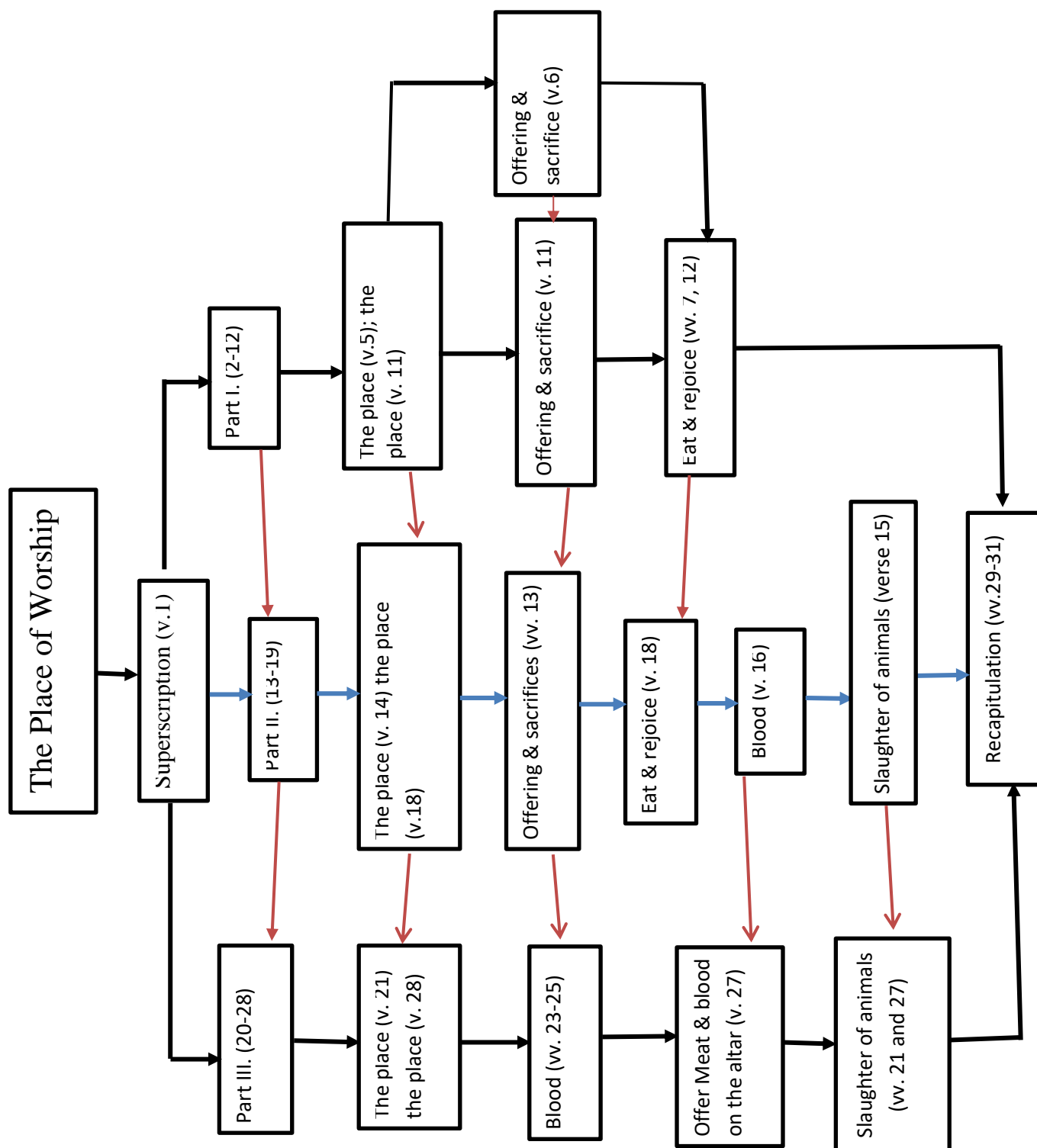
Outlining the structure and internal coherence of this chapter is not an easy task due to two main factors. One, like any Old Testament text, the chapter has experienced heavy editorial activity, each editor representing his own textual, contextual and ideological intentions. It has been noted above that the supposedly old layer (vv. 13-18) is sandwiched by two significantly later layers, 20-29 and 2-12 respectively. The second factor is in regards to the

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<sup>50</sup> In fact, two decades earlier, Wenham (1971:103) had stated, “For nearly a century it has been almost axiomatic to hold that Deuteronomy demands centralization of all worship at a single sanctuary, and therefore its composition must be associated with Josiah’s attempt to limit all worship to Jerusalem.”

<sup>51</sup> In his article on Deuteronomy and centralization, Greenspahn argued that Deuteronomy 12 does not limit worship to a single place, as he reckoned, “As for the contrastive tone of Deuteronomy 12:5 and 14, that could be directed at what were considered inauthentic shrines rather than requiring allegiance to only one *place of worship*” (2014:231, italics added).

influence of the final editor of the present form of the chapter. In other words, it is not by accident that the chapter is located where it presently is in the book. The final editor might have had a strong reason for positioning it between chapters 1-11 and 13-26. Because of these two factors, the survey will be based on the present form of the chapter taking into account its predominant genre, as described above. In this analysis it will be argued that the structure of Deuteronomy 12 is very much influenced by threefold editorial activity and, therefore, classify it into three parts, namely 2-12; 13-19 and 20-28. These three sections are sandwiched by what Clements (2001:55-57) would call superscription and recapitulation, verses 1 and 29-31 respectively. With regard to the internal coherence, the researcher will identify four topics, namely offerings and sacrifices, eating and rejoicing, slaughtering of animals and the blood throughout the chapter, and all of them are related to the theme of worship. Moreover, each of these four elements is repeated and, to some extent, elaborated as the editor moved from the first to the last section of the chapter. The researcher shall first summarize this as follows:



Deuteronomy 12 is introduced by a superscription which starts with a presentation of what will come next, “These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess – as long as you live in the land” (v. 1). This verse has been addressed above and, therefore, the study will not repeat the discussion. However, it should be pointed out here that biblical scholars have often argued

that the verse plays a significant role in connecting the two units of the book – the general stipulation and the law code (this point is developed below under the heading of intertextuality). Now the study shall move on to the three parts of the chapter, starting with the first one (vv. 2-12). As mentioned above, this section represents the postexilic ideology of group identity, and the major issue is about the place of Yahweh worship. Should the returnees join the “עַם־הָאָרֶץ” (“people of the land”)<sup>52</sup> in their places of worship, or should they not? Regardless of whether those people of the land were Yahweh worshipers or not, the answer is clear and straight forward. No, they should not join them, as in verse 4 it reads, **לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּן כֵּן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** (“You must not serve the Lord your God in their way”). This prohibition is clearly repeated in verse 8, which reads, **אֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים פֹּה הַיּוֹם אִישׁ כַּל־הַיֶּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו**, **לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן כַּכֵּל אֲשֶׁר** (“You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit”). Instead, the Israelites were to seek the **הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** (“the place the Lord your God will choose”). As shown in the diagram above, this phrase is repeated six times; two times in each part, verses 5 and 11; 14 and 18; 21 and 28. It is made clear throughout the chapter that there was an exclusive place, whether known or unknown, where the returnees were supposed to go, as it reads **“וּבֵאת שָׁמָּה”** (“there you must go”), supposedly to worship Yahweh.

As part of worship, offerings and sacrifices became the first component. This component is repeated four times, running from the first part down to the last section (vv. 6, 11, 13 and 27). Most importantly, as these people present their offering and sacrifices, they are to eat and rejoice before Yahweh. This is the second component of worship. In fact, it seems like according to the editor, the ultimate aim of bringing offerings, sacrifices and other types of gifts to the place of worship is not to make the king happy. Rather, it is for the benefit of the giver and his entire household. Reeder (2012:19) summarized this ideological shift as follows:

At the heart of Deuteronomy’s vision for Israelite identity lies the family. Households are the epicentre of the covenant, the arenas in which Israel’s national identity is instituted and taught. The members of a household speak about the law and worship together. Their interrelationships are a living metaphor for the relationship between

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<sup>52</sup> In his analysis of this section of this chapter, Monedeeep (2015:249) noted, “The role of Israelites is now reversed. From the position of victim they were now gaining the position of social domination. The cultural destruction was to politically subdue others.”

God the Father and the people of Israel, God's children. In its historical particularity and theological significance, Deuteronomy's Israelite family is the embodiment of Israel, the people of Yahweh.

In other words, unlike in the monarchic system where taxes and special offerings were exclusively for the royal household and imperial services, now they are for both the contributor and those taking care of the temple. The paradigm shift here is that from the literary point of view, the givers are no longer mere contributors but Yahweh's children. Knoppers (2001:405) commented, "If any one qualifies for the exalted metaphor 'son of God' in Deuteronomy, it is Israel, not the king. The determination that a king should oversee and maintain worship, caring for its sacred places, festivals, rites, holdings, and personnel, is absent from Deuteronomy." The third component of worship that brings this chapter together is blood. It is introduced in the second section of the chapter (v. 16) and repeated in the third part (vv. 23-25). According to the final editor, the blood of the animal, whether for sacrifice or food, represents life, and no one is permitted to eat it. Monedee (2015:250) commented, "They were not to consume blood as food, as a sign of deep respect for life; perhaps as seed-of-life it was owned by God." In both places where blood is mentioned, the instruction is that it has to be poured out on the ground like water (vv. 16, 24). One more component related to the last one is the slaughter of animals whether for sacrifice or for family food. It is first mentioned in verse 15 and repeated in verse 21. In both places the slaughter of animals for food is allowed to be done at any place. However, verse 27 restricts the slaughter of sacrificial animals only and exclusively at the place the Lord would choose/has chosen. The reason for this exclusiveness is that the blood had to be poured besides the altar of the Lord. Lastly, the chapter is closed with a recapitulation (vv. 29-31). The heart of this closing part is found in verse 31a which seems to be a repetition of verse 4. לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כֵן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ("you must not worship the Lord your God the same way"). Why not to serve the Lord in those ways? The answer is כִּי כָל־תּוֹעֵבֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵא עָשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם ("because in worshipping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord your God hates"). What are those detestable things? גַּם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ ("they even burn their sons and daughters with the fire"). In fact, this is what is seen in the biblical texts about some of the kings of Judah. In 2 Kings 16:1-4 and 2 Chronicles 33:6 it is reported that both Kings Ahaz and Manasseh of the kingdom of Judah sacrificed their sons in the fire, just like other nations did. This practice is explicitly identified as detestable to the Lord. In short, although

Deuteronomy 12 is represented by at least three different layers, the final editor has crafted it in a reasonably coherent manner by distributing all the key concepts throughout the chapter.

### **3.6. Intertextuality of Deuteronomy 12**

As mentioned above, the book of Deuteronomy is one of the most edited books in the Hebrew Bible. Besides that, the idea of one single author has to be revised and, if possible, abandoned, because the different editors represent different socio-historical contexts and, therefore, they definitely had different ideological agendas. This is one of the reasons why, like many other modern scholars, Cook (2015) found it difficult to discern the literary structure of the book of Deuteronomy, as he wrote, “Discerning the details of Deuteronomy’s literary organization is not a simple task... Even more difficult, a long literary history and an interplay of perspectives have added complexity to the book’s structure. Editors of Deuteronomy have surely worked artfully to produce the book’s final form, but the subtle intricacies of their work do not always come into focus easy” (2015:15). It is with the acknowledgment of this complexity that this study will attempt to address this topic.

#### **3.6.1. Deuteronomy 12 in relation to Deuteronomy 1-11**

Deuteronomy 1-11 is known as the prologue of the book of Deuteronomy, and biblical scholars have categorized these eleven chapters into two parts. The first part includes the first three chapters and is called historical prologue; the second part is comprised of the next eight chapters and is identified as stipulation of basic laws (Dillard and Longman, 1994:99; Gertz, Berlejung, Schmid and Witte, 2012:306-307). A close reading of these three chapters, also known as the prologue, will show that they represent a summary of the journey and life of the Israelites through the wilderness. In fact, Harman (2001:8) and Brettler (2005:85) noted that the opening of the book of Deuteronomy is a reflection of the past; it is a repetition of what is already recorded in the previous books. This is what Brueggemann meant when he wrote, “Deuteronomy looks both backward to *rootage* and forward to *crisis* and interprets at the precise place where *rootage* and *crisis* intersect” (2001:22). To give a few examples, the account about the appointing of leaders in 1:9-18 reflects the one in Exodus 18; the account about the sending of spies in 1:19-25 is found in Numbers 13; the rebellion against the Lord in 1:26-46 is also found in Numbers 14; the forbidding of Moses to enter the promised land in 1:37-40 resembles Numbers 20:1-12; and the story about the defeat of Og, King of Bashan, in 3:1-11 is found in the book of Numbers 21:21-35. This is to say, the information found in these three chapters represents a late insertion by the editors. Now if this is true, the question

remains as to why the editors decided to introduce the book by bringing in old traditions. Although this is not an easy question due to the fact that, like any other Old Testament writings, it needs significant socio-historical and literary reconstructions, Brettler (2005:85) has proposed one sound historical and literary answer – authentication or legitimization of the book.

On the one hand, the editors wanted to authenticate the book in relation to its authorship. In the first 5 verses of the first chapter, it says, “These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the desert east of the Jordan ... East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law saying” (1:1-5). This is a voice of the narrator who is about to relate something that somebody, in this case Moses, said and/or did in the past. The first impression a reader of these and other related passages might have is that Moses is the authentic author of the book of Deuteronomy. The insertion of the voice of Moses in this book by the editors was not an accident; it was a result of recognition of the place of Moses in the biblical traditions. Cook (2015:6) commented, “This voice of the book, this stamp of Mosaic authorization, is of real theological significance.” From early ages of Israel’s religion up to this day, Moses is known as the law giver and the father of Israelite’s religion (Bright, 1980:96).<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the legitimization of the book of Deuteronomy has to do with its relationship to the preceding traditions in the books of Genesis - Numbers. Looked at from this perspective, the book of Deuteronomy becomes an integral part of the Pentateuchal corpus. Levinson (1998) summarizes the reason for this phenomenon as follows, “Very likely, even the voicing of Deuteronomy – its attribution to Moses – points to the attempt by the text’s authors to lend legitimacy to their innovations. The voice of the text belies its belatedness. By means of it, the text’s authors purchased a pedigree – both an antiquity and an authority – that the text properly lacked” (1998:6). Having said this, the study moves to the second section of this part – chapters 4-11.

A careful reading of this section will also show that its predominant theme is obedience to החקים and המשבטים (“statutes” and “judgments”) that God gave to Moses to pass to the Israelites. This is shown by the fact that there are about 11 instances (4:1, 6, 14, 40; 5:1, 31; 6:1, 17, 24; 7:11 and 11:32) where these two terms appear, and in each of those instances there is an admonition to observe/obey them. In fact, the section opens with the appeal in 4:1,

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<sup>53</sup> In fact, the Bible portrays Moses as the most faithful servant of the Lord, as it reads, “When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions; I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house” (Numbers 12:6-7).



“Hear now, O Israel, the החקים and המשבטים I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go לכם וירשתם את־הארץ אשר יהוה אלהי אבותיכם נתן לכם (“and possess the land that the Lord God of your fathers is giving you”), and it closes with the same admonition in 11:32. As has been repeatedly mentioned in the course of this writing, the land has been the heart of the existence and history of ancient Israel as a nation and a distinctive people in the land of Canaan. Biddle would put it this way, “The land represents the most tangible feature of the covenant” (2003:185). Ideologically, long before Israel was constituted, God promised Abraham a land to give to his offspring. Now when it comes to the fulfillment of this ancient promise, Abraham’s descendants are only required one thing – obedience to God’s statutes and judgments. According to the editor(s) of Deuteronomy, obedience to God’s statutes and judgements was the only and ultimate key to unlock the gate to the Promised Land. This is what Benjamin (2004: 96) meant when he commented that unlike anywhere else in the Old Testament, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel in the book of Deuteronomy is conditional. In other words, for Abraham’s offspring to possess the land, regardless of their circumstances, they had to be obedient to Yahweh. McConville (2002:207) states: “Yahweh is giving Israel the land; and correspondingly, Israel must obey his commands.” This condition is stated clearly in 11:22-23. If the Israelites obeyed the statutes and judgements of the Lord, then the Lord would drive out the nations, even those that were larger and stronger than the nation of Israel. In 11:26-29 there is another condition. This time it is stated as if the Israelites were already in the land. If they obeyed the Lord, they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed, they would be cursed. In short, “The land was granted to Israel on condition she remained true to the requirements that God had placed on her” (Harman, 2001:24). But now the question remains as to what this theme of obedience has to do with the issue of centralization of worship in Deuteronomy 12.

Scholars such as McConville (2002:229), Liverani (2003:177), Biddle (2003:183) has argued that the theme of obedience in chapters 4-11 can be understood better when it is addressed in connection with two fundamental ideologies. One is the ideology of ‘One God’, which is expressed in the first commandment. It reads, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me” (5:6-7). The second ideology is that of the Shema which reads, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all

your strength” (6:4-5).<sup>54</sup> Based on 2 Kings 23, Liverani describes the religious situation in the ancient Middle East in general and the kingdom of Judah in particular and argues that Judah should not be isolated from the rest of the ancient Near East as far as her religious practices are concerned. Although from a literary point of view the Jerusalem temple seem to be dedicated to one chief God – Yahweh, it is also true that there were a couple of deities around it. This is the case of the Asherah, the veneration of the sun, the moon and other astral deities, the horses and chariots that were located at the entrance of the temple and so on. In fact, Gerstenberger (2001:276) reckoned: “We must think in terms of a fixed, homogeneous religious community (the state?), which tolerates other cults alongside itself or admits several deities to one and the same sanctuary.” According to Liverani, this situation should not be attributed “to the ‘recent’ apostasy of Manasseh, but it should be referred back to the time of Solomon (and his foreign wives); for that reason it had to be a notoriously ancient practice” (2003:177). It should be noted here that the belief and worship of one God, technically known as monotheism in the society ancient Israel, started in exile with the deportees and was gradually developed after the exile by the returnees.<sup>55</sup> In his comment on the ‘Shema Israel’, Gerstenberger (2001:274) stated, “The exclusiveness of the worship of Yahweh asserted here is important in this moment of the Babylonian captivity and in the overwhelmingly powerful world of the gods of the rulers.” It is in this context that the concept of obedience and love to the one and exclusive God has to be approached. In other words, the call for obedience, love and loyalty to Yahweh was meant to be expressed through worship. If the returnees were to submit themselves in obedience, love and loyalty to Yahweh, such submission was to be reflected first of all in their worship exclusively to Him. Miller (1990:129) wrote, “Proper, full, and exclusive love of the Lord (the primary demand of the first and second commandments and the Shema) is found in the way Israel carries out the activity of worship.” If this assumption is plausible, then one can argue that for the returnees, now in power, to maintain this religious innovation, they had to make sure that they had strong influence and control over the worship system by centralizing it in one place – in the temple of Jerusalem.

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<sup>54</sup> McConville has moved further to suggest that the ideology of one God expressed in these two biblical passages is more than obedience; it is about worship. He contended, “The regulations for Israel’s worship are, first, an expression of the first commandment, which requires the exclusive worship of Yahweh (5:6-8). That commandment has so far been elaborated in the exhortations following the confession at 6:4...” (2002:208).

<sup>55</sup> This phenomenon is attested in biblical text itself. On the one hand, the Deuteronomistic historians made it clear that the destruction of both northern and southern kingdoms was due to their worship of gods other than Yahweh alone. That is why the first and second commandments and the ‘Shema Israel’ came into the context. On the other hand, the prophets constantly called Israel to come back to Yahweh, God of their forefathers, because they had left him and continued with the worship of other gods.

### 3.6.2. Deuteronomy 12 in Relation to Deuteronomy 13-26

Deuteronomy 12-26 is generally a collection of different laws which are technically known as “Covenant clauses” (Miller, 1990:13), “Detailed stipulations” (Thompson, 1974:19), “Deuteronomic law code” (Clements, 2001:52), “Deuteronomic Code” (Biddle, 2003:197), or simply “law code” (Keck, 1998:272). A critical reading of these laws will show that they do not deal only with religious issues – the people’s relationship with Yahweh – but also the editors/collectors tended to elaborate the Pentateuchal worldview as far as the people’s social and judicial issues were concerned, for example, the appointing of judges and officials to judge the people fairly (16:18-20; 17:8-13); the law of the king (17:14-20); the law about a witness (19:15-21); the law about going to war (20:1-20); social and family abuse (22:13-30). In fact, Clements (2001:52), Brettler (2005:90) and Neusner (2005) have argued that, different from the covenant and holiness codes in Exodus and Leviticus respectively, the Deuteronomic code is both religious and humanitarian, as it attempts to accommodate both religious and secular logics.

Moreover, scholars such as Philo of Alexandria, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Stephen A. Kaufman, George Braulik and many others who engaged in careful study of the Deuteronomic code argued that, to some extent, this Code mirrors the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 (Biddle, 2003:201).<sup>56</sup> According to this school of thought, the ultimate goal of the redactors/collectors, consciously or unintentionally, was to make sure that every aspect of Israel’s life, be it religious, social, economic or civic, is guided only and exclusively by these laws. In other words, if the Israelites chose to be and to do what the Ten Commandments recommend, their worldview should be reflected entirely in their state of belonging to Yahweh and their sense of love and care for one another. For that to happen, it was the responsibility of the editor to elaborate such laws in an understandable way and easy to be applied in the everyday lives of the people. In his analysis of how the law code mirrors the Ten Commandments, McConville (2002:217) commented, “The giving of the laws, therefore, fundamentally continues the Decalogue, applying those basic commands into the life of Israel.” Cook belongs to this school of thought and notes that at least the first two

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<sup>56</sup> It should be acknowledged here that not all biblical scholars support this argument.

chapters (12-13) of the law code reflect the first two commandments which call for the worship of Yahweh alone (2015:16).<sup>57</sup>

Most importantly, almost all the laws in the Deuteronomic code whether religious or humanitarian are to be practiced at the place of worship and not anywhere else. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. All types of tithes and the firstborn of animals, 14:13 and 15:20 respectively should be taken to and eaten at המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם (“the place the Lord your God will choose”); in 16:2 it is explicitly stated that the Passover should be celebrated at המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם; in 17:8 we read that judicial matters that were difficult to be dealt with should be taken to המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם; offering for the priests and Levites should be taken to המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם and from there to them (18:6-8); the first fruits of every harvest should be put in the baskets and taken to המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם (26:2); finally, the law of the Lord should be read to the assembly of the Israelites at המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם (31:11). This is to demonstrate that the call for the Israelites to go to המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם is not limited to chapter 12. As mentioned previously, every aspect of life of the Israelites whether individually or communally was shaped by the law of the Lord, and המקום אשר יבחר יהוה אלהיכם became the focal centre. Should this המקום be understood as referring to Jerusalem, according to 1 Kings 8? This is the next search.

### 3.6.3. Deuteronomy 12 in Relation to 1 Kings 8

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that המקום (the place) that the Lord would choose in the book of Deuteronomy, in general, and chapter 12, in particular, remained unknown until 1 Kings 8. It is here that המקום is explicitly identified with Jerusalem (Niehaus, 1992:4). This happens when King David conquers Jerusalem, previously owned by the Jebusites, and later on when his son Solomon builds the temple, brings in the Ark of the Covenant and dedicates it to Yahweh. For centuries in the history of Old Testament studies it has been held that these two texts are closely related, 1 Kings 8 being an obvious fulfilment of Deuteronomy 12.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See also Wright (1996:4-5).

<sup>58</sup> In what he calls ‘The Myth of Centralized Worship’, Stanley (2010:369) commented, “As the story progresses, however, this insistence that all ritual activity must be concentrated at a single location appears to be forgotten. Not until the construction of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6-8) does it emerge once again

The reasoning used to connect these two texts is quite unclear.<sup>59</sup> Nihan, correctly stated the consequence of this assumption as follows, “One particular consequence of this view is that many of the traditions dated after Deuteronomy were seen to endorse Deuteronomy’s programme of centralization, even when such traditions show little or no clear connections with this programme” (2016:254). Unfortunately, there is not sufficient data to support the hypothesis that the Deuteronomist historian who collected and compiled the Solomonic traditions actually had the Deuteronomic agenda of Deuteronomy 12 in mind. Furthermore, due to the complexity of the historical reconstruction of these two texts, one could look at their relationship based on the literary grounds. But to approach it that way would still lead to speculative assumptions, because from a literary point of view, the two texts seem to have almost nothing in common although one may be tempted to see one common theme – the place of Yahweh worship.

Even if one imposes a common theme on them, that theme is presented differently in each text. Nihan (2016:257) has identified one sharp difference between them. Although both Deuteronomy 12 and 1 Kings 8 portray the המקום (place) Yahweh would choose for the dwelling of His name, for the former, the place is for offering and sacrifices to Yahweh, and for the latter the place is mainly for prayer. In his comment about Solomon’s prayers in 1 Kings 8, Rice (1990:65) stated, “The purpose of these prayers is twofold: to consecrate the temple as a house of prayer and to define typical circumstances of prayer.” One could argue that offering and sacrifices to Yahweh and the praying to Yahweh are two sides of the same coin and, therefore, it may be considered as one and the same thing. That might be a point to be raised, but this researcher’s point is to listen to the texts and not to speak on their behalf. On the one hand, the taking of offerings and sacrifices to the place the Lord would choose, in Deuteronomy 12, is repeated 5 times (vv. 6, 11, 13, 14 and 26), and there is no mention of prayer. On the other hand, the praying in the temple that Solomon has built, according to 1 Kings 8, is mentioned 8 times (vv. 28, 29, 30, 33, 38, 42, 44, and 48), and there is no mention of offering and sacrifices.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, with regard to the nature of the place, the Deuteronomic is more generic than the Deuteronomist. The former uses the term המקום which does not have specific geographic boundaries, while the latter is very specific; the

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as a concern of the narrator.”

<sup>59</sup> This is the case with Josiah’s reform in 2 Kings 22, as pointed out in 3.2.1 above.

<sup>60</sup> Hess (2007:231) also has voiced a strong concern with regard to this difference. While in Deuteronomy 12 המקום was to be for Yahweh’s habitation, “In 1 Kings the temple is not assumed to be a ‘home’ for deity.”

place of prayer is exclusively in the premises of the “בית” (temple), literally house with walls around it that Solomon has built in Jerusalem. In fact, the expression “build a temple for my name” is repeated 12 times, in verses 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 38, 44 and 48. However, the Deuteronomist is fully aware of the fact that the temple that Solomon built is not big enough to contain Yahweh, as it reads, “But will God really dwell on earth? The heaven, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I built?” (v. 27). As a matter of fact, neither the earth nor the temple will ever be Yahweh’s dwelling place. Yahweh dwells in heaven; it is from there that he will hear and answer the prayers of his people, both Israelites and non-Israelites, as stated in verses 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45 and 49.<sup>61</sup> Having heard the two voices, the researcher comes to agree with Nihan who he said, “While there can be no question that Deuteronomy’s law of centralization represents a major stage in the development of a centralized cult in ancient Israel, the place of that law in this development, as well as its relationship to other traditions pertaining to the Israel cult, are no longer obvious” (2016:258). In other words, the assumption that 1 Kings 8, irrespective of different theme and context, represents a legitimate fulfillment of Deuteronomy 12 needs to be revisited.

#### **3.6.4. Deuteronomy 12 in Relation to the Covenant and Holiness Codes**

The study has just looked at how Deuteronomy 12 relates to the rest of the law collections, also known as the Deuteronomic Code, and observed that it seems like all the laws that are contained in that collection have their focus on the place the Lord will choose/has chosen. The Deuteronomic Code, however, is not the only law collection in the Hebrew Scriptures; there are at least two more sets of laws, namely the Covenant Code in Exodus 20-23 and the Holiness Code in Leviticus 17-26. In this subheading the researcher will look first at how the Deuteronomic Code is related to these two codes – Covenant and Holiness in general, then to Deuteronomy 12 in particular.

With regard to the first search, it is important to mention here that the answer will not be obvious due to at least two factors. One is that the composition/collection of these laws codes is not an all of a sudden event, but a process over a long period of time, covering different

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<sup>61</sup> The Deuteronomistic understanding of the concept of Yahweh’s dwelling place seems to be the same with that of the LXX. For the LXX this place is neither for Yahweh’s dwelling nor for offerings and sacrifices. Rather, it was “ἐπικληθῆναι” (for his name to be invoked there). Approached this way, one could agree with McCarthy (2007:85) who argued that the LXX and, if one was to add something with regard to the Deuteronomist’s interpretation of the concept of Yahweh’s dwelling place would say it was influenced by later theology such as the one reflected in Jer. 7:10, 11, 14, 30.

generations and, consequently, a work of different editors from different socio-historical contexts (Kratz, 2007:77; Knoppers, 2013:181). The second factor is that which looks at these law codes from a larger context of the ancient Near East than what the law codes themselves are portrayed to be. In other words, it would be unrealistic to suggest that the compilation/collection of these codes was solely restricted to the Judean context. In fact, in his brief comment about the formation of the Pentateuch, Nihan (2007:187) stated: “The Pentateuch is not simply a collection of various sources compiled by a ‘final redactor’ in an almost mechanical way. Rather, it is a sophisticated composition that, on the basis of earlier traditions, defines a new legend establishment of origins of ‘Israel’, a legend capable of rivalling other prestigious national traditions inside the Achaemenid Empire.” This is a clear acknowledgment of the fact that Judah was never in isolation from the rest of the world. Even if it were the case, it is quite clear that right from the beginning there has never been a single Judaism; there were at least four groups, namely, the Judaism of Judea, of Samaria, of Babylon and that of Elephantine (Knoppers, 2013:182). It is in this perspective that modern scholars admit that the collection of these legal narratives constitute a process, as it is correctly noted, “In any event, the very development of the Covenant Code, Deuteronomy, the Priestly Code, the Holiness Code, and other legal collections embedded within the Pentateuch, whatever the respective dates assigned to the composition and rewriting of these literary works, is testimony to the growing importance of written law in ancient Judah” (Knoppers and Harvey, 2007:130-131).

Despite this complexity, recent researchers have come up with at least two slightly different schools of thought. One school is of the opinion that each code represents a unique socio-historical context (Knight, 2011:21-23). Accordingly, the Covenant Code, also known as the book of the Covenant (Exod. 21-23), seems to be the oldest. It represents the pre-monarchic and monarchic periods and is less concerned about cultic issues. The Deuteronomical Code is situated in the late monarchic period and covers the whole exilic period. It is the work of historians whose aim was to reconstruct the history of Israel, including issues of the land and worship. The Holiness Code is said to represent the work of the priests, after the exile, who found it necessary to call the returnees to a moral and ritualistic life, if they were to survive in the land. Finally, like the Holiness Code, the Priestly Code is a postexilic work but directed only to the priestly personnel, “composed at the time of rivalry between the Judean and Samaritan sanctuaries on Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim” (Nihan, 2016:258).



The other school of thought, though partially in agreement with the previous one, is of the opinion that the Deuteronomistic Code represents a comprehensive revision of both Covenant and Holiness codes. Arnaldo (2014:245) commented, “The most salient feature of Deut. 12, in terms of the way it related to those legal corpora, is the way it engages and transforms the older law of the Book of Covenant (Exod. 20:24-25).”<sup>62</sup> Cook is one of the scholars who seems to support the assumption that the Covenant Code represents an older stratum than both the Deuteronomistic and Holiness Codes. In his analysis of Deuteronomy 12, he stated, “Chapter 12’s limiting of worship to a chosen sanctuary was revolutionary. Earlier years knew no such restrictions”<sup>63</sup> (2015:105). Furthermore, a comparison study by Biddle (2003:198-199) has revealed that the three sets of codes – Covenant, Holiness and Deuteronomistic – represent at least two different socio-historical settings. According to Biddle, the first one reflects life in a rural agrarian society, probably before the formation of the monarchy, while the latter two seem to portray life in an urban society, most probably in the monarchic period. For example, after outlining what he considers to constitute the five top topics in the Deuteronomistic code, namely cult centralization, apostasy, the role of the king, war and unsolved homicides, Biddle noted that the first three reflect a context of power abuse of a contemptuous monarch (2003:201). The hypothesis, in this case, is that redactors/collectors of the Deuteronomistic Code might have innovatively used the existing material/tradition from both Covenant and Holiness codes to address their contemporary religious, judicial and social issues. This hypothesis seems to support the view that most of the Deuteronomistic code is postexilic. In their analysis of the law entrusted to Ezra, Knoppers and Harvey (2007:135) commented, “In the narrative world of Ezra, it seems that the Torah does not simply function as some sort of descriptive ideal but as a body of prescriptive legal literature, the statutes of which are to be followed in the community.” Having given this brief overview, now we turn to the main inquiry in this section – Deuteronomy 12 in relation to both the Covenant and Holiness codes.

One element which shall guide this search is the terminology used in each of the three codes to describe the cult site where the Israelites are recommended to go and offer their sacrifices.

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<sup>62</sup> See also Levinson (1998:3).

<sup>63</sup> Neusner (2005:85), after his considerably extensive study of the Covenant, Holiness and Priestly Codes, came to the Deuteronomistic Code and in his introduction he pointedly commented, “If we set the topical agenda side by side with those of the Book of the Covenant or the Holiness, we find here a still more comprehensive account of Israel’s social order than is given in the codes we have already considered.”

Exodus 20:24

“Make an מזבה (altar) of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offering and fellowship offering, and your sheep and goats and your cattle. בכל-המקום (in all the place) I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.”

Leviticus 17:5

“This is so that Israelites will bring to the Lord the sacrifices they now זבחים על-פני השרה (sacrifice in open fields). They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the Lord at the entrance of the אהל מועד (tent of meeting) and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings.”

Deuteronomy 12:5-6)

“But the place the Lord your God בחר/יבחר (will choose/has chosen) from among all your tribes to put his name there for his dwelling. שמה ובאת (There you must go); והבאתם שמה (there you must bring) your burnt offering and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts...”

As shown in this comparison table, on the one hand, the Covenant Code uses the term מזבה (altar) to describe the cultic site. There is no indication of any specific place that the altar should be built; the text simply says that the Israelites should built an altar of earth בכל-המקום (in all the place/in every place) the Lord causes his name to be honored. Then the Lord would come and bless his people. Here it seems like the Israelites were allowed to erect an altar to the Lord in different places. But now the question is whether those places were simultaneously active or one place at a period of time. If one would side with Biddle who situates the Covenant Code at the period before monarchy, one would choose the first option, given the assumption that the tribal system was characterized by independent settlements and therefore each clan/tribe had its own site of worship (Wellhausen, 1994:21-22). On the other hand, the Holiness Code starts with the cancellation of the former sites – in על-פני השרה (the open fields) then introduces a new place – at the entrance of the אהל מועד (tent of meeting). Due to the fact that the expression ‘tent of meeting’ is mainly a wilderness tradition, one is encouraged to argue that the sites in the open field might refer to those tribal cult places, and now there is a tendency of focusing on one place, at the location of the tent of meeting. The Deuteronomic Code, in turn, adopts neither one nor the other; it introduces a completely new concept. First, the place the Israelites were to bring their sacrifices should be of the Lord’s own choice and not of the people’s. Second, the Israelites were to go exclusively to that place and nowhere else, as Kartveit (2015:210) commented, “Whereas Exodus 20:24 is open to the possibility of several cult places, the centralization command in Deuteronomy 12:13-14 closes this option and prescribes one place.” To see how serious this shift was for the redactor/collectors of the Deuteronomic Code, the demonstrative pronoun שמה, which in some translations is rendered as ‘to that place’, is repeated twice, in the end of verse 5 and the

beginning of verse 6. What can be learned from all these differences? Levinson (1998:5) summarized the whole phenomenon as follows: “In commanding centralization, the authors and editors of the legal corpus did not create *lex ex nihilo*. They confronted existing legal texts that enshrined the legitimacy of the local altars that the Deuteronomic authors sought to prohibit... The authors of Deuteronomy, in one way or another, had to take account of these texts and justify their departure from their norm.”

### 3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter this study has argued that the earliest text of the book of Deuteronomy represents a collection of various laws (chaps.12-26) also known as the Deuteronomic Code, probably composed by a Judean nationalistic movement in response to both external and internal socio-political and economic circumstances, in the period between Hezekiah and Josiah’s reign. It is also noted that in response to different socio-historical contexts in the southern kingdom of Judah, this text went through a very complex editorial process and expansion, thus resulting in what is today called Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy – Kings) which is generally classified into two editorial layers. One is the historic layer also known as DtrG by the so-called Deuteronomistic historians who sought to interpret the horrific vandalism of the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria by the Assyrians, in 722/1 B.C.E., and later in 587/6 B.C.E. the southern kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians and, therefore, construct a new history of ancient Israel. The second layer is the prophetic, also known as DtrP, which focused optimistically on the exilic experience and portrayed it as a new beginning that would be fulfilled with the return of the exiles to their homeland. In addition to these two editorial layers there is the priestly redaction DtrN, which aims to incorporate the creation stories and the Mosaic traditions into this ideology of new beginning. Deuteronomy 12 represents a clear example of this editorial phenomenon. The present form of Deuteronomy 12 represents a multi-fold redaction: verses 13-19 are posited as constituting the earliest layer, probably dating to the pre-exilic period, intending to address issues pertaining to the integration of the northern refugees into the southern society, in general, and worship, in particular; verses 8-12 are mainly dominated by a language of hope for a better future in the place of rest and, therefore, represent the exilic layer; lastly, comes the postexilic layer (vv. 2-7, 30-32), as characterized by a language of strict separation between the returnees and the people of the land.

With regard to the differences between the two textual witnesses – the MT and SP readings – The researcher has outlined six categories of which the last one in the list – the qatal versus yiqtol of the verb בָּחַר is of great interest in the present study. It is observed that this difference is a product of the postexilic redactor(s) who aimed to maintain group identity within the context of competitive ideologies with regard to a legitimate place of Yahweh worship – a topic which is picked up and discussed extensively in the next chapter. Furthermore, it is noted that Deuteronomy 12 is sandwiched by two sections, the prologue (chaps 1-11) and the law code (chaps 13-26). The major theme of the first section is obedience to God’s statutes and judgement, while the second is an exposition of such statutes and judgements. Both the former and the latter find their home at the place of worship. In other words, the call for centralization of worship was to make sure that the worshipers to the obeyed those statutes and judgements.

Lastly, having mentioned the Deuteronomic Code, it would not do justice to end this discussion without recognizing the existence of other law codes in the Hebrew Bible, such as Covenant and Holiness codes, to see how they are related to the Deuteronomic code, particularly with regard to the issue of cult centralization. In this brief inquiry it is noted that there are two distinct schools of thought. One argues that each law code is different from the others and, therefore, there is no relationship among them. The other school of thought believes that the Deuteronomic Code represents a radical revision of the existing codes, resulting in a comprehensive socio-religious innovation of centralization of worship. As in Deuteronomy 12, the editors of the Deuteronomic Code “deliberately presented their new vision of the Judean polity as continuous with the abrogated past and used the earlier textual material, carefully transformed, to sanction their own independent agenda” (Levinson, 1998:3-4). Now if it is true that the change from yiqtol to qatal of the verb בָּחַר was in the context of competitive ideologies with regard to a legitimate place of Yahweh worship, the question left is what could be the theological significance of this innovation of cult centralization. This is the focus of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CENTRALIZATION OF WORSHIP

#### 4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher has addressed the second task of this study, namely the textual analysis of Deuteronomy 12, a text about the centralization of Yahweh worship, and divided it into two major sections. In the first section he looked at the growth and expansion of the book of Deuteronomy under the influence of the Deuteronomistic historians and observed that if there were books in the Hebrew Bible, in general, and in the Pentateuch, in particular, that have experienced heavy editorial activities, the book Deuteronomy would be one of them. Its origin justifies this phenomenon; it started as a collection of principles and regulations in response to both external and internal socio-political and economic circumstances that seemed to negatively affect the life of the people in the southern kingdom of Judah. On the one hand, the inevitable presence and domination of the Assyrians over the region greatly affected the life of the Judeans not only socio-politically and economically, but also religiously. Despite the harshness and heavy tributes that the Assyrians imposed on their subjects, which left them in absolute poverty and despair, some of the Judean kings had welcomed the Assyrian religious beliefs and practices into the kingdom. On the other hand, after the Assyrian devastation of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/1 B.C.E. Judah significantly experienced a huge mass migration. These war refugees from the northern kingdom needed some sort of integration, not only socio-politically but also religiously, which came by addressing the question of where to worship Yahweh. The book of Deuteronomy and its expansion, technically known as Deuteronomistic History (DeutH), became one of the primary tools used to address these and other similar issues not only in the Assyrian period but also throughout the exilic and postexilic eras. In the course of time, especially in the exilic period, these Deuteronomistic historians were joined by the prophetic movement and later, in the postexilic era, by the priestly school. In the midst of all those harsh experiences under the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians, the three attitudes (Deuteronomistic, Prophetic and Priestly) paved a way for a new beginning for ancient Israel based on the worship of Yahweh, the Creator of the entire universe and the God of the

forefathers. This Yahweh, according to the Law of Moses, is to be worshiped at one particular site.

In the second section, the researcher considered Deuteronomy 12 and identified the differences between the Judean and the Samaritan Pentateuchs with regard to the centralization of Yahweh worship. Out of many differences, more focus was placed on the qatal form of the verb בָּחַר (choose) found in the SP versus the yiqtol form in the MT version. In agreement with other biblical studies, this researcher came to the assumption that the ideology of the place of Yahweh worship remains as the main reason for this difference. Firstly, the Pentateuch in particular is said to have been a common tradition for both Samaritan and Judean communities for many centuries. Secondly, in this particular text (Deut. 12) the specific place of worship is not explicitly mentioned. Thirdly, with regard to the qatal versus yiqtol forms, there are at least two schools of thought. One approached the topic from a textual viewpoint and argued that the qatal form in the SP seems to represent the earliest reading, while the yiqtol in the MT stands as a late insertion to synchronize it with other passages found outside the Pentateuch which explicitly support the Jerusalem Temple. The other school of thought, as well as the present study, addressed the subject from an editorial approach and noted that the yiqtol form in the MT fits well in the big picture of this phenomenon.

Having come to this assumption, the question which will be addressed in the present chapter is what could be the theological significance of this phenomenon of centralizing Yahweh worship. In order to achieve the intended objective, the researcher shall structure the chapter as follows: in the first section there will be an overview of the worship system until the exilic period. This section begins with the assumption that the phenomenon of centralization of worship became an issue only after the exile. If this is the case, then it will be helpful to understand the religious conditions that paved the way for the ideology of a central place of worship. Following this, will be an overview of the worship in the context of the Persian period onward, with particular focus on the provinces of Yehuda, Samaria, and the diaspora and the rise of Judaism and Samaritanism. In the third section the research will address some ideologies that seem to revolve around the issue of identity formation, thus demanding one central site of worship, particularly the ideology of the temple and of election through the Davidic kingship. Lastly, there will be some concluding remarks.

## 4.2. Religion and Worship until the Exile: An Overview

Both biblical and theological scholars have addressed this topic from at least two different perspectives. One is what this study will call the traditional approach<sup>1</sup>. Advocates of this approach have addressed this topic from an uncritical biblical point of view, simply because it has been maintained that the Hebrew Bible represents, to some extent, the main, if not the only, source of information about the history and religion of ancient Israel<sup>2</sup> (Rendsburg, 1995:4). As mentioned above (cf. 2.2.1- 3), depending on each individual researcher or of each particular school's objectives, some have addressed the history of ancient Israel from a genealogical point of view and suggested that ancient Israel started with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; others have focused on the exodus tradition and argued that the history of Israel started with Moses; still other scholars looked at it from an ideology of Davidic monarchy and divine election and argued that ancient Israel as a distinct group originated with King David. Consequently, the religion and worship of ancient Israel is portrayed as purely Yahwism all the way through. Despite these different views, the common ground with regard to this topic is that the origin of ancient Israel does not begin prior to the Patriarchal era.

The second approach is the so-called scientific. Advocates of this approach have questioned the historicity of the biblical narratives and argued that, firstly, the biblical records are not about the history and religion of ancient Israel but rather a set of traditions that portray Israel's understanding of her own history (Rendsburg, 1995:3), and, secondly, these narratives are "not continuous and comprehensive as we would like" them to be (Gerstenberger, 2001:162). Consequently, any scholar who wishes "to reconstruct ancient Israelite religion is forced to comb the Bible's diverse texts in order to extract from them statements which reveal the beliefs and practices of ancient Israel" (Rendsburg, 1995:8). This process is, however, still not enough to guide one in his/her convincing reconstruction of Israel's history and religion. One needs to come out of the biblical box and try to situate ancient Israel in her real historical context. Vriezen (1963:22) commented:

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<sup>1</sup> By the term 'traditional' this study refers to some pre- or non-critical approaches used by biblical scholars until other approaches such as historical, literary and textual started informing the field of biblical studies.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these scholars, however, even aware of the existence of other extra-biblical sources that could be useful in this regard, have not given significant attention to them and, therefore, have based their reconstruction solely on the biblical traditions. For example, in their introductory pages of their book 'A History of Israel from Conquest to Exile', John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb (1970:5) stated, "The focus is upon the biblical text rather than the various theories of Israel's history as reconstructed by contemporary critics".



One cannot hope to give a true-to-life picture of Israel's religion without indicating its proper place within the world in which and out of which it arose. That world did not merely constitute the 'backcloth' to Israel's history; nor were the religions to be found in it merely so many items of scenery – 'stage props' against which the drama of Israel was played out. On the contrary, that world was part and parcel of the Israelite outlook and understanding of life. The surrounding countries and their religions were fellow-players on this stage.

This comment is based on the assumption given by Oesterly and Robinson (1933:1) and, four decades later, by Fohrer (1973) that the Israelites came from a large family group known as Semitic that migrated probably from the Great Arabian Peninsula, and formed various Semitic subgroups such as Babylonians, Assyrians, Arameans, Phoenicians, Edomites, Moabites, Ammorites, Hebrews, and Abyssinians. In fact, Fohrer (1973:28) reckoned, "The early history of the Israelites took place for the most part within the framework of one of the waves of Semitic migrations that emerged from the desert of Syria and Arabia with the goal of penetrating into the Fertile Crescent, a long belt of settled territory extending from the Persian Gulf through Mesopotamia to Syria and Palestine." Accordingly, ancient Israel's history and religion cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration this larger context.

Moreover, Collins (2005) and Hess (2007) have argued that biblical scholars, theologians, historians and archaeologists seem to not have given full attention to the difference between Israel's religion and her biblical theology. Collins (2005:99) wrote, "Scholars have often found it hard to distinguish between biblical theology and the history of Israelite religion." According to these scholars, these two fields of study have to be addressed distinctively, even though they prove to be related to each other. According to Hess, "The study of ancient Israelites religion relies on drawing a distinction between theology, which emphasizes what the Bible suggests should be believed, and religion which is more concerned with what ancient Israelites actually did believe" (Hess, 2007:22). This is not to underestimate the special role the Hebrew Bible plays in this regard. Rather, it is simply to say that, like any other extra-biblical resource, the Hebrew Bible is one source. Hess stated it correctly, "The Pentateuch is filled with information about Israelite religion. It is impossible to ignore this when discussing the subject" (2007:141). This is the approach which will be reflected in the next few paragraphs. But before moving on to that, it is necessary to mention that due to these different approaches, the scholarly literature and interpretations on this subject are many and very diverse to the point that one cannot do justice to them all in a subsection of a chapter. Gerstenberger (2001), Hess (2007) and Albertz and Schmitt (2012) have done a

comprehensive scientific<sup>3</sup> study of this topic and outlined at least three distinct phases of the history of ancient Israel, from its origins to late Persian period, namely family/clan, tribe/small village, and kingdom/state.

#### 4.2.1. Religion in the Family/clan Context

The family/clan represents the first and most basic social institution in human society, and it is on this level that the most basic aspects of human life are formed. In this sense, Israelite's **בית אב** (literally translated as “house of the father” or simply “family/household”) was comprised of a small group of blood related people that could vary between 10-20 people<sup>4</sup> (Albertz, 2012:41), and their main activity for living was hunting/gathering, since there was no practice of agriculture in the ancient Near East before the tenth century B.C.E. (Gerstenberger, 2001:19). In the context of ancient Israel and in most of African societies, the correct idiomatic translation of the expression **בית אב** would be ‘household’, which normally goes beyond the borders of a normal modern family. It includes grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, brother/sister and cousins abiding in one geographic area but either in different houses or in the same house with many rooms “under the leadership of a patriarch” (Albertz, 2012:41). This becomes very clear in the patriarchal traditions where one reads about Abraham and Jacob. In Genesis 11:31 it reads, “Terah took his son Abraham, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abraham, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan”<sup>5</sup> Again in Genesis 12:5 the picture of a family in those days is portrayed. At the time Abraham was leaving his father’s household to go to the land God had commanded him. “He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran and they set out for the land of Canaan and they arrived there.” A third example is of Jacob’s definite journey to Egypt, in Genesis 46:7, which reads, “He took with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons, and his daughters and granddaughters – **וכל-זרעו** (all his offspring).”

<sup>3</sup> The use of the term scientific is in the sense that Gerstenberger did not base his studies on the biblical records, as has been the tendency of many biblical scholars and theologians. Gerstenberger conducted his study from a historical point of view by putting aside the biblical portrayal of the history of the biblical Israel and approaching it from a general and non-ideological origin of any human society.

<sup>4</sup> These numbers may seem odd for modern urban readers who understand a family differently. A modern family is limited to one or two parents and their blood children.

<sup>5</sup> Nothing is written about Terah’s wife. It is possible that the narrator omitted her or that she had passed on by the time Terah moved from Ur to Canaan.

With regard to religion and worship, Albertz (2012:41) is of the opinion that the household was engaged in a “domestic cult”, which was conducted by one of the members of the family. Two things need to be considered in addressing this topic. On the one hand, because of the nature of this level (small group of people who spent most of their time outside), fear was part of everyday life. There was fear of forces of nature (night, storm, drought, plagues, flood); and fear of the spiritual realm (demons and other creatures that seemed to represent the unseen world). Fohrer (1973:40) commented, “The god of the clan is not a sky god; neither is he associated with a local sanctuary. He is a god who protects the wandering nomads as they travel. These nomads feel dependent on his leadership because they move among forces that are alien and often hostile. They seek his protection because he knows the routes and their dangers and will guide them safely.” In this case, religion was used to protect all the family members and belongings from those forces. On the other hand, religion was meant to meet the basic needs of the family, such as production and reproduction. Gerstenberger reckoned, “Thus family theology is primarily the theology of basic human needs”<sup>6</sup> (2001:29) through apotropaic rites and incantations to protect the house and its inhabitants from evil powers (Albertz, 2012:46).

As to the beliefs and practices of the domestic religions, Oesterly and Robinson (1933:5-16) have outlined at least two characteristics. One is known as animism which believes that anything can be infused with life and then turn into a deity or a supernatural being. This type of belief caused the worship of natural forces or substances such as streams, stones, trees, springs, to mention only four. A clear example of this type of belief is found in Deuteronomy 12:2, which commands the Israelites to destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under the spreading tree where the nations worshiped their gods. In fact, in their analyses of Genesis 12:6-8 and Judges 4:4-5, Oesterly and Robinson (1933:21) reckoned, “At the present we are merely concerned to show that the Old Testament itself gives indications that Hebrew religion emerged from the animistic stage of belief.” The second characteristic of domestic religion is polytheism – the worship of more than one deity. In his concluding remarks on the subject, Fohrer (1973:39) pointed out, “Our first conclusion, then, is that in the early period of Israel each clan (and probably also each tribe) worshiped its own particular god.” Genesis 31:30-35 would be a good example for illustrating this type of worship. Rachel has stolen the gods of her father Laban when she was preparing to start her

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<sup>6</sup> In agreement with this assumption, Nikhai (2014:54) wrote, “Family life, writ large, related to those aspects of life that were of great concern to all Israelites: sustenance and economic survival, on the one hand, and health and reproduction, on the other hand.”

own household with Jacob. Two observations need to be made about this passage. One, the text does not say anything about the nature of those gods. However, the fact that Rachel was able to put her stolen gods under her vests and sit over them so that Laban could not see them, one is tempted to argue that those gods were of a small size, probably the size of amulets. This is probably what Gerstenberger (2001:36) meant, after presenting a list of individual objects and practices that people in the family religion used as instruments to drive away the spiritual forces, “Amulets,<sup>7</sup> spells, and exclamatory prayers to personal deities helped against such demonic dangers.”<sup>8</sup>

The other observation is about the role of women in the domestic religion. Studies in the history of the ancient Near East have revealed that labour distribution was based on gender. Men were responsible for outdoor duties; they spent time outside in public places together with their sons, preparing them for their future responsibilities, while women remained indoors with their daughters, also preparing them for their future responsibilities (Foerster, 1964:129). If this is true, then one can argue that Rachel learnt from her mother the usefulness of the gods in the household and where they were kept. In his comment about the state religion, Gerstenberger (2002:260) stated, “Women, too, were active in the cult, but because of the male dominance which had come about in the cult of Israel they could only be active underground and contrary to the theology of the scribes.”<sup>9</sup>

In short, domestic religion was a family/clan enterprise used to address issues related to the very basic needs of life such as protection, provision, reproduction, and unity in the family. It was believed that all sorts of fortunes and misfortunes of everyday life were caused by gods and natural forces. Religion, in this case, was the only means to create peace between members of the family and between humans and natural and/or spiritual forces. It can also be argued that it is highly possible that women were in charge of the domestic religion.

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<sup>7</sup> Archaeology has identified at least two silver amulet inscriptions dating around mid-seventh century B.C.E. (Wegner, 2006:140-141).

<sup>8</sup> It is important to mention here that these practices are still found even today in many societies on the African continent. The worldview of most of the African communities up to this day is that of the ancient Near East. One may dispute this fact, but at least in the community where the researcher of this study is from, superstition is not a matter of question. People spend most of their time and resources trying to fight against harmful and bad spirits, create peace with the ancestors and please the gods through the practice of amulets, spells, divinations, ancestral worship, exorcism, and so on.

<sup>9</sup> In his introductory statement on ‘The Household as Sacred Space’, Nakhai (2014:53-54) voiced his opinion as follows, “What I suggest is that household religion functioned both at the level of *bêt ab* – that is, the extended family or residential kin or group – and at the level of the individual or, even more specifically, at the level of women within the household.”

#### 4.2.2. Religion in the Tribal System

In comparison to the family institution, the tribal level is a completely different scenario in terms of the number of the members, the geographical area and the reason for its institution. According to Gerstenberger (2001:122), the estimated number of the members of people per tribe in ancient Israel varied from 100 to 1800 persons. This means that individual families/clans in small villages came together into a coalition and formed a tribe. As to why different families/clans came together to form a tribe, Albertz (1994:73) stated, “The tribe is a political coalition of the clans of a region so that they are capable of political action.” Although the need for provision and reproduction still remained evident even in this level, the need from protection became the highest priority. The protection was not only against natural forces and spiritual interventions as is the case in the family circle, but also against other human beings. In response to this new challenge, certain innovations had to be introduced – organizational structure that would be able to solve both internal and external conflicts. In this case, two offices were instituted: one was comprised of the elders of the families or clans and was in charge of internal conflicts (Albertz, 1994:73). The second office belonged to the council called ‘men of the city’ whose responsibility was to ensure that the tribe is protected against external attacks. In his discussion about tribal formation, Gerstenberger (2001) observed that the coming together of different clans to form one group was a very complex process. One of the most challenging elements of this period was that each tribe claimed to be superior and therefore exercised power and dominion over other tribes. In this case, protection against external invasion became the first priority for every tribe. Gerstenberger wrote, “The tribal ethos calls for a new quality of readiness to commit oneself and hardness in favour of one’s own community. An episode from the book of Judges clarifies the ‘male virtues’ which were thought desirable in the conflict with neighbouring tribes...” (2001:155).

The need for protection brought about at least five implications as far as religion and worship in the tribal context are concerned. One is the shift from a matriarchal religion in its indoor environment to a patriarchal one in its outdoor world. It is mentioned previously that women played a key role in the domestic religion and, therefore, the deity was considered to be a member of the family. Now, because the great threat for the tribe’s well-being came from outside, it was the responsibility of those who spent their time outside (the men) to take the necessary steps which, in most cases, it meant to engage in battles against the invaders. Gerstenberger (2001:155) correctly stated: “Tribal religion has a markedly patriarchal stamp, because the business of war concerns almost exclusively the men.”

The second implication closely related to the previous one is that the deity is not a mere protector of the family from natural and spiritual forces and a provider of basic needs; he is also a warrior who is in charge of the battle field and liberates his people from their invaders. This warrior deity identified himself with the name of Yahweh.<sup>10</sup> For example, the entire episode in 1 Samuel 4 is about the ideology of Yahweh, the warrior God. This does not mean this warrior deity was the only one in the tribe. In his discussion about ancient Israel's religion, Goldenberg (2007:14) noted, "Worship of a national god was typical of the Near East, but in other cases this was usually combined with reverence for the forces of nature, such as rain, and storm or love and fertility, that seemed to rule people's lives; similarly, even in Israel, the idea that worship should be limited to one god met heavy resistance for generations." Having had a hard time with the Philistines on the battle field, the Israelites decided to take the Ark of the Covenant to the battle. In verse 3 it reads, "When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, 'Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hands of our enemies.'" Scholars such as Gerstenberger are of the opinion that "The entire concept of Exodus is built upon what modern scholars have regarded as "Liberation Theology"<sup>11</sup> (2001:156). This assumption is somewhat supported by Leuchter (2012) in his article 'The Fightin' Mushites'. According to Leuchter, the Mushites were a distinctive group of people who had great cultic influence in the Trans-Jordanian region before the monarchic period. Their influence was due to "their legacy as warriors at a time when success on the battlefield demonstrated fitness" (2012:479). The third implication is the transfer of the place of worship from inside to outside the בית אב (household). Hess (2007:216-222) has listed a couple of major cultic sites that, according to archaeological studies, are most probably to be dated in the early period of the history of the Trans-Jordanian region. These sites are Mount Ebal and Gerizim (c. 1250-1150 B.C.E.), Shiloh (suggested to be operating in the first half of the eleventh century B.C.E.), and Gilgal (from the second half of the eleventh century until 900 B.C.E.).

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<sup>10</sup> As to the origin of this God whose proper name is Yahweh, it has been discussed in the previous chapter (cf. 2.2.2.2). Gerstenberger (2001:139) stated, "It is impossible to make out precise details, but the conjecture that the origin of belief in Yahweh is to be sought outside Israel is an extremely convincing one." See also Fohrer (1973:87-88).

<sup>11</sup> Gerstenberger (2001:145) moved on to argue that this worldview was not only limited to the tribes of Israel; it was also applicable to other tribes and nations around them. He gave at least three references of places where the deity was portrayed as a military warrior. One is the 1.42m high and 50cm wide limestone stele from Ugarit that shows the deity in full armor (helmet, working garment and sword). The second and third examples are the god Shamash of the neo-Assyrian period and the god Resheph in the northwest Mesopotamia. Both Shamash and Resheph were portrayed as warrior gods.



The fourth implication is the introduction of animal sacrifice. After asking the question as to what was the primary motivation for the worshipers to think of sacrifice, Eakin (1971:150-151) stated, “Since ancient thought understood the gods to have functional needs corresponding to man’s, some think it probable that the provision of food for Yahweh lay behind the sacrificial act.” Other studies went further to suggest that besides the sense of those functional needs, ancient Israel understood sacrifice as a means to pleasing the deity and subsequently to gaining its favour (Davis and Whitcomb, 1970:124). Probably because of lack of data, it seems like there is no evidence which supports the practice of animal sacrifice in the domestic religion. According to Schmitt (2012:58; 224) elements that have been identified in the domestic cult sites so far are articles of personal adornment, ovens, tabuns, vessels, jars, cooking pits, basins, pots and other utensils for food processing and consumption. Coming to the tribal cult centres, however, one learns that animal bones have been found in those sites. Based on archaeological studies, Hess (2007, 127-140) has outlined at least 7 cult sites where animal bones were found namely Megiddo, Nahariya, Tell Kitan, and Tell el-far’ah North (in the northern part of Israel); Tell el-Hayyat (in Jordan); Shiloh, and Gezer (in the central part of Israel).

The fifth and last implication is the introduction of figurines in addition to the previous representatives of the deities – the amulets. Together with his discussion on the topic about animal sacrifices, Hess (2007) has identified at least 7 sites with figurines either of an animal, snake or person. These are: a lion figurine (at the Hazor site); a snake figurine (at the Tell Mevoakh and Megiddo sites); and a women figurine (at the Megiddo, Nahariya, Tell Kitan and at Lachish sites). In short, unlike the family domestic religion, the tribal religion is very much patriarchal with the belief of a warrior God called Yahweh, practiced outside the household and very probably polytheistic.

#### **4.2.3. Religion in the Monarchic Context**

The same driving motive for the formation of the tribe is applied also here – monarchy was a political coalition of different tribes that came together either through formal agreement or submission of the conquered populations to form one state or kingdom whose ultimate purpose was to defend its territory and properties against other tribes or kingdoms. One good biblical example always referred to when dealing with this subject is 1 Samuel 8 (cf. 2.3.2 above). One of the major characteristics of the monarchical system is power centralization. Gerstenberger (2001:163) remarks: “By contrast with tribal society, the monarchical state of the ancient Near East was a bureaucratic, centralized system. All the authority emanated from



the king (and court). The segmentary groups (large families, villages, cities, tribal alliances, semi-nomadic shepherds and itinerant workers) had to submit to the royal authority wherever the well-being of the state as a whole or the leading dynasty was at stake.” In the context of the ancient dynasty (probably also in some modern kingships) the attribution of the power to the king is said to be through divine intervention. It is the deity that appoints the king to rule over his people.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the position of the king is not only to rule over his people but also to mediate for them with the deity. He represents the deity here on earth<sup>13</sup> (Gerstenberger, 2001:164-166). Some ancient documents have revealed that the king was more than a mediator; he identified himself as the human son of the deity. An inscription identified as originally from Moab refers to King Mesha as the son of the god Chemosh, as it reads, “I am Mesha, son of Chemosh(yat), king of Moab, the Dibonite” (Hess, 2007:275). In Psalms 2:6-7 scripture states, “I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill. I will proclaim the decree of the Lord, ‘אמר ילדתיך היום אתה בני אל’ (‘He said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you’).” Due to the fact that in the biblical traditions about kingship David is portrayed as “The King”, one is tempted to connect verse 6 with King David. What about verse 7, could it be considered as a continuation of verse 6? Does this king over Zion refer to King David? If the answer to these and other related questions is yes, then one could argue that this passage might be referring to David and, because of his kingship position, is called the son of God.<sup>14</sup>

This ideology has many religious implications in the monarchic system. Firstly, different from the family and tribal religions where each family or tribe had its own deity, in the monarchic religion there was a chief deity who was in charge of all national affairs. In the case of Persia, the national deity was Ahura Mazda (Gerstenberger, 2011:46), whereas for ancient Israel (both northern and southern kingdoms) it was Yahweh. This however, did not mean the end of both family and tribal religions; they continued to function at their respective levels, as long as they did not disturb the running of the national religion. Gerstenberger (2001:170-171) said it well, “The Temple of the Capitol could exist for the state and the royal

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<sup>12</sup> The biblical traditions of Saul in 1 Samuel 11; of David in 1 Samuel 16; and of Cyrus in Ezra 1:1-4 are good examples to illustrate this point.

<sup>13</sup> In describing the relationship between the Persian king and the national deity, Brosius (2006:66) stated, “Ahuramazda, the ‘Wise Lord’, was the god who installed the king in power, who guided him, and who made him act in a truthful and moral way. Though the king was not a god himself, he was no less than Ahuramazda’s representative on earth.”

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 45:7 reads: “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

house, whereas regional, local and domestic cults continued to hold undisturbed their own ceremonies for fertility, health and expiation. They probably served their own deities, as long as these did not rebel against the central authority.” Another implication is the definition of the national shrine. One of the major obligations of the king was to build a central temple for the national deity. This is shown in both Davidic and Solomonic traditions. According to 2 Samuel 5-7, after David, now king of the Israelites, conquered Jerusalem and established his residence, he erected a tent and brought in the ark of the Lord. Then as he was preparing to replace the tent with a temple, Yahweh stopped him and promised him that his son was going to build the temple. This promise was fulfilled in 1 Kings 7-9. As soon as the Jerusalem Temple was built, other cultic sites lost their influence. Fohrer (1973:140) commented, “The Jerusalem Temple was the dwelling place of Yahweh, and any other temples – especially in the Northern Kingdom of Israel – were of lesser significance.” The same is said about the construction of the Second Temple. Because the Israelites had lost their political identity, Yahweh had to commission Cyrus, the Persian King to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the king was in charge of almost all the temple services, including a full right to appoint temple officials. A few examples can illustrate this point. Again, whether these traditions represent religious propaganda or not, they seem to give significant hints as to what could be the role of the kings in the ancient days. In any case, 1 Kings 8-9 states that King Solomon is the leading official for the dedication of the temple. He first gave a very extensive and elaborate prayer (vv. 22-53), then dedicated the temple (vv. 62-65). 1 Kings 12 indicates that after the 10 tribes, under the leadership of Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, Jeroboam built shrines at Bethel and Dan and appointed priests for himself to take care of those cult places. In 2 Kings 12 one reads that King Joash mandated the priests to repair the temple. More often, this chapter is said to relate to the famous history about King Josiah’s religious reform, in 2 Kings 22. One more implication that should not be underestimated is that the temple became one of the important economic resources for the dynasty. Studies have proved that the temple in ancient societies functioned as a place of tax collection. For example, it is argued that in the Persian period “The temple was actually a part of the administrative system, acting as a tax collector and processor on behalf of the Persian government” (Grabbe, 2004:208). In short, religion in the monarchic society was a national institution with a centralized system. The deity became not only the liberator and protector,

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<sup>15</sup> The use of these examples is not to mean they represent historical events in the modern sense. They may to some extent represent both political and religious propaganda of the Deuteronomists and Second Temple redactors (Becking, 2011:9).

but also the father of the nation represented by his earthly son, the king. The shrine had double functions, religious and economic. As the worshipers came to worship the deity, they also came with their taxes and tributes for both national and international services.

#### **4.2.4. Religion in the Exilic Period**

The exilic experience “marked a decisive turning point in the historical life of the Israelite nation” (Fohrer, 1973:307). The famous Solomonic temple which had great significance in their religious life was in ruins; the monarch which marked their political presence in the region had been overpowered and deported to foreign lands; their land had been taken away and occupied by foreigners; and, most significantly, their traditions (histories about their origin) could no more be passed to the next generation. In other words, all was lost, and Israel as a nation seemed to come to a perceived end. The question remains as to how the deportees, those who remained in the land and those who fled to other places such as Egypt responded to this experience. The assumption is that the response was not the same for all of them. The exiles, the people who remained in the land and those in the diaspora were in different contexts and, therefore, reacted differently.

##### **4.2.4.1. The People in the Land**

Starting with those who escaped the deportation and remained in the land, it is observed that there were two groups. One group was those who accepted the situation and sought some alternative ways of maintaining their Yahweh worship. Jeremiah 41:5-6 seems to be a witness to this group. Jeremiah saw eight men from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria taking their “grain offering and incense” to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> On their way to the temple, these men found Gedaliah, the newly appointed governor of Judah by the Babylonians, assassinated, and they had “shaved their hair and beards, tore their clothes and cut themselves” as sign of mourning. The other group was those who lost hope and engaged in “syncretistic religion” (Fohrer, 1973:309). As the borders were open and people all over the Trans-Jordanian region could move from one place to the other, those who fled to Judah came with their beliefs and practices. In this case, people exercised their freedom to choose the deity they felt comfortable and secure with. These could supposedly be Yahweh of Samaria, Yahweh of Jerusalem, Baal of Sidonia, Milcom of the Ammorites, Chemosh of the

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<sup>16</sup> There is a counter-argument as to whether or not the Jerusalem Temple functioned during the exilic period. A different hypothesis is that there might be another cult place different from Jerusalem if the Jerusalem Temple had indeed been destroyed and declared unclean. In this case, these men whom Jeremiah saw carrying their offering might have been going to that unidentified shrine (Grabbe, 2004:282).

Moabites, Marduk of the Babylonians, Ahura Mazda of the Medes, the gods of Egypt, or some/all of them.

#### 4.2.4.2. In the Exile

With regard to the deportees, the situation seems to be the same as those in the land, of course, in different levels and contexts. Some of them got very discouraged by the exilic experience. They had put all their trust in Yahweh as the Warrior God, and now He is defeated by the Babylonian gods. Having found themselves in Babylon with the freedom and privilege to start life *de novo*, they preferred to settle in Babylon and, therefore, be Babylonians and not Israelites any more. In this case, they joined the Babylonian religions and worshiped the Babylonian gods. The other group, however, sought to preserve their Israelite identity, although in the foreign land. Hess (2007:339-340) pointed out, “Many Jews might have had little motivation to return to their land and to rebuild. However, a Late Babylonian text demonstrates that Jews in Babylonia in 498 BC did preserve Yahwistic personal names. In this text some eight personal names contain the divine name Yahweh, indicating that in the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.E., Yahweh was worshiped by Jews in Babylonia.”<sup>17</sup>

In the process of seeking to preserve their identity, these faithful Yahwists had at least one challenge – the absence of the Jerusalem temple, Yahweh’s dwelling place. How could they worship Him and bring their offering and sacrifices to Him while in a foreign land? Because they were willing to preserve their Yahwist identity, they had to find ways. One way was to establish a religious school also known to modern scholars as a Deuteronomistic school right in Babylon. Although in that school they could not honour Yahweh with proper worship, offering and sacrifices, they could at least collect and interpret their earlier traditions. It was in this period that the deportees started to have a different picture of Yahweh from that of the tribal and monarchic periods. Yahweh is a personal God who does what pleases Him at any time; He does not depend on circumstances, and He can reverse the situation at any time (Fohrer, 1973:313). This new understanding of what Yahweh was, became the motivation for them to build a strong trust and hope in Him that one day, sooner or later, Yahweh would take them to the resting place. But to show their sense of regret, some practical elements had to be put in place. Fohrer (1973:312-313) suggests that the observance of the Sabbath and the practice of fasting started in the exile.<sup>18</sup> The Sabbath was a day of lament before Yahweh and

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<sup>17</sup> See also Gerstenberger (2001:209).

<sup>18</sup> There is no consensus among biblical scholars with regard to the origins of the Sabbath ideology. Some have

part of this lament was the abstinence from food and water. Moreover, those collected and interpreted traditions became the guiding principle of their everyday life and conduct. Both Gerstenberger (2001:222) and Fohrer (1973) are of the opinion that the sense of “Judaism” and of being “people of the law” started in the exile. Fohrer wrote, “After the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of its cult, the deportees, threatened by their new environment, sought something they could hold fast to, some means of protecting themselves against the threat, something into which they could withdraw as into a fortress. They found it in the law” (1973:313).

#### **4.2.4.3. In the Diaspora (Egypt)**

There is one more group of Israelites who were neither in the land nor in the exile. This group had fled to Egypt. According to Jeremiah 41, the group was comprised of soldiers, army officers, court officials, women and children. He describes this group in verses 16-18 as follows:

Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the survivors from Mispah whom he had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after he had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam: the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had brought from Gibeon. And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt to escape the Babylonians. They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam who the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

There is not much said about the religion of these Israelite refugees in this period, except what Jeremiah himself reported. There is his message and the people’s response in 44:16-17 which reads: “We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord! We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our fathers, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem.” In this case, one is tempted to agree with Fohrer’s comment: “The Judahites who fled to Egypt after the assassination of Gedaliah may have been lost to Yahwism” (1973:315). However, recent studies have revealed that the migration from Israel to Egypt did not start with the group led by Johanan, after the assassination of Gedaliah. The migratory phenomenon started way back

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attached it with the creation story and argued that the Sabbath originated early in the Persian period, and it is not only for abstinence from food and water, but also for other areas of everyday life in the society. Berquist (1995:143) commented, “As ritual, Sabbath observance offers opportunity to sense solidarity and to thank the powers that grant the time of rest. It limits work and reinforces thoughts that work levels are reasonable; as long as there is time to refrain from work then the daily work is certainly survivable. The Sabbath also provides an easy way for all citizens to have access to temple worship, especially when the Persian Empire required taxes to be paid within the temple.”

in the monarchic period due to commerce and mercenary activities that took place in the region. It is said that far before the exile there was a temple dedicated to Yehu in Elephantine, supposedly by voluntary immigrants who made Egypt their new home (Kessler 2008:127).

#### **4.2.5. Summary**

Ancient Israel's religion is more complex than is portrayed by the biblical writers. It started in the family circle as a domestic religion. The major focus in this religion was on the basic needs of a nomadic life, such as food and water provision, reproduction, healing and protection against natural and spiritual forces. In this case, women played an important role and the deity became a member of the family and dwelled with them. Later on, different families/clans came together in settlements, and their challenges moved to a different level. There were wars between the settled communities or between the settled and the nomadic ones. The ultimate need at this point was a warrior deity who could protect the entire settlement including all the members of the tribe(s) and defend them against external invaders. This meant the shift of the religious responsibilities from women to men and of the shrine from indoors to the hilltops. It is supposedly in this phase that the warrior deity became known as Yahweh. The wars among both settled and unsettled communities were greatly intensifying, and there was a need of a more organized and centralized social system – the monarchy. The king became the deity's direct representative on earth through whom all the divine decisions come to the community. Consequently, the dwelling place of the deity, in this case the sanctuary, had to move again from the hilltop to be close to the palace. This system remained functional for approximately four centuries until the end of the southern kingdom of Judah in 587/6 B.C.E.

For ancient Israel the destruction of both the City and the Temple of Jerusalem was nothing but proof that the Babylonian gods were stronger than Yahweh and, therefore, they were greatly disappointed, because for centuries they had put their entire trust in Yahweh and offered Him the best sacrifices they could. The outcome of this disappointment was that, on the one hand, some of the Judeans in the land, in the exile and diaspora had lost their trust and confidence in Yahweh and engaged in syncretistic religion. On the other hand, however, the elite deportees together with Deuteronomistic historians and prophets interpreted the whole situation differently and came up with a different understanding of who Yahweh was. That interpretation and understanding seemed to guide the worship system of Yehud in the Persian period.

### 4.3. Worship in the Context of the Persian Period

It has been noted in the previous section that the Babylonian experience became a turning point for the entire history of ancient Israel, especially for the southern kingdom of Judah. The destruction of both the City and the Temple of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E. represented the end of the first phase of the history of Israel as a tribal society, and then a monarchic state, followed by a transitional period of about half a century or so – the exilic period. A new phase in the history of Israel, technically known as Second Temple period, starts in 539 B.C.E. when the Persian Empire, through Cyrus, became the regional superpower. It is generally agreed upon by the majority of biblical scholars, historians and archaeologists that the Persian's policy differed significantly from that of their predecessors, namely the Assyrians and Babylonians (Kessler, 2008:129). To mention only three differences: firstly, both the Assyrians and Babylonians believed in power centralization, whereas the Persians believed the opposite. Sources suggest that the Persian Empire was divided into satraps and “the governor of each satrap was a powerful semi-independent, in normal circumstances a high-ranking Persian and often a member of the royal family”<sup>19</sup> (Grabbe, 2004:132). In agreement with Grabbe, Hess noted that one of Cyrus's unforgettable remarks was that his yoke on the subjects was lighter in comparison to that of his successors (2007:338). Secondly, while the Assyrians and Babylonians believed in disempowering their subjects, the Persians are credited with empowering the local leaders and communities. This is probably what Fohrer meant when he stated, “In the design of this new ruler, the Persian Empire was no longer to be a political and military alliance of subject peoples under leadership of a dominant nation, but a full-fledged state with equal rights for all the citizens” (1973:330). Thirdly, the Babylonian rulers repressed individual and local religions, while the Persians, whether intentionally or not, promoted the spirit of freedom of worship.<sup>20</sup> This is shown in the so-called Cyrus Cylinder. According to this source, Cyrus did not only grant freedom to the deportees to return to their homelands but also sent with them the various gods and temple treasures that Nebuchadnezzar had confiscated while destroying their respective

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<sup>19</sup> Still on this subject, Grabbe (2004:132) noted that Persian Empire's type of government has its own advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the decentralization was necessary as the empire was too vast in a way that a centralized system would find it difficult to maintain control. Despite many other factors, centralization of power might have contributed significantly to the downfall of the Babylonian empire. On the other hand, giving power to local satraps could mean more possibilities for rebellion, as came to be the case. One example is the revolts of satraps in the year 366-360 B.C.E. See also Goldenberg (2007:68) Kessler (2008:129).

<sup>20</sup> Rather, some scholars have argued that, “The religious policy of the Persians was not that different from the basic practice of the Assyrians and Babylonians before them. They tolerated – but did not promote the local cults except for the traditional temple in the Persian heartland” (Grabbe, 2004:273).



temples.<sup>21</sup> In addition to all these, Cyrus gave an order to all the returnees to rebuild the temples for their gods, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed (Hess, 2007:338). Again, just like the sending of the gods to their respective shrines, the assumption that Cyrus supported the construction of temples is debatable. Brosius (2006), however suggested that there should be no doubt that the Persian policy included the acceptance and support of local cults. Therefore, “The permission to allow the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem has to be seen in the same light as his care for the restoration of the cult of Marduk in Babylon or Darius’ rebuilding of the Hibis temple at el-Khargeh” (2006:10). The question now is how this political policy of the Persian Empire shaped the religion and contributed to the rising of Judaism in Yehud and Samaritanism in Samaria. This is the search of the next paragraphs. But before moving on to the first subsection, it is important to mention that in what follows it will be argued that just like the tribal association, the monarchic system and the exilic experience, the political policy of the post-exilic regional superpower, in this case the Persian Empire, has greatly influenced the religious understanding of the Judeans, Samaritans and of those in diaspora.

From a political point of view, the question frequently asked in relation to this subject is whether in the Babylonian period Judah was a province on its own or it was under another province. One group of scholars hold the opinion that when the Babylonians devastated the City of Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and deported the royal and priestly families and other important figures in the society, such as scribes and land owners, Judah lost its political status as an independent state and was put under the jurisdiction of the province of Trans-Euphrates until Nehemiah’s return to Jerusalem (Grabbe, 2004:140).<sup>22</sup> Supporters of this thesis base their arguments on various incidents. One is in relation to the opposition of the leaders of the Trans-Euphrates to the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra 4. It is stated that when the leaders of the Trans-Euphrates heard that some Jews had come from the exile and were rebuilding the city, they immediately sent a letter to alert Artaxerxes what was happening in the province. It reads, “The king should know that the Jews who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city...” (v.12). One more incident is recorded in Nehemiah 4 where Sanballat is said to oppose Nehemiah’s mission. A consensus arrived at among students of this school of thought is that the leaders of the Trans-Euphrates

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<sup>21</sup> There are still debates as to whether it is true or not that Cyrus released even the gods and statues. Recent studies have argued that the Babylonian Chronicles (Nab. Chron. 3:21-22) confirm that during Cyrus’ time at least the Babylonian gods were returned to their respective shrines (Grabbe, 2004:272).

<sup>22</sup> In his discussion on Judah, Fohrer (1973:331) refers to it as a “territory attached to the province of Samaria.”

Province understood the presence of the returnees and their work as illegal. In fact, Hjelm (2000:30) summarizes this school of thought as follows, “The ruling classes in Samaria, placed there first by the Assyrian governors and later by the Babylonian and Persian authorities, had jurisdiction also over Judaea and its remaining poor landed population.”

Another school of thought, however, claims that, although the present data cannot prove it objectively, Judah was and remained a province throughout the Babylonian dominion until the Persian conquest. Students of this school argue that, first, the biblical witnesses indicate that when the Babylonian army devastated the city of Jerusalem and took the royal family and the upper class captive, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah as governor of Judah (2 Kgs. 25:22-23; Jer.40:7).<sup>23</sup> Ezra-Nehemiah states that both Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were governors of Yehud, as Grabbe (2004:142) commented, “But that Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and probably several other individuals were governors of the province of Judah before Nehemiah seems to be the best explanation in the light of the present data”. Moreover, archaeological and epigraphical studies have revealed that some coins and seal impression on bullae and jars bearing names of governors of the province of Yehud (Grabbe, 2004:141). Whether one chooses to side with one school or the other, it remains certain that it was at the return of Nehemiah and Ezra that Judah took a different posture both politically and religiously.

When Cyrus conquered Babylon without any fighting effort<sup>24</sup> (Hess, 2007:338) and took control of the Babylonian Empire, his main agenda, which was also inherited by his direct successor Cambyses, was to extend and maintain the borders of the empire, focusing mainly on the eastern borders. However, after both Cyrus’ death in a battle in 530 B.C.E. (Berquist, 1995:24) and that of Cambyses, his successor, supposedly Darius I, seemed to have realized that there was a big threat coming from the western borders provoked by Egypt and Greece.<sup>25</sup> Given this political situation, Darius had to shift his attention to Yehud, as it was located at a significantly strategic point between his empire and the two other superpowers.<sup>26</sup> Starting with Cyrus, then his successors, especially Darius, supported the rebuilding of the temple in

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<sup>23</sup> See also Kessler (2008:119).

<sup>24</sup> It is observed that part of the Persian policy was to avoid, as much as possible, military interventions, because such interventions were economically very expensive (Berquist, 1995:61).

<sup>25</sup> In his interpretation of the Persian’s direct intervention in the reconstruction of the temple, Berquist (1995: 111) contended, “The investment of the Persian’s Empire in Yehud’s religious reform has political reasons.”

<sup>26</sup> To see how strategically Judah was located, it is observed that during the Greek dynasty, the two sibling empires fought for many years over Judah. Goldenberg (2007:70) stated, “The Ptolemies and Seleucids fought sporadically for control of Judea, a valuable territory that straddled the border between their kingdoms.”

Jerusalem precisely because of political motives. If one were to trust the canonical records, the first two chapters and sixth chapter of the book of Ezra read that Cyrus issued an edict in the name of the God of Israel and freed the Israelites to go to Jerusalem and “build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem” (1:3b). In response to this imperial mandate, Sheshbazzar, supposedly the son of Jehoiachin (Hess, 2007:338), took the lead of the first group of returnees (1:8-11) to Jerusalem. Later on, Zerubbabel, Jeshua and Nehemiah led another group, supposedly the second. The project of the reconstruction of the temple took about a decade and half to be completed and dedicated<sup>27</sup> (Ezra 6). The question again remains unanswered as to who was in charge of its completion and dedication, since there is no mention of either Zerubbabel or Jeshua. Instead, it reads that “They installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God of Jerusalem, according to what is written in the book of Moses” (v. 18).

The temple was already rebuilt, dedicated and all the offices put in place. However, it seems like protection from outsiders became a challenge. The walls of the city had fallen apart and people with whatever intentions could come in and out at any time they wanted. More than that, keeping in mind that political tension in the western borders still continued, at any time those Persian rivals could easily come in and take control of the city. For security purposes, there was, therefore, a need to make one more investment of both material and human resources to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. To this end, it is said that Artaxerxes I took the liberty of sending one of his trusted Judean men – Nehemiah – to Jerusalem to supervise the work. Kessler (2008:132) commented, “After the Egyptian revolts and then Megabyzos the general’s insurrection had been put down by 448 B.C.E., the central government’s concern must have been to pacify its outlying lands extending to the borders of Egypt. Therefore, Artaxerxes I, in the year 445 (the twentieth year of his reign, according to Neh. 1:1; 2:1) permitted his Jewish cupbearer Nehemiah (Neh. 1:11) to return to Jerusalem in order to stabilize the situation there.” From a canonical point of view, however, it sounds like the initiative to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls came from Nehemiah when some individuals brought the news to him about the degradation of the walls of Jerusalem. After a serious time of fasting and prayer, Nehemiah reported this news to the king, who authorized

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<sup>27</sup> Kessler (2008:131) argues that the construction did not start with the first group but with the second. Therefore, it took only 5 years to be completed instead of 15. However, it is still debated whether this is realistic or not. In ancient times could this kind of project be completed within such short period of time (Kessler, 2008:283-285)?

him to go and reconstruct the walls (Neh. 1-2). In either case, the point here is to highlight the imperial interventions in Yehud's religious development and its socio-religious implications.

Besides, it seems like the reconstruction of both the temple and the walls of the city was not enough to bring the Judahites on the side of Persian authorities against other superpowers in the region and, therefore, more human and material investments were needed, according to Kessler, for internal reforms (2008:132). In Ezra 7 one reads that Artaxerxes<sup>28</sup> commissioned Ezra, a man portrayed as legitimately from the lineage of Aaron the chief priest<sup>29</sup> (vv. 1- 5), and “a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel had given” (v. 6a), to go to Jerusalem with a letter of recommendation from the king himself. From this source, Ezra's main mission was to teach the Law of God to those who were already in the land worshiping their God in the newly rebuilt temple. By knowing the Law, the people would probably have a new perspective and hopefully increase their loyalty not only to their God but also to their rulers, as Berquist (1995:111) stated it well, “In all these ways, Artaxerxes I desired a much stronger presence for the Persian Empire in this frontier colony, and religion proved to be one means toward this end for the emperor, as it did for Darius before him.”<sup>30</sup> According to Holmgren (1987:56), the law had to be taught to both returnees and those in the land, “They were unable to perform many of their priestly functions because no temple existed there, but they were able to continue their ancient role as interpreters of Torah.” Whether Ezra was a true political figure in the Persian Empire, or only an expert teacher and interpreter of the Law of Moses, the aim here is to point out the literary implications of the power the returnees received from the Persian imperial authorities. Because the Persian emperors sought to maintain loyalty from the local leaders and the returnees, neither the Egyptians nor the Greeks seem to have gained absolute control over Yehud since early times of the Persian period (Grabbe, 2004:144).

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<sup>28</sup> With regard to Artaxerxes in Ezra 7, it should be noted that it is disputed among scholars whether the text refers to Artaxerxes I or II.

<sup>29</sup> With regard to Ezra's genealogy, scholars have observed that the final redactor of this source was not quite sure of Ezra's lineage. If he knew, he might have changed the data to accommodate his own agenda. Pakkala, for example, argued that because the editor did not start Ezra's lineage from his immediate parents, in this case Joshua, but he starts from Seraiah who lived about a century and half before Ezra, it is an indication that “...the author of this verse was all but unaware of Ezra's real genealogy” (Pakkala, 2004:24).

<sup>30</sup> As to whether Ezra was a political figure or merely a religious leader, scholars are not in accord. Some, such as Myers (1965), Weanzana (2006) and many others, are of the opinion that Ezra held an important political role in the Persian government: “That Ezra occupied an important position cannot be doubted, since he was entrusted with a special mission by the king (vs. 14). He appears to have had political as well as religious responsibilities” (Myers, 1965:60). Other scholars argue that Ezra was not a politician at all; his scribal title came from his fellow Jews, probably he was one of those who started scribal schools in Babylon and with others collected and interpreted their ancient traditions, which later came to be called the Law of Moses.

### 4.3.1. Social situation

While some scholars have approached this topic – the worship in the context of the Persian Period – from a political point of view, others addressed it from a sociological perspective. According to this approach, the question as to who qualified to hold an Israelite identity is the most predominant of all the questions. Kessler (2008:130) reckoned, “In the Persian period, the question of what the people of Israel is and who belongs to it becomes more and more acute.” Kessler went on to outline at least three social groups that claimed to have an equal right to the ownership of land: a) the deportees; b) the people of the land; and c) the immigrants.<sup>31</sup> The main focus in this regard will be the first two groups. Before coming to these two groups, however, it should be mentioned that just like those who had remained behind during the Babylonian exile and took possession of the land, the returnees were not socio-economically equals; they were classified into three categories: a) the royal family who are said to have, to some extent, maintained their nobility status even in Babylon and hoped to exercise it when they return to their homeland. Scholars such as Grabbe (2004:280) have argued that Zerubbabel’s label as “the signet ring” in Haggai 2:20-23 could mean an attempt to restore the Davidic dynasty; b) the priests and scribes who are also said to have significantly gained trust from the Babylonian and later the Persian authorities. This is the case of Jeshua and Ezra, and Nehemiah; c) the landowners who practiced agriculture in Babylon and hoped to continue the same activity on their return to their homeland. This is enough to acknowledge the complexity of the Yehud society during the Persian period.

From a biblical point of view, one gets the impression that the relationship between the two major groups, the *golah* and the people of the land, was quite good until the arrival of Nehemiah (445 B.C.E.) and later Ezra. The returnees used basically the myth of the “Empty Land” to justify their legitimate ownership of the land. Both Deuteronomistic historians and post-exilic biblical writers portrayed the Babylonian exile as total and complete in the sense that nobody was left in the land. 2 Kings 24:14, for example, reads, “He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans – a total of ten thousand.” In verse 26 of chapter 25, moreover, indicates that, due to Gedaliah’s assassination by Ishmael son of Nethaniah, even the poorest that had remained in the land

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<sup>31</sup> These are the 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. immigrants that Gerstenberger (2011:126) referred to when he wrote, “The historical events of the sixth and fifth century B.C.E. in the Near East precipitated extensive population migrations that we are only marginally able to know or reconstruct. Like many of their contemporaries in other regions, people in the tiny province of Judah were kept on the run by the armies of the major powers, as well as by marauders of small neighboring people groups, and by economic and natural catastrophes.”

fled to Egypt, thus leaving the land absolutely empty.<sup>32</sup> This interpretation is also supported by the contemporary prophets such as Jeremiah. In chapter 39 the prophet sees the situation more seriously than the Deuteronomist historian does. Carroll (1992:80) has referred Jeremiah's version as a "brutal realism". According to Jeremiah, the Babylonians had no mercy on anybody they found in Jerusalem and the surroundings. Nebuchadnezzar and his army slaughtered all the royal members and blinded King Zedekiah (vv. 6-7); they burnt all the houses and the city, and carried all the people that had remained to Babylon (vv. 8-9); and the few people that were left in the land also fled to Egypt (41:18). In fact, the Chronicler went much further to theologize this incident. According to him during the exilic period "The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfilment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah" (2 Chr. 36:21).

The ideology of the "Empty Land" is also reflected in the lists of names of the golah families found in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. Scholars have argued that the lists were compiled mainly to make it clear that only the families whose names were in the lists constituted the legitimate Israelites and, therefore, owners of the land (Esler, 2003:419). However, there are instances where both biblical writers and the returnees acknowledge the fact that the land was not totally empty during the Babylonian exile. The Babylonians had left some people, known as "עם הארץ" (people of the land) to take care of the vineyards (2 Kings 25:22; Jeremiah 39:14), as Farisani (2003:35) stated: "The *am haaretz* are those Jews who did not go into Babylonian exile but stayed in Palestine." Now the reason why the "עם הארץ" were no longer identified with the "גולה" (exiles) is that they had mingled with other ethnic and religious groups from the neighbouring nations and therefore lost both ethnic and religious identities. In other words, the "גולה" used the term "עם הארץ" to separate themselves ethnically, socially, economically, and religiously from the rest, both Jewish and non-Jewish people, who had remained in the land (Brown, 2005:160).

Having mentioned ethnicity and separation, Esler (2003:422) has equally argued that the whole episode of rebuilding the wall had to do with identity. According to Esler, Nehemiah's

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<sup>32</sup> It should be mentioned here that modern scholars have read these verses differently. Barstad (1996:31), for instance, has suggested that the term "all" should not be understood as synonym to "complete" or "totality" but simply many. He wrote, "When the ancient writer says 'all the people' he does not mean 'all the people,' but a large number. And when he refers to a large number, this may simply be because he wants to make a point with regard to the importance of what had happened." In this case, according to Barstad, the term 'all' does not necessarily mean 'total' or 'complete'; it means many people were taken to Babylon.



sadness in his face was not merely because of the walls that had been destroyed and burnt down, but it was because his ancestral place remained unprotected, and the returnees could easily mingle with other people and therefore lose their ethnic identity. Religiously, on the other hand, it has been noted that the rebuilding of the walls simply meant, first of all, a definite and practical separation between the people of the temple and the rest of the populace and, secondly, the increase of power of those in charge of the temple. Berquist (1995:114) summarizes this phenomenon as follows:

The rebuilding of the city wall was Nehemiah's prime task, and it enhanced the separation between the rich and the poor by creating a physical barrier between the urban elites and Yehud's countryside dwellers. In this context, it is striking that the Book of Nehemiah details the people involved in the wall construction; they represent leaders from the tribes (Nehemiah 3). In fact, the priests conduct the organization of the project (Nehemiah 3:1). These who will live within the walls of the restored city include the priests, the temple servants, the merchants, goldsmiths, perfumers, and others – clearly the upper classes of Yehudite society. The rebuilt city exists for the urban elite and their cohorts from Persia; the outlying, unprotected countryside remains for the poorest inhabitants of the land.

In this quotation, Berquist emphasized that the reconstruction of the Jerusalem walls resulted in explicit separation between the elite and the rest of the inhabitants of the land. Now on to the next point of this section – the economic perspective.

#### **4.3.2. Economic Conditions**

Kessler (2008) has dedicated a few pages to address the economic situation of the Persian Yehud. He introduces his discussion as follows: “An essential element of continuity lay at the heart of a divided society. All the elements of the indebtedness, oppression, and impoverishment that can be observed in the late monarchical period are found also in the Persian era; the tendency to impoverishment appears to have increased” (2008:135). According to Kessler, one of the biblical texts which provides a better description of this phenomenon is in Isaiah 58. Verses 6-7 read, “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” In this passage the prophet points out that oppression and injustice were part of everyday life in the land and, as a result, there were people who had more than they needed, while others went without food, without shelter and clothes to cover their bodies. Just like in many African and Asian societies today, the poor people had to engage in day-labor for their survival (Kessler, 2008:135).



This phenomenon seems to have been aggravated by the mass migration of the returnees. Despite the fact that most of these returnees were economically stable and could afford to purchase land, the majority of them claimed their land or the land of their ancestors back from those who had remained in the land. Kessler (2008:137) suggested that Zachariah's message in 5:1-4 is about the returning of the properties acquired illegally by the people of the land to the previous landowners, in this case the returnees. If this is the case, then it implied that a significant number of people, especially those who did not go to the exile, remained homeless and landless.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, those people were forced to give themselves or their sons and daughters to slavery in order to get some money and pay tax, as described in Nehemiah 5. Although the issue of taxation in Yehud stands as a matter of speculation, it is noted that the Persian Empire demanded from its subjects taxes paid in coins, either in full or in part. In this case, it was necessary that each family come up with a good harvest for family consumption with a surplus for sale in order to pay their taxes and tributes (Grabbe, 2004:207).

#### **4.3.3. Religious Situation**

The returnees were fully aware of the fact that although the temple was rebuilt, the worship reestablished and the Jerusalem walls renovated and put up again, they were not on an island; they were still a Persian colony and therefore potentially vulnerable to the Persian cultural influence. Fohrer (1973), for example, has pointed out that there were at least two foreign religious beliefs that had a significant influence in the community. One was the Persian religion which believed in dualism between good and evil and rejected animal sacrifice in favor of ethical conduct. A direct outcome of these beliefs can be found in Malachi's messages about worship in the temple, in Jerusalem. Supposedly around 465 B.C.E. Malachi condemns the attitude of the priests with regard to the sacrifices in the temple and the rest of the community with their tithes. According to Malachi, the priests brought blind, lame and sick animals for sacrifice (1:6-2:9), while the rest of worshipers withheld their tithes and free offering from the Temple (3:6-12). The other influence came from the old Canaanite religion of fertility. Isaiah 57 extensively addressed this situation, when Isaiah shouted, "You have made your beds on a high and lofty hill... forsaking me, you uncovered your bed you climbed into it and opened it wide; you made a pact with those whose beds you love and you looked on their nakedness" (vv. 7-8). Looking at this sort of prophetic message, Fohrer

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<sup>33</sup> It has been mentioned in the course of this writing that the main source of income for family living in ancient Israel was agriculture. In this case, land became one of the principal natural resources.

(1973:355) commented, “Thus Yahwism appeared to be in mortal danger in Jerusalem. The necessary reforms were introduced by the Babylonian Diaspora, which was religiously stricter.”

In short, the fact that the returnees represented to some extent the Persian presence and authority in the province of Yehud, there is no doubt that they held not only the political power but also the religious authority. This, however, did not happen automatically or instantaneously. As indicated above, this transition moved gradually from the royal palace to the temple court under the leadership of the priesthood. In other words, when the Judean dynasty was dismantled during the deportation, the Persians tried to restore it by allowing a significant influence of the priestly circle. In his analysis of this type of ruling system, Berquist (1995:135) noted, “The temple was a physical center for the new state and also functioned as a civic and political locus.”<sup>34</sup> At a certain point, moreover, the priestly circle completely replaced the royal court and Yehud became what scholars have described as “temple-state” under the authority of the priestly court (Grabbe, 2004:147).<sup>35</sup> This is said to be the seed of Judaism in Yehud.

#### **4.4. The Rise of Judaism**

It would be useful to introduce this section by mentioning, once again, that the rise and fall of any social movement is always a process and, therefore, it is not realistic to attempt to suggest the exact date of its origin and its respective lapse (cf. 3.2.4). This is so with Judaism; its origin is not an all of a sudden event but rather a process. In fact, Sigal (1988:31) has outlined at least three phases of Judaism, namely proto-Judaism, Judaism, and late or Rabbinic Judaism. Other scholars have added one more phase known as Orthodox Judaism situated in the first century of the Christian era (Schmidt, 2001:24). According to Sigal, although the three phases seem distinct from each other, they overlap in a way that is difficult to draw a dividing line between them. He wrote, “That which scholars call ‘late Judaism’ or ‘Rabbinic Judaism,’ has its origins and evolution in the period of Israel’s monarchy and even earlier...The quintessential theological doctrines, ethical principles, and rituals were present

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<sup>34</sup> According to Berquist (1995:147) the temple also functioned as a symbol for the unity and solidarity among the returnees in particular and with the imperial system in general.

<sup>35</sup> This is exactly what VanderKam (2012:72) meant when he wrote, “The high priest seems at times to have exercised political power as well serving as the chief national official in the absence of a governor.” In fact he continued to indicate that almost the whole mandate of the Hasmoneans until the Roman conquest the high-priests were the head of the cultic affairs, the chief of the state and the commander of the army. See also Balentine (1996:142).

from the dim beginning of Israel's odyssey"<sup>36</sup> (1988:31). In other words, one could argue that it is almost impossible to talk about one phase without a direct or indirect reference to the others. It becomes important, therefore, to assert that the aim of this section is not to provide a comprehensive discussion of Judaism and its development, but rather to highlight the historical background and some factors that contributed to its birth, starting in the Persian period. Before coming to that, the issue of terminology will be addressed.

One key term that needs to be defined is Judean. Being a name of the Persian province, everybody who was born within the juridical borders of that province came to be known as Judean. No matter where one had established his residence (whether in Babylon, in Samaria, in Egypt, or elsewhere outside the province) or what could be his political, social or religious background, as long as the individual proved to be a native of the province of Judah, he had full qualifications to be a Judean. In fact, Grabbe (2004) moved further to argue that even those who were born outside Judah but in a Judean family had the right to claim their Judean citizenship. He stated, "Thus, membership of the Jewish community or people was primarily a matter of birth. If you were born into the people, whether in Judah or in one of the communities elsewhere in the ancient Near East, you were a Jew/Judean" (2004:168). With time, however, through the influence of the returnees from the Babylonian exile, Judah changed from being a political colony to a religious center, and its connotation took a totally different meaning; now it is not a matter of birth but faithfulness to the pre-exilic ancient Israel's traditions and their interpretations (Hayes, 2011:1). In other words, one could be born within the judicial borders of the Judean province or in a Judean family outside the province, but if that person would not willingly submit him/herself to and be a faithful practitioner of those traditions, he/she would definitely lose his/her Judean status. The second term is Judaism.

Biblical scholars such as Sigal (1988), Goldenberg (2007) and Hayes (2001) have attempted to give a definition of the movement called Judaism. Sigal wrote, "Only after postexilic Judah became the successor state to the old northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, and after it laid sole claim of preserving the older Yahwistic religion and Mosaic traditions, is it proper to refer to this religion as 'Judaism'" (1988:31). Almost two decades later, Goldenberg described Judaism as "a religion that worships God through *words* – prayers, sermons, the reading of scriptures, and the like – in buildings called *synagogues*

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<sup>36</sup> See also Schiffman (2012:420).

under the leadership of learned *rabbis*” (2007:5). In agreement with both Sigal and Goldenberg, Hayes came up with the following definition, “The term *Judaism* refers to an evolving *religious* tradition most, but not all, of the adherents of which are *ethnically Jewish*” (2011:ix). In these definitions, the three scholars have identified one common ground: Judaism stands as a religion that is based on Mosaic traditions and worships the God known as Yahweh.

Moreover, related to the second definition is the role of religion. According to Goldenberg (2007:34), in ancient societies religion was a key element for group identity; people, identified themselves as a distinct group from others through their religious beliefs and practices. In fact, although it may not be the case in the modern societies, one could also give a reflection on the question as to why Christians identify themselves differently from Hindus or Muslims or any other modern religion. It is because they differ significantly in both beliefs and practices. To take the same question to a deeper level, why do people prefer to die for their beliefs, or to kill others who profess different religions from theirs? Simply because religious beliefs and practices seem to clearly demonstrate the identity of a given group of people, and whatever threatens that identity is immediately rejected.<sup>37</sup> It is likely to have been the case among the returnees from the Babylonian exile. They were aware of the fact that whatever religion they identified with, be it the Babylonian religion, the Persian, the Egyptian or later the Greek or Roman, that religion would determine their identity. The only way they could avoid falling into that kind of trap was to reject all social and religious influences around them, get hold of their pre-exilic or Mosaic traditions, work on them innovatively and come up with a unique religion, which came to be their identity.<sup>38</sup> It is in this context that this study will argue that Judaism came into being as a result of the identity negotiation of an ideologically related minority group in a situation of socio-political challenges, as Balentine (1996:144) pointed out, “The urgent task for the community in Yehud was to survive, not in some abstract, imaginary world, but in the real world of the Persian Empire. The task was to create a ‘visible self,’ a self that could exist meaningfully in the environment in which it was placed.”

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<sup>37</sup> In his study of identity, Schmidt (2001:23) relates the episode about the death of an Indian girl named Chachugi who refused to submit herself to female circumcision.

<sup>38</sup> With the term innovation, the researcher means that the returnees used the existing pre-exilic traditions to negotiate their new identity.

#### 4.4.1. The Archaemenid Period

History has revealed that politics and religion seem to be two sides of the same coin. Those holding political powers tend to be in control of the religious affairs. They even go much further to impose their religious convictions and even to persecute and execute those who refuse to follow such beliefs and practices.<sup>39</sup> A classic example is the two massacres of Alexander Jannaeus, son and successor of Aristobulus (cf. 4.3.2.3 below). In this respect, there was no way that the returnees would be successful in their identity negotiation without having a strong political influence. This is what scholars such as Berquist (1995:108-109) noted, that the strong feeling against the peoples of the land should be viewed in the context that the returnees were struggling to take over the political leadership from the foreign governors, such as Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. 2:10), and the governors of Trans-Euphrates, Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel (Ezra 3:7). The Persian policy with regard to the local leadership and religious freedom was in favour of the returnees' agenda. Instead of the palace, the temple became the throne of the ruling class. Ideologically, this significant shift was due to what Levin (2005:122) referred to when he noted that the Davidic dynasty had failed the returnees and, therefore, they longed for God's kingdom and no longer for a kingdom led by human kings.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in Ezra 4:12-13 Zerubbabel and his team are accused by the so-called 'enemies of Judah' of rebuilding a "rebellious and wicked city". According to the accusers, once the rebuilding of the city and its walls was done, the king's subjects in that city would rebel as their previous kings in the pre-exilic period did, and they would no longer pay their taxes and tributes. Consequently, given the fact that Judah was geographically in a strategic position, the rebuilding of the city would definitely result in serious political and economic crises for the Persian Empire.

However, the fact that the returnees had strong influence both politically and religiously did not mean everything ran peacefully. It is already noted above that, geographically, Judah was located at a very strategic place; a place of common contact between Persia, Greece and Egypt. From a sociological point of view, this location seemed to constitute a strong threat

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<sup>39</sup> Braxton (2011:558-559), in his discussion about politics and preaching in the context of postcolonial African-American theology, gives a glimpse of this phenomenon. According to this theology, the colonizers came as missionaries who had been sent to the nations to proclaim the good news, yet they had the agenda to spread imperialism which brought "destruction and death to African-American communities." In their turn, during the postcolonial period the African-American theologians and preachers used the biblical message not only bring people into the forgiveness of personal sins, but also as a tool for political resistance.

<sup>40</sup> As mentioned above, the returnees interpreted the exilic experience as a direct outcome of the sins committed by their human kings. For example, Nehemiah based his argument when rebuking the returnees who had taken foreign wives concerning Solomon's attitude towards this issue. "Was it not because of marriages like those that Solomon king of Israel sinned?" (Neh. 13:26).

for the Judeans' identity negotiation. Berquist (1995) noted that the military presence of both sides, Persia and Egypt, at certain points might have influenced the social life of Yehud. He stated, "Culturally, the impact of other regions upon Yehud's culture would have grown. The Egyptian influences during 401 – 380 B.C.E. would have provided new cultural inputs into Yehud society. Likewise, the increase in Greek trade would have brought new technology, new styles, and new ideas into the cultural milieu of Yehud" (1995:126).

#### **4.4.2. Hellenization and the Seleucid Dynasty**

It has been noted among biblical scholars and historians that Alexander the Great did not make significant changes in his leadership; he simply maintained the same principles and policies of his predecessors.<sup>41</sup> However, it is also argued that his ascending to political power introduced a new phase in the history of the Mediterranean region in general and the Second Temple Judean community in particular. Seeman and Marshak (2012:30) commented, "The conquest of Alexander the Great had far-reaching consequences for the Jews. In the course of a single decade (334-324 B.C.E.), Jewish communities everywhere found themselves subjects of a new world empire ruled by Macedonians and connected with Greek culture." Different from the Babylonians, whose political policy was based on deportation of the conquered elite class in order to maintain control over their subjects and the Persians' on decentralization of power and freedom of their subjects, the Greeks used their culture as the main tool to rule. In other words, scholars such as VanderKam (2001) and many others have called the Greek dominion "Hellenization" or "cultural hegemony".

Johnson (1999) has done a comprehensive study of this period and identified at least three components of the Hellenization philosophy. One is the use of one language – the Greek language.<sup>42</sup> Alexander and his successors promoted mass migration<sup>43</sup> and practice of intermarriage, hoping that in the long term there would be one people of one language. Johnson noted, "He [Alexander] encouraged his soldiers into intermarriage with native women to create one race, and set a good example by his marriage with the Indian princess Roxanne" (1999:25). The second component of Hellenization was the institution of *polis* – a

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<sup>41</sup> Goldenberg (2007:68) commented, "Alexander kept the Persian system of dividing his kingdom into regions or satrapies and placing a trusted subordinate in charge of each; once active warfare had ended, many of his generals were appointed to these positions."

<sup>42</sup> VanderKam (2001:11) noted, "The age of Alexander is known as the Hellenistic period, a time when aspects of Greek culture and knowledge of the Greek language became widespread and dominant."

<sup>43</sup> Whether that is historically true or not, ancient historians such as Josephus noted that during Antiochus' reign about 2,000 Jewish families from both Judea and Babylon were displaced to the land of the western part of Asia Minor, such as Phrygia and Lydia (Seeman and Marshak, 2012:37).

place where citizens could gather together, market their ideologies and discuss their social-political concerns. The city of Jerusalem found itself fit for this type of socio-political institution, and during the reign of Antiochus it was turned into a polis.<sup>44</sup> The third component of Hellenization was religious syncretism. This component was expressed through the assumption that there was no universal deity; all the local gods, such as Baal, Shemai, Zeus Olympus, including Yahweh, were of the same rank and, therefore, deserved the same degree of honour and dignity in every polis.

This new socio-political reality greatly affected the three essential areas of the Second Temple Judean community. Firstly, the promotion of both mass migration and intermarriage seems to compromise the sense of nationalism and ideological ethnic identity. For example, in addressing the issue of territory, Schmidt (2001) noted that the Judean territory changed at least three times. During the Seleucid period Judah was known as a nation exclusively of Jews, and it extended its borders from the Jordan and the Dead Sea to the east. In the south it was limited by Idumaea and in the north the boundary was between Judea and Samaria. In the Hasmonaean period, however, the territory of Judah expanded. It included Samaria, Galilee, the coastal part extending from Mount Carmel to Raphia, and the territory from Gaulanitis, in the north, to Moab, in the south. When the Romans took control of the Mediterranean region and Herod became the governor of Judah, its borders changed once again; it included Bethania, Trachonitis, and the east of Lake Gennesaret. This phenomenon also concerns the issue of intermarriage, which is strongly opposed in Ezra-Nehemiah's writings, as Schmidt commented, "This territorial expansion was accompanied by a policy of Judaization of the annexed regions (2001:27)<sup>45</sup>. Secondly, at a certain point, the religious power was taken from the priests and given to imperial governors. At this point, the priestly office was based no longer on family hierarchy, but on the governor's appointees. The governor, in this case, had the power to remove the high priest from the office (even if he was the legitimate one) and replace him with the one he wanted (2 Macc. 4:23-30). This was probably the time when the temple treasury was stolen by Seleucus (2 Macc. 3).<sup>46</sup> Thirdly, like any other previous regimes, the temple became one of the major targets. Thus, as soon as the Seleucids gained victory over the Ptolemies, they installed a military fortress in Jerusalem, right next to the temple. Later, the Jerusalem Temple was finally dedicated to Zeus Olympius (Kessler,

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<sup>44</sup> Schmidt (2001:74) observed that the turning of the city of Jerusalem into a polis was not initiated by the Greek rulers, but by the Jerusalemites who sent a request to Antiochus that their city be restructured as a polis.

<sup>45</sup> See also Grabbe (2004:138).

<sup>46</sup> See also Seeman and Marshak (2012:38) and VanderKam (2001:19).



2008:159). From then on it turned into a place of prostitution, and the Jews were forced to offer sacrifices and eat impure animals<sup>47</sup> (2 Macc. 6) until the situation came to the point that the Judeans were prohibited to perform their religion in favour of non-Jewish worship systems (Kessler, 2008:168). This brings up the next era.

#### **4.4.3. The Hasmonean State**

The Hasmonean state was founded by a family known by the same name. There is no absolute certainty as to the origins of this family. What seems to be certain, however, is that if the family was related to either monarchic or priestly lineages of the traditional pre-exilic descendants of the Second Temple Judean community, they might have adopted the name, as Goldenberg noted, “The family came to be known as *Hasmonaeans*, after a distant ancestor who was presumed to have given his name to the line” (2007:82). In the course of time the Hasmonean family grew strong in zeal for the pre-exilic tradition and finally ascended to both religious and political powers and formed the very first known Judean state, which lasted approximately 80 years (140 – 63 B.C.E.).

In response to all these new socio-historical realities, especially the turning of the temple into a place of the profane, the Hasmoneans, led by their patriarch Mattathias, engaged in very strong opposition, which turned into a military conflict against the Seleucids (1 Macc. 2:23-28; VanderKam, 2001:21; Goldenberg, 2007:79-80). In the beginning, the Hasmoneans’ major objective was to protect the Mosaic traditions with respect to the sanctuary and the Torah.<sup>48</sup> To that end, they had to recover and strengthen the priestly office. This objective was partially accomplished when the Seleucids decided to stop the Hellenistic practices, and finally the temple was purified and rededicated in the year 165 B.C.E. The Seleucid dynasty, however, remained in power, and the king continued to appoint the high priest<sup>49</sup> until, at last, Mattathias’ last son Jonathan was found fit for the office. He held the office for a very short period and was succeeded by his brother Simon. After a very remarkable contribution to the process of Judean liberation from the Seleucid’s yoke, Simon died and was succeeded by his son John Hyrcanus who is said to have committed his entire life to see the dream of his ancestors come true. VanderKam gives a glimpse of Hyrcanus’ successes as follows, “After Antiochus VII died in 129, John was able to conquer territory in ancient Moab and Samaria where he destroyed the Samaritan temple and forced those who worshipped there to follow

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<sup>47</sup> For more information, see Schmidt (2001:20).

<sup>48</sup> Goldenberg (2007:80).

<sup>49</sup> Goldenberg (2007:81).

Jewish laws such as circumcision (2001:27). These achievements continued until the Hasmoneans gained both political and religious powers. Around 104 B.C.E. Aristobulus, John Hyrcanus' direct successor, was able to hold both priestly and dynastic offices. This achievement, however, seemed to be of no advantage for the Judeans. Alexander Jannaeus, the son and successor of Aristobulus, turned the basket of hope upside down. He is said to have conducted at least two mass murders. One of them occurred during the Festival of Tabernacles when he poured the ceremonial water on his feet instead of the altar and the people got angry at him. In response to the people's reaction, Jannaeus ordered the killing of thousands of Judeans (VanderKam, 2001:29). In fact it is said that Jannaeus was so brutal to the point that he came to be known as the "Lion of Wrath" (Seeman and Marshak, 2012:48).

It is in these socio-historical settings that Judaism, in its proper sense, became a real tool to fight against Hellenization in favour of the pre-exilic or Mosaic traditions. Of course, the response of the Judean community was not unanimous. Some found Hellenization to be another way they could identify with and live life to the fullest. These are the so-called Sadducees. Others, called Pharisees, decided to reject the way of Hellenization and claim back their heritage and fight for it to the death. Still others found life outside in the world to be unbearable and, therefore, chose to renounce themselves and spend the rest of their lives in the caves of the Dead Sea coast. Goldenberg (2007:69) summarised this phenomenon as follows: "Certain families learned to become comfortable with Greek ways, while other no doubt looked on with dismay at this departure from ancestral custom. Certain individuals rose to positions of power and honour, while others no doubt looked on with envy and resentment. In an age-old pattern, the countryside saw the city fall into wickedness (as they saw it), while anger and bitterness slowly mounted." This all happened in Judah, which poses the question now: What was the Samaritans response?

#### **4.5. Samaria and the Rise of Samaritanism**

From a political vantage point, there is no indication that the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria suffered the 587/6 Babylonian devastation, as its counterpart the southern kingdom of Judah did.<sup>50</sup> If any political changes had been made by the Babylonians, it was only to integrate the Samaritans into their governing policies. In this case, unlike the southern Judeans, the Samaritans did not need to return home and claim their political rights

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<sup>50</sup> Scholars such as Knoppers (2013:121) have supported this point on the assumption that if Samaria did not take part in the rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, there was no reason to suggest that its towns had experienced significant destruction.

during the Persian period. At the time when Cyrus proclaimed freedom to the deportees and sent them to their homeland, the Samaritans were only anxious to welcome home their relatives and integrate them into the system by helping them to reconstruct both the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. The same can be said with regard to the economic situation. Compared with Judah during both Babylonian and Persian periods, Samaria is said to be farther advanced economically.<sup>51</sup> In fact, it has been noted that Samaria was one of the most important regions during the Persian period. Zangenberg (2012:325-326) wrote, “The city of Samaria, the former seat of the Persian governor and later a Macedonian garrison, was certainly more important and cosmopolitan than Jerusalem.” This is not a surprise, because even before the exile, Samaria was known to be one of the important commercial corridors (cf. 2.3.3.1). If this is the case, one can argue that while the southern returnees lived on donations (probably from the imperial coffers) for their settlement, the Samaritans were very much independent with stable infra-structures. Now, if it is true that Samaria was both politically and economically more stable than Judah, one can ask: what about the religious situation?

As mentioned above (cf. 4.2.4.1) some scholars have based their arguments on Jeremiah 41:5-6 saying that during the Babylonian period the Samaritans went down to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. However, other scholars such as Knoppers (2013:122) have addressed this subject differently<sup>52</sup> and argued that while it is true that the northern kingdom had at a certain point accommodated other gods,<sup>53</sup> it is certain that they still identified themselves as Yahwists, and they dedicated shrines such as Bethel to Yahweh. If this is true, then there is no reason to assume that all the northerners, even the ordinary people, left Bethel and regularly went all the way down to Jerusalem to present their offerings and sacrifices.<sup>54</sup> In addition, scholars have argued that if one would seriously consider the ancient norm that each nation/kingdom had to have a national shrine not only for the worship of the national deity

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<sup>51</sup> Despite that studies have revealed that Samaria was very well positioned in terms of commerce and trading, scholars such as Grabbe (2004:156) have also pointed out that Samaria was a better place for agriculture than Judah. With regard to the economic condition of Judah, see Kessler (2008:136).

<sup>52</sup> Knoppers (2013:122) does not disagree completely with the possibility that some northerners might have gone down to Jerusalem to worship, but he also argues that it should not be generalized. He stated, “To be sure, it may be acknowledged that there were some northern patrons who supported the Jerusalem sanctuary (e.g. Jer. 41:4-8), but such pilgrimages southward should not be taken as representative to the whole.”

<sup>53</sup> As mentioned in the course of this study, the practice of accommodating other deities rather than the national one was not a phenomenon found only in the north, but also in the south. For that reason both Deuteronomists and the prophets were very strong in their call to the worship of one God – Yahweh.

<sup>54</sup> Scholars such as Zangenberg (2012:325) have argued that at least until the end of the Ptolemaic regime Jerusalem was still smaller than Bethel.

but also for the collection of imperial tributes and taxes, it should be applicable to the northern kingdom of Israel as well (Knoppers, 2013:122). In fact, archaeology has revealed that the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim which is estimated to have been built during the Persian period was not the first one; before the Persian period there was a shrine dedicated to Yahweh on that site. This sanctuary is said to have been improved during the Hellenistic period (Goldenberg, 2007:65; Zangenberg, 2012:326-327). In support of the hypothesis that the shrine on Mt. Gerizim was dedicated to Yahweh, excavators have identified bones supposedly of animals, such as goats, sheep, cattle, and doves offered as sacrifices, and from around the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Knoppers, 2013:123-124). One observation that can be made with regard to this list of animals is that all are in the category of clean and, therefore, fit for sacrifice to Yahweh, as described in both Judean and Samaritan Pentateuchs. There are two more archaeological facts that modern scholars use to support the assumption that the Samaritans worshiped Yahweh during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, namely, the use of personal names of a Yahwistic character and the usage of particular ancestral names. After a brief exposition of this phenomenon, Knoppers summarizes, “When surveying the Mt. Gerizim onomasticon with the early Hellenistic period in view, one is struck by three things, (1) the number of common Yahwistic names; (2) the number of archaizing names, that is, names that recall the anthroponyms of male and female figures associated with Israel’s classical past; and (3) the number of common Hebrew names” (2013:128). Now if this is the case, the question that remains is about the rise of Samaritanism.

From the preceding, one argues that from the Babylonian period until the early Hellenistic era, Samaria enjoyed remarkable political, economic and religious stability compared to Judah. A turning point, however, occurred in 331 B.C.E. when the Samaritans were found guilty of murder; they had murdered the appointed prefect of Syria named Andromachus. In fact, some sources report that the Samaritans had burned alive this important ruler (Crown, 1989:199). In response to this criminal incident, Alexander the Great sent his well-trained forces to go and destroy the city of Samaria and deport its citizens. Alexander turned Samaria into a Macedonian colony. As a result Samaria partially lost its political privileges. In fact, archaeological sources have disclosed hundreds of skeletons from the caves of Wâdi ed-Dâliyeh. These were of the Samaritans who sought to escape from Alexander’s harsh punitive reprisals (Knoppers, 2013:169). From that time on, Samaria was not a home for Samaritans only; it seems that besides the Macedonians whom Alexander encouraged to move and occupy Samaria, it was also a home of the Seleucid army (1 Macc. 3:10). This phenomenon

is also attested to archaeologically, as Grabbe (2004:158) pointed out, “With regard to other aspects of life in Samaria, the seals, seal impressions, and coins are important for indicating the general cultural influence on Samaria. They saw both Persian and Greek influence, though the Greek influence appears to have been mediated primarily through Phoenicia.” Another incident that needs to be pointed out here is that of 296 B.C.E. It is reported that in this year Demetrius I destroyed, if not all Samaria, part of it. The reason at this time might be due to constant political disputes between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties. Archaeological finds revealed that the eastern valleys of Samaria and the Shechem area had “experienced population loss in the Hellenistic period” (Knoppers, 2013:171).

The most decisive moment of the Samaritans’ history and the rise of Samaritanism was when John Hyrcanus assumed the Judean priestly office and also took the lead of the Hasmonean liberation party. As mentioned previously, one of Hyrcanus’ greatest achievements was the conquest of neighbouring nations/kingdoms, including Samaria. As soon as he captured Samaria, he destroyed the temple on Mt. Gerizim and forced the Samaritans to convert to Judaism by following the Jewish laws and practices, such as circumcision (VanderKam, 2001:27). Some scholars are of the opinion that the destruction of the Samaritan’s temple was motivated by the dispute between the two nations that started all the way back in the pre-exilic period (Goldenberg, 2007:65). Others, however, approach it from a different angle and argue that it had nothing to do with the distant past. Due to their contemporary political and economic situations, the Hasmoneans found it unhelpful to have another well established and competing Yahwist community such as that in Samaria.<sup>55</sup> Knoppers states it correctly, “When John Hyrcanus destroyed the Mt. Gerizim temple in 112-111 BCE, he ended the existence of the chief Yahwistic competition to the Jerusalem sanctuary within the land” (2013:212). This is shown by the fact that the citizens of the conquered nations were not only forced to follow the Jewish law and practices but also to perform all their worshiping duties in the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>56</sup> In this case, Jerusalem became the central place of worship, and in every festival

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<sup>55</sup> One hardly hears about any case in the ancient days where the imperial power tried to monopolize religious beliefs and practices. Although the Babylonians are said to have destroyed the temple of Jerusalem and confiscated all the temple utensils, they seemed to maintain freedom of worship by not forcing their subjects to worship the Babylonian deities. In fact, according to Psalm 137, the Babylonians encouraged their deportees to sing songs of Zion even in the Babylonian lands, “There on the poplars we hung out harps for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded song of joy; they said, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How can we sing songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?” (vv. 2-4).

<sup>56</sup> In addressing the question: “Who are the Jews” De Lange (2010:1) has argued that while to be a Jew may mean to be born in a Jewish family, it may as well be different from being a follower and practitioner of the Jewish religion. He wrote, “It is sometimes said that ‘Judaism is not a proselytising religion’, meaning that Jews do not actively seek to make converts to Judaism. Yet this formulation is fundamentally misleading. Religious

season, all worshipers from every conquered nation were required to go down to Jerusalem with all their tithes, votive offerings and sacrifices. Goldenberg (2007:87) summarized it as follows, “People from these areas now joined the crowds of pilgrims at the great festivals.<sup>57</sup> They also became subject to the Torah’s laws requiring annual payments of harvest and livestock to the priests and the Levites. The new kings were also priests, and they managed to gather much of this revenue to themselves.”

How did the Samaritans respond to these new realities? Scholars are of the opinion that the Samaritans interpreted this phenomenon as pure religious and economic manipulation. Although it was not a good experience for the Samaritans that they had to leave their place of worship and go all the way to Jerusalem, the issue at stake was the way the Jerusalemites interpreted the law in order to define the place of worship. Fohrer (1973: 369) commented, “The cause of the schism was therefore not Samaritan opposition to the law or the Jerusalem Temple, but opposition to the South’s claim to exercise political and religious leadership and to David as a national and religious hero.” According to the Samaritans, the Hasmoneans’ campaign in favour of Jerusalem represents a continuation of the Davidic dynasty. One of the Second Temple literary texts illustrate this campaign is 2 Chronicles 7:13-18. Verses 13-16 read that Yahweh chose the Jerusalem Temple to be the only legitimate place of prayer, and it is only from there that He would hear and answer those prayers. The last two verses 17-18 talk about the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty. “I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel’” (v. 18). For the Samaritans, Jerusalem had never been connected to the ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not even to Moses and Joshua (cf. 1.8.1.2 above), nor was David ever their father. Jerusalem’s existence started with the political warrior David and, therefore, it is David’s city and not Yahweh’s. As a result, the Samaritans denied the status of inspiration of every piece of Hebrew literature and tradition attached to both David and Jerusalem (Goldenberg, 2007:65). This literature and traditions include the whole Hebrew Bible, except the Pentateuch, as Sacchi (2000:158) pointed out, “One sign of this distance is that books such as Samuel or Kings, which clearly state the promise of an eternal reign to David and his descendants, were never accepted into the Samaritan canon. Nor were the books of the prophets accepted, because some of the prophets “were too closely tied to the

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Jews are generally proud of their religion, they are happy to explain it to non-Jews, they welcome and are even flattered by the interest of outsiders.”

<sup>57</sup> See also in Nickelsburg and Stone (2009:66).



kingdom and reigning family...” In fact, with regard to the ideology of the prophets and their messages, the Samaritans considered Moses to be the only and true prophet of Yahweh, and the rest were simply sorcerers (cf. 2.6.1.3; Hjelm, 2000:254). Even the Pentateuch had to be winnowed to remove all the passages that favoured Jerusalem and David/Judah, whether implicitly or explicitly, and to replace it with Mt. Gerizim and Moses, respectively. Samaritanism then becomes a movement that rejected the religious submission to the Jewish ideologies of Jerusalem and Davidic dynasty.

#### **4.6. The Diaspora**

The term diaspora traditionally refers to those Jewish communities that, for various reasons, in the 8<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C. migrated to different gentile regions, such as Syria, Babylonia, Persia, Egypt and so on. In this study the researcher has chosen to look at the Jewish community in Elephantine, Egypt, for one simple reason. The scholarly assumption is that, different from other places where the Jewish community fled to, generally speaking, Egypt was like a home for them (Gerstenberger, 2011:126). Consequently, from an archaeological vantage point, the Elephantine site has become an important source for better knowledge of ancient Israel in general. With regard to the differences between the Elephantine community and other Jewish communities outside Jerusalem and Palestine, Kessler (2008:127) has outlined at least two. One is that most of those who migrated to Egypt, with the exception of some (Jer. 41), did it voluntarily, while those who relocated to Babylonia, for example, were politically forced and hoped that one day they would come back home. However, studies have revealed that when Cyrus gave freedom to the deportees to return home, the majority of them preferred to remain in Babylon. The other difference is that the former group was free to build a shrine for their deity called Yehu, and they worshiped him there (Gerstenberger, 2011:127), while the latter even failed to sing joyous songs to their deity, because they felt they were in a foreign land. The focus of the researcher in the following paragraphs will be with respect to this second difference.

Studies suggested that the formal settlement of the Jewish community in Elephantine goes back as far as the Persian period in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. It is said that the Persian Emperor had recruited some Jewish men into the military force and settled them in Elephantine to protect the Egyptian frontiers (VanderKam, 2001:147). It is not clear whether this group of soldiers was solely composed of Judeans or whether there were also other nationalities. It is likely that the second option is better, especially when referring to military issues. This



phenomenon became evident in the Hellenistic period when the community became a mixture. In fact, inscriptions have indicated that the Jewish community in Elephantine “was living among a variety of other peoples on the island” (VanderKam 2001:147). In any case, archaeology has revealed that in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. there was a temple in that community dedicated to Yehu (Kessler, 2008:171).<sup>58</sup> For some reasons unknown to us, this temple was destroyed supposedly by the non-Jewish people.<sup>59</sup> Goldenberg suggests that it might be due to religious conflicts between the Egyptian community residing on that island and the Yahwist Jews. He wrote, “Here the Jewish God, apparently called Yehu, was honoured through familiar sacrificial rites, a situation that surely pleased the local Jews greatly but also greatly irritated the local priests of the Egyptian god Khnum: the temple of Khnum, otherwise the main temple on the island, felt intense pressure from this competitor from abroad” (2007:63).

Having their temple been destroyed, the Elephantine Jewish community sought legal protection and help from both imperial and provincial levels to rebuild it. One correspondence probably from the imperial level is called the Passover papyrus. This document orders the local Persian official in Elephantine to protect the Jewish community on that island from any disturbance as they celebrate the Passover feast. Moreover, there are two other correspondences, both about the reconstruction of the temple in Elephantine which had been destroyed. The first one was directed to the priestly leadership in Jerusalem and, after three years without any response, the Elephantine community sent another letter but now to both the high priest in Jerusalem and the governor in Samaria (cf. 2.4 above; Brosius, 2006:71). Both leaders responded positively and gave permission for the rebuilding of the temple.

However, critical scholars such as Goldenberg (2007:63-66) have given a very important observation about this authorization letter from both the Jerusalem priestly leadership and the Samaritan governor. The letter reads: “If our lord [...] and the Temple of Yhw our God be built in Yeb the fortress as it was formerly built, and sheep, ox, and goat will not be offered there but incense and cereal offerings will be offered there” (Grabbe, 2004:211). According

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<sup>58</sup> Kessler (2008:171) noted that the Elephantine temple was not the only shrine in foreign lands dedicated to Yahweh. According to him, there were two more temples, one in east of Jordan, built by Hyrcanus in the year 200 B.C.E., and the other one was built in Leontopolis by Onias IV.

<sup>59</sup> With regard to this episode, Brosius (2006:71) wrote, “Widranga, the governor of Syene, the city on the shore opposite Elephantine, had been bribed by the priests of the temple of Hnum, adjacent to the Jewish temple, to disrupt their rituals and damage the temple.”

to Goldenberg, the high priest and the governor gave official authorization for the rebuilding of the temple but with certain conditions. They could only sacrifice cereal and burn incense but not animals. Now the question remains: if those in Elephantine were not allowed to sacrifice animals in their local temple, what would they do during those big festivals in which both national and individual sacrifices are required? One of many possible answers to this question might be related to economic reasons. The prohibition of animal sacrifice in Elephantine might have been a strategy that the Jerusalem priestly leadership used to encourage the diaspora to engage in more pilgrimages to their home sanctuary. “The Jerusalem priesthood was not unhappy to see a competitor go out of business. It is extremely improbable that Jews from elsewhere took the long journey to southern Egypt in order to worship at Elephantine, but perhaps the priests of Jerusalem thought that pilgrims from far away might be more willing to visit the home land if no local shrine were available” (Goldenberg, 2007:65-66). This seems to be the same reason why Hyrcanus destroyed the temple on Mt. Gerizim.

To summarize, like any other social organization, Judaism is a very complex religious movement where it is not easy to estimate the precise date of its origin (Schmidt, 2001:50). While some scholars suggest that the origin of Judaism goes as far back as the pre-exilic period, others support the hypothesis that it originated with the returnees, and still other scholars argue that Judaism came into existence in the Hellenistic period. There is nothing unusual about these different views, because each of these three phases represent a response to contemporary socio-historical challenges. On the one hand, the Persian Yehud had the challenge of group identity in the midst of socio-economic and political superpowers. The only way they could achieve their goal was to transfer both political and religious power from the palace to the temple and use their pre-exilic traditions to justify this transition. On the other hand, the Hellenistic generations faced not only economic and political difficulties but also religious ones – the phenomenon of syncretism. To this end, they had to use both political and religious powers that were in their hands to centralize the worship system by either destroying all the competitive shrines in the case of the Gerizim temple, or by limiting their influence, as it was the case of the Elephantine temple. As a result, the Jerusalem temple became one of the main causes for the final separation between the Judeans and the Samaritans and their respective Pentateuchs. Now the question remains as to what were the ideologies that shaped both Judaism and Samaritanism.

#### **4.7. Key Ideologies that Shaped both Judaism and Samaritanism**

The objective of this section is not to restate the socio-historical factors that contributed to the rising of both Judaism and Samaritanism and their respective Pentateuchs, but it is rather an attempt to highlight some features that seem to draw a clear distinction between the two. It is important, however, to reiterate that to identify these features and explain them comprehensively is not an easy assignment. This is due to the fact that, as shown in the course of this writing, the two traditions represent two branches that came out of the same root and trunk, developed in a unique distinctive feature for many centuries,<sup>60</sup> and at a very late stage they branched apart completely. The two movements are fundamentally rooted on the Mosaic traditions, technically known as the Torah. In the next paragraphs, the researcher will attempt to outline at least two features which seem to be more explicit than others.

##### **4.7.1. The Ideology of the Temple of Jerusalem**

A close reading of both biblical and extra-biblical sources of the Second Temple period<sup>61</sup> will show that the Jerusalem Temple played a significant role in the formation and development of Judaism versus Samaritanism. Firstly, Becking (2011:36) has acknowledged a very interesting concept known as “belief-system<sup>62</sup>” which seeks to explain the link between the pre-exilic and postexilic periods. Through the temple the returnees claimed their identity was rooted in the ancient pre-exilic Israel.<sup>63</sup> Besides the assumption that the temple was built on the spot of the previous Solomonic temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians almost a century earlier,<sup>64</sup> it is said that the old temple utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had carried and placed in the temple of his gods were returned and placed in the newly rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7-8). Approaching the topic from this view point, one can argue that the rebuilding of the temple is more than an act of obedience to the Cyrus mandate; it is a literal claim of ancestral identity. In other words, the Second Temple biblical writers are saying that the Temple represents a revitalization of the pre-exilic place and system of worship. This is not, however, the case with the Samaritans. According to them, their history has never been interrupted. Even after the Assyrian invasion and deportation, Shechem never ceased to be

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<sup>60</sup> The term “siblings” does not necessarily mean those, involved in the family relationship, that share both parents. They may share only one parent but still be truly siblings.

<sup>61</sup> By biblical resources, the researcher refers particularly to the book of Ezra 1-6, and by extra biblical resources he refers basically to the so-called Cyrus edict.

<sup>62</sup> According to Becking, these lines of institutional continuity should not be viewed as historically justified records.

<sup>63</sup> See also Breneman (1993:50) and Ben Zvi (2003:32).

<sup>64</sup> Although the question as to whether the so-called Solomonic temple ever existed in the history is under debate among modern historians and biblical scholars, the main purpose here is to illustrate the point that the returnees sought to maintain a certain level of continuity between the pre- and postexilic eras.

Yahweh's sanctuary. Looking at this from these two perspectives, for the Judeans, on the one side, the Jerusalem Temple remained the bridging element between the pre- and postexilic eras. For the Samaritan, on the other side, with or without the temple, Shechem will always hold the status of a holy place.

Secondly, scholars such as Lasor, Hubbard and Bush have argued that for the Judeans the Jerusalem temple represented Yahweh's presence among his elected ones; it "symbolizes the renewed presence of Israel's God among his people" (2003:264). As mentioned above, the exilic experience was understood to be an immediate consequence of Yahweh's absence among his people. Now, through the temple in Jerusalem, Yahweh is back with his people. Nickelsburg and Stone (2009:60) stated, "Most basically, the temple was the place where one found God, where one came 'before' or 'into the presence of' God". Although the biblical writers were very much convinced that it would be unrealistic to confine Yahweh to a specific space on earth, they decided to choose the temple in Jerusalem as His abode. Whoever wanted to pray to Yahweh, had to go to the Temple in Jerusalem and not to Mizpah, Gilgal, Bethel or any other high place in Samaria (1 Kgs. 8:27-34). For example, the Prophet Isaiah saw the train of the garment of Yahweh whose throne was nowhere else but in the temple of Jerusalem (Is. 6:1-5). In fact, in their analysis of this passage, Nickelsburg and Stone (2009:61) commented that the angelic proclamation "Holy, holy, holy" in Isaiah 6:3 known as *kedusha* and *Trisagion* liturgies in Jewish and Christian traditions, respectively, came as a result of the understanding that the earthly temple in Jerusalem corresponds to the heavenly temple. This brings the researcher to the third and last role of the temple which he terms "mono-Yahwism." Yahweh is one and not many. Because of that, He is therefore entitled to only one dwelling place – the Jerusalem Temple. In short, Nickelsburg and Stone (2009:68) summarize the role of the temple as follows, "The temple played an essential and central role in the religious life of the Jewish people. Its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes was at the heart of the religious crises that shook Judaism in the early part of the second century B.C.E."

#### **4.7.2. The Ideology of Election: The Davidic Dynasty**

The reason this study considers the ideology of election as another important distinctive feature of Judaism versus Samaritanism is from the fact that the returnees portrayed themselves as the only authentic children of Abraham and, therefore, claimed their faithfulness to the beliefs of the fathers to be crucial. Wenham (1994:432) noted, "It was important for those who returned to Jerusalem and those who followed them to be reassured

that they stood in the same line of faith as their forefathers.”<sup>65</sup> This mindset is also reflected in the prophetic oracles. Jeremiah 24, for example, talks about two baskets of figs; one with good figs and the other basket with bad figs. The good figs, on the one hand, represented those who were taken into exile together with King Jeconiah. After the Sabbatical period, according to Leviticus 26:34-35, the deportees came back and gave new life to the land. On the other hand, the bad figs represented those who remained in the land under the kingship of Zedekiah. These were hopeless, helpless and lifeless; they were lost forever. According to Carroll (1992), because of this “good-versus-bad figs” ideology, the editor of the Cyrus edict did not even think of including the people of the land in the project of temple reconstruction. For Cyrus, like the bad and lifeless figs, the peoples of the land were lifeless and, therefore, non-existent. This ideology contributed significantly to the attitude of the returnees towards those in the land. The returnees felt far superior and held all the power over those in the land (Carroll, 1992:81). It is in this sense that scholars such as Schmidt (2001) noted that the name Israel which later came to refer exclusively to this minority group of the returnees symbolized the land of the promise. He commented, “As opposed to the lands of the nations, Israel designates the land where the people maintain privileged relations with their God” (2001:31). In a broader sense, the name ‘Israel’ meant to refer to the twelve tribes who are said to be the direct descendants of the Patriarch Jacob. Later on, when the Davidic kingdom was divided into two, Israel came to refer to the northern kingdom, while the southern kingdom was called Judah. From the Second Temple period onward, the term Israel/Israelites has carried an ideological meaning – the land belonging exclusively to those who profess Judaism, whether by birth or by conversion.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher has sought to address the historical overview and theological significance of centralization of worship. In the first part he traced the religious and worship developments of ancient Israel from the early moments of her history (the nomadic era) until the exilic period as an attempt to understand the background of the phenomenon of centralization of worship. When proceeding through this section, it is noted that, firstly, from a historical vantage point, religion and worship in the society of ancient Israel are more complex topics than they are portrayed in the biblical writings. This is due to the fact that the Hebrew Bible, which represents one of the major sources of information, is not a product of a

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<sup>65</sup> Scholars such as Nickelsburg and Stone (2009:100) suggested that Jubilees 20:1-10, for example, might have been composed in the first part of the second century B.C.E.

comprehensive research study of the history and religion of ancient Israel; it is rather an overview of Israel's understanding and interpretation of her own history.

Secondly, like any other society in the history of humanity, religion in ancient Israel until the exile is classified into three phases, namely family, tribal and monarchic levels. In the family, phase religion was a direct response to basic needs of the family such as protection, reproduction and provision. Both the deity and the shrine were integral parts of the family's daily life. In the tribal phase, the role of religion changed, as it became an institution of a larger group than the previous one. Now it was not only about internal family needs but also the safety and well-being of the larger group. In that case, both the deity and shrine were moved from indoors to outdoors, presumably on the high places, where the deity was expected to play the role of an overseer and a warrior leader against external threats. Lastly, when the monarchy became the highest level of socio-political organization, the third phase, the role of religion also shifted significantly. The deity was no longer an overseer but the father and founder of the monarchy, and the king, also known as the son of the deity, served as the mediator between the deity and the nation. Consequently, the king held both political and religious offices at the palace and national shrine, respectively.

In the second part of the chapter, the researcher addressed the religious situation of the Second Temple community, from the Persian period until the Hasmonean dynasty. Before this, however, he briefly looked at the exilic period and noted that during the space of about a century, Israel was divided into three groups, namely the deportees, the community in the land, and the diaspora. As far as religious identity is concerned, the common element within the three groups was that the exilic experience represented a great disappointment to them. For that reason, some were forced to renounce their pre-exilic religion and decided to follow other beliefs and religious practices, while others maintained the faith of their forefathers. The main difference, however, was that the elite class from the deportees took advantage of their current experience to start all over again, yet building it on their pre-exilic beliefs and traditions.

Coming back to the Second Temple period, it is noted that the political conditions during the Persian domination favored the returnees over those in the land. They strengthen the provincial status of Yehud over the province of Trans-Euphrates and, at the same time, regained both political and religious offices in the province. Moreover, due to the Persian policy of governance, there was a progressive shift of power in the province of Yehud, from

the supposedly Davidic dynasty to the temple priesthood. Because of this shift, the community of the Temple gradually gained a significant influence not only with regards to religion and worship, but also in political matters. These privileges granted to the returnees changed when the Greeks overpowered the Persians and took control of the region. Besides that, the splitting of the Greek Empire into two (Ptolemy and Seleucid) destabilized Judah politically, and the Hellenistic regime did not help the religious influence of the Jerusalem Temple at all. This is mainly because of the equal status that the Greeks gave to all deities in the empire, thus increasing the phenomenon of syncretism. The situation got worse during the Seleucid control when Jerusalem became officially a polis. In response to this situation, the Hasmonean family engaged in various revolts in order to recover their religious rights and to purify the Jerusalem Temple from the Hellenistic practices. This objective was accomplished when the Hasmoneans finally overpowered the current Greek ruling party, conquered some of the neighboring provinces, such as Samaria, and forcefully officiated the Jerusalem Temple as the only and legitimate site of Yahweh worship. As a result, Jerusalem acquired sufficient economic resources to control the temple and the dynasty, as pilgrim travelers came all over the borders with their sacrifices and tributes to worship Yahweh. Above all, the possibility of multiple Yahwisms in the land was at a very minimal level. Now the researcher turns to the last task.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE PLACE OF THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH IN BIBLICAL STUDIES AND IN THE ENTERPRISE OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

#### 5.1. Introduction

Up to this point this study has addressed the first three tasks, namely the historical, textual and theological. In the first task the researcher looked at the origin and relationship between the Jewish and Samaritan communities and arrived at the conclusion that they are of the same origin. However, with regard to the question about the place of worship, the two communities differ significantly. The former argues that Jerusalem is the place that Yahweh has chosen for his dwelling and worship, while the latter points to Mt. Gerizim as the legitimate sanctuary for Yahweh. In the second task, he turned to these different places of Yahweh worship, which are expressed in their respective Pentateuchs, and noted that, from a textual point of view, they are to be understood within the big picture of an editorial phenomena. On the one hand, if the MT editors had Jerusalem in their perspective as the future place of rest and, therefore, a chosen place of worship, then the *yiqtol* form of the verb בחר (choose) made a lot of sense for this particular reading. However, if the later SP editors aimed to demonstrate that the already known ancestral place, Mt. Gerizim in Shechem, was the chosen site of Yahweh worship, then the *qatal* form of the verb בחר (choose) would fit into their context and fulfil their purpose. Looking at this difference, there should be some obvious theological implications of this phenomenon of the centralization of worship. That became the topic addressed in the third task, and it was observed that, firstly, early in the Second Temple period the place of worship served as one of the areas of identity negotiation for the minority group of the returnees. Secondly, late in the Hellenistic era, for political reasons, the phenomenon of centralization of worship came to be the ideal way that the Judeans could hold control over the worship system and, by so doing, avoid syncretism and multiple Yahwisms in the land. In response to this new reality, the Samaritans rejected all Judean literature that justifies the Jerusalem temple ideology and adjusted the Pentateuch to fit their Mt. Gerizim theology. Now the question remains: given these differences between the two Pentateuchs, “How important is the SP for understanding the text of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament or for establishing the best text from which translations are to be made?” (Flint, 2013:44).

A lot of research on the subject has been done and still more is to be published. A significant number of researchers argue that the SP is no less than any other textual witness, such as the MT, the Latin Vulgate and the DSS, to mention only four. In agreement with other modern biblical scholars such as Würthwein (1995:46), Sacchi (2000:157), Kartveit (2009:260), Tov (2012:93; 2013:vii) and many others, Pummer (2016) argued that for many centuries the SP had been regarded as a mere Samaritan sectarian reading in comparison to those mentioned above. But now the scenario has become totally different; “it [the SP] plays a special role in biblical studies” (2016:195). This is exactly what Charlesworth reckoned, “Scholars are beginning to note that the Samaritan Pentateuch represents ancient readings that should be included in the study of the biblical text” (2013:xvi). In fact, this acknowledgment of the importance of the SP in the biblical discipline is not a completely recent innovation. Back in the sixteenth century, for example, there was the question of which version, between the MT and the SP, represented the decisive text for the Christian faith and life. After Pope Clement VIII approved the canon of the LXX and Vulgate versions, in 1592, Jean Morin, one of the famous Catholic scholars of the time, launched a totally different thesis. According to him, the MT text had been corrupted by the Jews and, therefore, was unfit for the Christian faith (Tal, 1999:298). Morin’s thesis was heavily criticised by the reformers who defended the legitimacy of the MT text and went further to declare it infallible (Kartveit, 2009:260).

It is in this context that the objective of the present chapter is, as noted above (cf.1.3.3), primarily to stimulate the understanding of the current biblical scholarship with regard to the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in biblical studies and the enterprise of Bible translation. Should one bring it into the company of other textual witnesses and use it responsibly in a given project of Bible translation? To approach this question, the chapter will be divided into five sections. The first section will focus on the Samaritan Pentateuch, particularly its early translations into other ancient languages such as Aramaic, Greek and Arabic. The second section will look at how both the early church and church fathers approached the Samaritan community and their Pentateuch. This will be followed by a brief overview of the influence of the Samaritan Pentateuch in European scholarship, in the third heading. The fourth part of the chapter will consider the relationship between the Samaritan Pentateuch and other textual witnesses, in this case, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and the Jewish Pentateuch, followed by the fifth section which will attempt to address the place of the SP in the enterprise of Bible translation. Lastly there will be some concluding remarks.

## 5.2. Translations of the Samaritan Pentateuch

Like the Judean Pentateuch and the Qumran Scrolls,<sup>1</sup> the earliest manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch were written down in the Hebrew language and later translated into other languages such as Aramaic, Greek and Arabic. Flint (2013:40) stated, “The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) is not a translation, but the Samaritan version of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, the Torah. For Samaritan Jews, who still exist as a group in Israel today, notably in Nablus (in the West Bank) and Holon (near Tel Aviv), the SP constitutes their entire Bible.” Before moving on to look at each one of those translations, however, it is important to briefly highlight at least two important driving motivations for such translations to have been made, namely the conquest and the diaspora.

### 5.2.1. Conquest

Like any other nation, ethnic or religious group in the ancient Middle East, the Samaritans were not on an island; they were fully involved in every innovation and/or change that occurred in the region, be it politically, socially, economically or religiously motivated. In the previous chapter, for example, it is noted that one of the ultimate aims of Alexander the Great, when he conquered the Mediterranean region, was to create a culturally homogeneous population in his empire. Alexander implemented this program by encouraging the practice of intermarriage and the use of Greek as the commercial language. This program was, at a certain point, accomplished when Hellenism became one of the predominant ways of life in the region and, therefore, Greek was the lingua franca. Consequently, all the legal and religious documents had to be written in and/or translated into Greek. In fact, Shehadeh (1989:483) has outlined several different factors that seem to have contributed significantly in the translation of the local/national literature into the conquerors’ language. These factors are as follows: “the relations of the conquering people to the conquered; the degree of military, economic, social and cultural dependence of the conquered on the conquerors; the effect of the geographic conditions in which the conquered nation lives – did they live in proximity to the conquerors or not...” The first step taken by the conquerors would normally be to create a sense of inferiority on the side of the conquered in every domain of their life, be it social, political, economic, as well as intellectual. Moreover, all these and other similar factors worked well when the system of communication between the two groups was properly

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<sup>1</sup> In addressing the language in which the Qumran Scrolls were written, Joosten (2010:351) stated, “From a linguist’s point of view, however, the Qumran community was situated in the eye of a storm. Hebrew was favoured by Jews’ nationalism and religious traditions, Aramaic had for many generations been the main language of public life, yet Greek had taken a central place in administration and politics. Under the Romans, Latin was added into the mix. Language use was never neutral in this society.”

defined for the benefit of the conqueror. In this case, it would always be the language of the conqueror that was used for ordinary communication and trading, as well as for policies and regulations. The aim of introducing and forcing the conquered to use the language of their conquerors was to help the conquered community, both in their home land and in the land of the conquerors, assimilate the worldview of their conquerors. This brings up the second reason.

### **5.2.2. Diaspora**

Like the Judeans, the northern kingdom of Israel experienced the diaspora phenomenon. However, it seems like both historians and biblical scholars have found it difficult to address this subject, mainly because, on the one hand, both biblical and extra biblical resources seem to be silent about this topic. In fact, as mentioned above, from biblical and some extra biblical viewpoints, the biblical Samaritans are portrayed as different from the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. On the other hand, for some ideological reasons, the diaspora concept has been, all along, connected to the Israelites, particularly the Judeans only. Due to these and other reasons, when scholars address the issue of diaspora among the Samaritans, a few questions immediately come into their mind. Did the Samaritans really experience this phenomenon? If they did, when and for what reasons? (Crown, 1989:195). Pummer (2016:180), for example, introduced his discussion on the ‘Samaritan diaspora’ by affirming, “What we do not know is when it began and how large it was.” Because of this direct connection of the diaspora concept to the Judean Israelites only, Crown (1989:196) is of the opinion that if one would accept the Samaritans’ own identification as *samarium/ shomerim* (the guardian or keepers of the Law), then their diaspora experience should go as far back as the Assyrian conquest and deportation in 722/1 B.C.E.. Crown moved on to note that out of many factors that might have contributed significantly to this event, two were notable ones – military service and to some extent political and religious persecutions.

With regard to the first factor, it is observed that because of military service during the Greek empire, Samaritan settlements were found in places such as Tyre, Egypt and Gaza (Crown, 1989:197-198) as well as Greece, Lebanon and Carthage (Pummer, 2016:184-185). Moreover, although there is no clear evidence, it is possible that the Elephantine settlement also had a group of Samaritans. Another important site of the Samaritan community is identified with the city of Caesarea. According to Dar (2011), the city of Caesarea was comprised of at least three main religious groups: Jews, Samaritans and Christians, of which the Samaritans represented the largest group, who also are said to hold important political and

administrative positions. As to when and how the Samaritans settled in that important and strategic Roman city, Dar reckoned, “According to the excavator, the pottery reached the city through Samaritans who were invited by King Herod to take part in the construction of the city” (2011:225).

Besides the military service, the Samaritans left their homeland due to other political reasons. The obvious one was already mentioned above – the murder of Andromachus which resulted in Alexander’s harsh punitive measures. Although it remains speculation, it is possible that some of the Samaritans at Syriha and Nebo were the survivors of those who died in the cave at Daliyeh (Crown, 1989:199). The third and equally important factor for the Samaritan diaspora is the rivalry between them and the Christians. Nutt (1980:22) summarizes this as follows, “In 529 a general revolt of the Samaritans took place against Christians, whole villages were burnt, churches destroyed, and the worshipers tortured to death. The severity with which this was put down by Justinian, followed by the enactment of severe laws against them, completely crushed the Samaritan people. Many fled to Persia, many became Christians.” In short, as the Samaritans suffered conquest and/or left their home land, in the long run both the conqueror’s language in Samaria and the hosting one in the diaspora gained strong influence and the Samaritans ended up being bilingual (Pummer, 2016:210). More than being bilingual, Shehadeh noted that, in addition to the Samaritans’ Hebrew which was the Samaritan vernacular, there were at least three more languages in Samaria, namely Aramaic, Greek and Arabic (1989:481). Flint (2013:41) wrote, “The text of the Samaritan Pentateuch is preserved in three kinds of sources: biblical manuscripts (of the SP); translations of the SP in Greek, Aramaic, and Arabic.”

It was in this context that translations of Samaritan literature into all three languages (Aramaic, Greek and Arabic) was extremely necessary. In his literary work ‘Narratology and the Pentateuch Targums’, Lasair (2012) addressed several questions with regard to the emergence of the Targum and pointed out that the translation of either the Samaritan or Judean Pentateuchs into other languages has to be looked at from a context where, on the one hand, the local vernacular had been replaced by a trade language either in the country or in the diaspora and, on the other hand, the holy text was now accessible not only to the minority literate people (priests and scribes) but also the majority illiterate people<sup>2</sup> who could read neither the vernacular nor the trade languages. In this case, the Targum, for instance, was

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<sup>2</sup> In the company of many other modern scholars, Nutt (1980:107) has pointed out that originally, the Targum was an oral translation only.

“For the people in the synagogue who could no longer understand the language of HB to make the HB understandable for women and children and others who would not have been able to understand it” (2012:29), while the Hebrew continued to be used as the liturgical language<sup>3</sup> (Macuch, 1989:833). Having mentioned the Targum, the first translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch is the topic of the next section.

### **5.2.3. The Targum of the Samaritan Pentateuch**

Research has revealed that, like the Judean Pentateuch in the south, the Samaritan Pentateuch in the north had been recognized as an authoritative text in its community.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned above about text and its meaning (cf. 1.7.1), for the Samaritan Pentateuch to communicate well and its message be meaningful to the readers/hearers/listeners, it had to be translated into the current language of preference, in this case, the Aramaic language. That translation came to be known as “The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch” (Würthwein, 1995:84; Tov, 1992:81). According to Nutt (1980:106-107), the Targum translation in general should be traced as far back as the time of Ezra, who is said to have introduced an “extemporary translation of certain portions of the Law” for the sake of those returnees who had lost the knowledge of their forefathers’ vernacular. With regard to the Samaritan Targum, it is highly possible that its translation happened at the same time as the Judean Targum, though from different contexts. To highlight this contextual differences, Pummer observed that while the Judean Targum accommodates a significantly great number of midrashic amplifications, the Samaritan Targum has none. He noted, “Even later Samaritan Aramaic versions contain hardly any expansions. Changes did occur as a result of copyists adapting the Aramaic to that of their own times and introducing modifications to express the evolving theological views of the community” (2016:208). It should be noted here that, although it is commonly agreed among biblical scholars that there has never been an official recension of the Samaritan Pentateuch,<sup>5</sup> an effort has been made to outline the existing editions. It is suggested that the first written Samaritan Targum of Onkelos dates around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E. (Nutt, 1980:107), followed by the Paris (1645) and the London Polyglots (1657); The Pentateuchus

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<sup>3</sup> With regard to the Greek language, scholars, such as Pummer (2016:210), are of the opinion that to assume the majority of the Samaritans in Palestine used Greek in their daily communications would be a misrepresentation of the historical reconstruction of the Samaritan community during Greek and Roman periods.

<sup>4</sup> To illustrate this point, Deist (1988:121) stated, “That the Samaritan Community was as vigorous as the Jewish group is clear from the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch also saw Greek and Aramaic translations.” In other words, the Samaritan Pentateuch did not remain as a text of the ancestors that should be only kept in the museum. Rather, it served as a literary instrument to respond to the day-to-day issues of the community.

<sup>5</sup> Deist (1988:121) wrote: “Since the existing manuscripts differ fairly markedly among themselves, it is difficult to establish the original reading. Indeed, it seems likely that there never existed a single original translation.”

Samaritanus (1872-1891) by Julius Heinrich Petermann and Carl Vollers; and the most recently published by Abraham Tal of Tel Aviv University<sup>6</sup> (Würthwein, 1988:84).

#### 5.2.4. The Greek Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch

Another translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch was into the Greek language (Deist, 1988:121), technically known by the name of *Samareitikon* (Noja, 1989:408). The consensus arrived at among biblical scholars as to when this translation took place is either at the same time as the Egyptian LXX or at a later stage. Pummer stated, “That the Samaritans in Palestine once used Greek is apparent also from the votive inscription found on Mt. Gerizim and dated to the third and second centuries B.C.E., as well as from the synagogue inscriptions of the fourth and later centuries C.E.” (2016:210). However, there are different opinions as to whether this translation is genuinely Samaritan or simply an adaptation from the LXX. On the one hand, it is argued that the Samaritans seemed to have used the already existing Septuagint text as the base source of their translation (Tov, 1992:81). This school of thought has based its argument on various points, one of which regards the position of Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal in both the Giessen papyri and the Thessalonica inscription. It is observed that their position in both sources is also found in the Lyon codex of *Vetus Latina* and, therefore, it is a reason “for not excluding the possibility that this codex might recall an ancient variant which need not be Samaritan” (Noja, 1989:411). On the other hand, it is suggested that the Greek Samaritan translation had the Samaritan Targum as the source text. Nutt summarized this school of thought as follows, “By many writers its [*Samareitikon*] existence has been denied, and the quotation of Fathers of the third and fourth centuries from τὸ Σαμαρεικόν have been understood to refer to the version of Symmachus, or the Samaritan Targum, or the Pentateuch, or the LXX” (1980:115-116). In fact, after highlighting some similarities that are found in *Samareitikon* and other ancient inscriptions and the differences between the LXX and MT versions, such as the reference to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal in Deut. 24-29 (in both papyri from Egypt and in the Greek SP),<sup>7</sup> Noja arrived at the following conclusion, “In any case it is clear that we may not abandon hope of recovering the text of the Greek version of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The author is certain that it did exist and that there are other fragments of some codex (or codices) of the *Samareitikon* in our libraries, but that the

<sup>6</sup> In agreement with Würthwein and other biblical scholars, Noja (1989:803) wrote, “The first text which should be mentioned is the edition of the Samaritan Targum by Abraham Tal. The following monumental work of Zeev Ben-Hayyim in Hebrew and Aramaic according to the Samaritans is the next great milestone.” See also Anderson (1989:392) and Tov (1992:81).

<sup>7</sup> Basically, it refers to the difference in Deut. 25:7 which reads ἐπὶ τὴν πύλιν [LXX] versus εἰς τὴν θύραν [ST], in Genesis 37:3 which in reference to Joseph reads “he was the son of his old age” [LXX and MT] versus “he was a sage in his eyes” [SP].



catalogues, who are experts in Greek but not in Samaritan matters, have not yet identified it” (1989:412).<sup>8</sup>

### **5.2.5. The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch**

The third important translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch is in the Arabic language. As mentioned above, translation of the holy literature into other languages was not optional, but rather compulsory. Pummer (2016:209) wrote: “In the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, Arabic displaced Aramaic as the spoken language among the Samaritans, and a translation of the Pentateuch in this idiom became a necessity.” Like the previous experiences with the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Greeks, in 634 C.E. Arabs conquered Palestine and Syria and their language gradually became the everyday spoken idiom among the Samaritans until “the Samaritan Aramaic slowly became a passive language among its speakers” (Shahadeh, 1989:484). Different from the Samareitikon and Targum of the Samaritan Pentateuch, it seems like at a certain point the Arabic translation achieved, even if not to a high degree, the status of a religious language. This is shown by the fact that there is evidence of prayers on ritual matters written in the Arabic language. One is the prayer for water, and the other is the prayer when one washes his groin and backside, to mention only two (Shehadeh, 1989:487-488). The first edition of the Arabic translation is estimated to date around 942 C.E. by Saadiah, followed by his countryman, Abusaid. This edition went through serious revisions by a Syrian scholar Abu-l-barakat, in 1208 C.E. (Nutt, 1980:116-117). Scholars, such as Shehadeh, have found the Arabic translation to be more important and useful than the previous ones, because it is said that it gives a better understanding of the Samaritan hermeneutics, of the linguistic traditions, the medieval rabbinic exegesis, as well as the theology and textual criticism of the Torah (1989:482).

In short, like the Judean Pentateuch in the south, the Samaritan Pentateuch in the north was, if one could use Macuch’s expression (1989:533), a “Holy Writ” not only to be kept in the temple or synagogue in the service of the minority literate group, but also to be used in everyday life among those in the country as well as in the diaspora, in accordance with the contemporary socio-cultural and political circumstances. While Hebrew remained the undisputable religious language, there was a sense of acknowledgment that the effectiveness of the biblical message depended on how much it is understood by its respective audience.

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<sup>8</sup> Although in a fairly neutral position, Pummer is of the opinion that there was, at a certain stage in the history of the Samaritan Pentateuch, a Greek translation, as he stated, “Apart from Aramaic and Arabic translations, there are indication that the Samaritans at one time also used a Greek translation, of which only a few traces are preserved” (2016:210).

Consequently, whenever one language became more active than the other, the Holy Scriptures had to be translated into that active language, in this case, from Hebrew into Aramaic, Greek, Arabic, even into some modern languages. Now the question is how the early church looked at the Samaritan Pentateuch and its early translations.

### **5.3. The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Early Church**

Despite the adversarial relationship between the Judeans and the Samaritans which peaked in the first century B.C.E., the Samaritans and their Pentateuch seemed to have a good reputation in the early Christian community and literature. To mention a few instances, in Luke 9:51-26 Jesus voiced concern about the Samaritans. In this episode, it is said that the Samaritans refused to accommodate Jesus in one of their towns. As the narrator put it: “But the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading to Jerusalem”. One gets the impression that if Jesus’s destination was Samaria, the Samaritans would have welcomed him. When some of the disciples heard that the Samaritans did not welcome Jesus, they asked him, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” Jesus was not pleased with this request, as it reads: “καὶ στραφες δὲ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς” (“But Jesus turned and rebuked them”) (v. 55). Luke 10:25-37 is another well-known episode – the Good Samaritan compared to the Judean religious leaders. Moreover, In John 4:1-42 Jesus took a route on his way from Judea to Galilee, which was not common for the Judean Jews; he went through Samaria. Right in Samaria, in the town of Sychar, Jesus did something unusual for the Jews; he held a serious conversation with a Samaritan woman, a conversation which resulted in the conversion of many Samaritans, as it reads, “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony...” (v. 39). Lastly, Acts 1:8 states Jesus’ last mandate to his disciples. He ordered them to remain in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit. When he comes and empowers them, then they should go to all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth and be his witnesses. This mandate was accomplished in Acts 8:4-25 where it is reported that, through Philip’s ministry in Samaria, many Samaritans including Simon, a great and influential sorcerer, believed and became followers of Jesus. When this news reached the church in Jerusalem, Philip was immediately joined by the apostles Peter and John and they preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages (v. 25). Bowman (1975:57) summarizes this point as follows: “The gospel of John is directed to them, *the Samaritans*. On the other hand, the gospel of Matthew is opposed to the Samaritans. The Samaritan problem does not appear in Mark at all, but Luke realizes that the

first mission of the church had to be made to Samaria before it could apply itself to the truly pagan world” (italics added).

From extra-biblical resources, it seems like the apostles passed the commission they received from Jesus on to the church fathers, in the next three or four centuries C.E. to the point that the Samaritan Pentateuch was known among these church leaders. It is not easy to tell whether, like the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch was used as a textual source during that time or it was simply known. However, Anderson, after outlining a list of Greek church fathers who made reference to the Samaritan Pentateuch, such as Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius and Cyril of Jerusalem, stated with strong conviction that some of the early church leaders and writers used the Samaritan Pentateuch as a textual source. He wrote, “Jerome made use of it [*Samaritan Pentateuch*] in his translation of the Vulgate, and the Talmud reflects awareness of it, even if only in generally critical sense” (1989:391). It is also stated that Origen, for example, in his reference to the Samaritan woman, in John 4:4-42, acknowledged the fact that the Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch of Moses (Pummer; 2016:195). With regard to Origen’s awareness of the existence of these ancient writings, Noja (1989:408) commented, “The question is whether a Samaritan Greek version of the Pentateuch ever existed, the query being prompted by Origen’s reference in his *Hexapla to Samareitikon*. This is generally understood by critics as referring to the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch...”<sup>9</sup> In short, the Samaritan community was in the heart of the New Testament writers, and their Pentateuch was very well known by at least the Greek church fathers who are said to have used it in their critiques and/or translations. The next topic is the impact of the Samaritan Pentateuch in western scholarship.

#### **5.4. The Samaritan Pentateuch in European Scholarship**

As mentioned above, before the Samaritan Pentateuch found itself in the hands of western scholars and on the shelves of western libraries, it was, for a significantly long period in circulation at least around the Mediterranean region. Probably, this is one of many reasons why it is categorized as a vulgar version,<sup>10</sup> in contrast to the Judean Pentateuch which was

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<sup>9</sup> Pummer provides further information about the church fathers and the Samaritan community. He wrote, “For the third century we have information about Samaritans, particularly their beliefs, in the works of the most important Christian scholar of antiquity, Origen, who resided in Caesarea from 232 to the end of his life (ca. 254) and had ample opportunity to become acquainted with the Samaritans’ views on a number of subjects, including their denial of resurrection, the limitation of their sacred scriptures to the Pentateuch, their veneration of Mt. Gerizim...” (2016:175).

<sup>10</sup> It should be mentioned here that the categorization of the Samaritan Pentateuch as vulgar, in contrast to the Judean Pentateuch that is known as a standard version, is based on the sectarian changes, not merely on its

referred to as a standard text (Kartveit, 2009:262). The former was for the common people both in the land and in the diaspora, while the latter tended to serve the needs of the conservative temple community. However, according to Pummer (2016:211), after the early church and the church fathers (in the first three or four centuries), the Samaritan Pentateuch had never been mentioned at least in a scholarly critical context until the 9<sup>th</sup> century in George Syncellus'<sup>11</sup> literary work '*Ecloga Chronographica*', when he gave reference to Eusebius. The reason for this omission seems to be explained by a medieval Muslim writer by the name of Abu Muhammad (in the tenth century) who wrote in his '*Book of Religions and Sects*' that the Samaritans were prohibited to leave Palestine, and for that reason their Torah differed significantly from that of the Jews. However, scholars such as Pummer argue that Muhammad might not have been aware that there was a great number of diaspora Samaritans in possession of their Pentateuch (2016:181). According to Nutt, the problem was more than the prohibition of the Samaritans to leave Palestine, but rather "the recollection of this recension afterwards entirely died out, so that the plain statements of Fathers and other early writers were looked upon as misapprehensions" (1980:86). Furthermore, there was an understanding that the Samaritan Pentateuch was nothing but a forged text (Kartveit, 2009:259). Following Muhammad's mention was that of Benjamin Tudela in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in his writings '*Book of the Traveller*'. This was followed by the discovery of the first Arabic copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch by the French scholar Guillaume Postel in Damascus, in 1550 (Pummer, 2016:211). Finally, a complete copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch landed in Europe.

The year 1616 is known to be the historic date that the complete copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, a manuscript estimated to date around 1345/46, first came to Europe. An Italian traveller and writer, Pietro della Valle, found it in possession of the Samaritans in Damascus and took it to his fellow western scholars and historians (Pummer, 2016:211).<sup>12</sup> The first step taken by these scholars was to find out how this newly discovered Palestinian text was similar to and different from the already existing ones, in this case, the Babylonian and the Egyptian.<sup>13</sup> After approximately four decades, several publications were available for western

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availability to the communities. The right expression that probably explains this phenomenon could be the one by Wegner: "Popularized revision of the text of the Old Testament" (2006:171).

<sup>11</sup> Scholars such as Nutt (1980:85) noted that Syncellus lived in the 8<sup>th</sup> century not 9<sup>th</sup>, as believed by other scholars.

<sup>12</sup> See also Deist (1988:114-115), Nutt (1980:86); Anderson (1989:391).

<sup>13</sup> This is the categorization of the three different textual types, also known as textual families. "The SP was seen as a Palestinian text, the LXX as an Egyptian or even Alexandrian text, and the MT as a Babylonian text" (Kartveit, 2009:263).

scholarship. Kartveit (2009:259-260) outlined three of them, namely the Paris Polyglot (1632)<sup>14</sup> by a Roman Catholic scholar, Johannes Morinus; the London Polyglot (1655/57) by Walton and the 1776 two column version (the Samaritan on the left and the Judean on the right) by Benjamin Kennicott. Looking at these and many other publications, Tsedaka (2013:xxii) contended, “The reappearance of the Samaritan Pentateuch in such a publication was like the rediscovery of a special text, and it renewed the debate about which of the two versions, Jewish Masoretic or Samaritan, was more authentic and closer to the original text of which is called the Torah of Moses.” In fact, Anderson (1989:391) pointed out that these publications became the focus of textual criticism in western scholarship and, as mentioned above, increased the dispute between the Catholic and Protestant scholars. In agreement with both Anderson and Tsedaka, Pummer (2016:211) summarized the heart of the dispute as follows, “When the Samaritan Pentateuch first came to the attention of scholars in Europe, it sparked a heated and protracted discussion between Catholic and Protestant scholars over the question: which is the true Pentateuch?” Catholics scholars led by Johannes Morinus started questioning the authenticity of the MT Pentateuch and, consequently, declared it spurious even in relation to the LXX. In response to the Catholics’ position, the Protestants, represented by Johannes Buxtorf, Simon de Muis and Genricus Hottinger, “claimed the infallibility and inspiration of the Masoretic text, and the attacks on the Catholic position were vehement” (Kartveit, 2009:261).

The controversy continued for the next four centuries. For example, it is reported that in his doctoral dissertation ‘*A Philological-Critical Treatise on the Origin, Character and Authority of the Samaritan Pentateuch*’, Wilhelm Gesenius (1815) came to the conclusion that the Samaritan Pentateuch was an inferior version in comparison to the Jewish text (Pummer, 2016:212).<sup>15</sup> In 1948 Gillis Gerleman argued that the Samaritan Pentateuch was a vulgar version during the pre-Christian period. Three year later, Gerleman’s opinion was opposed by Shemaryahu Talmon whose claim was that the Samaritan Pentateuch represents an original Jewish text, with, of course, some adjustments in accordance with the Samaritan’s ideology. However, it is reported that Talmon has reviewed his conclusions, and now he gives the SP an equal consideration as the MT (Tsedaka, 2013:xxii-xxiii).

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<sup>14</sup> Others suggest that the Paris Polyglot was published in 1645 (Nutt, 1980:86).

<sup>15</sup> Nutt (1980:90) summarized Gesenius’ conclusions as follows, “Later writers who have approached the subject have in some respect modified and amended his conclusions, but no one has succeeded in upsetting the general result at which he arrived, that out of the many hundreds of various readings presented in this text some three or four solitary ones, though of little importance, may be genuine, the rest being due in the first instance to improvements introduced for the sake of avoiding obscurities, and secondly to the Samaritans’ ignorance of grammar and exegesis, and the alterations made by them in the interest of their national religion.”

Before moving on to the next section, it will be important to give reference to two important schools of thought whose contribution in biblical studies has significantly shaped the current understanding of the biblical text in general and of the relationship between the Samaritan Pentateuch and other textual witnesses in particular. One is the school of Lagarde (1927-1991) that advocated the theory of an *Urtext*. According to this school of thought, originally, there was one text and, as time moved on, from that *Urtext* there developed a textual pluriformity. In other words, many texts came from the one original text. The second school of thought is led by Kahle (1875-1964) who took a different approach from Lagarde's. According to Kahle, the biblical text moved from the status of pluriformity to uniformity.<sup>16</sup> From a literary point of view, Lagarde's theory might make sense from the assumption that, in one way or the other, a tradition has to start from one person/source. As time goes on, the one source tradition, now with the status of a text, ends up having many versions due to the composition process and literary growth (Deist, 1988:19-21). A different scenario, however, happens when one addresses questions such as "which of these versions that came from the same tradition should be considered original or authentic, and who decides its originality or authenticity over against other versions?" This is probably where Kahle's theory has to be considered. At a certain point, someone from somewhere had to take the liberty to choose one from among many versions and authenticate it. This is what Charlesworth meant when he stated, "Kahle concluded that an initial pluriformity moved successively to a uniformity; that is, the biblical text was edited to conform to a standard imposed upon it by powerful scribes and political figures" (2013:xvii). It is on this basis that scholars such as Hendel (2010:290) argued that while the choosing of a particular version as authoritative could be viewed from a geographical perspective, it also had to do with social influence. He wrote, "More importantly, sociological context – in contrast to geographical – does play a role in textual history, particularly in the preservation of textual families... Moreover, prior to 70 C.E. the MT textual family may have been the 'authorized version' in particular circles, perhaps among the Temple Scribes." This approach goes hand-in-hand with the definition of the term canon by scholars such as Lim in agreement with Ulrich. Accordingly, canon is a "deliberate drafting of the definitive list of books that were considered sacred scripture by a religious group" (Lim, 2010:303).

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<sup>16</sup> Other advocates of Lagarde's schools are William F. Albright and Frank M. Cross, while Kahle's school is supported by scholars such as Shemaryahu Talmon and Eugene Ulrich (Wegner, 2006:67). For more details on these two schools of thought, see Deist (1988:174-178).



To summarize, firstly, because the two communities (Judean and Samaritan) experienced almost the same socio-historical contexts, namely conquest and diaspora, their response to those experiences was almost the same – to make sure that their respective Pentateuchs were translated into the languages of wider communication. In this case, when Hebrew was replaced by Aramaic, the Targum was the appropriate solution. So was Greek and the Arabic. Secondly, from both early church and church fathers' records, one gets the impression that their view about the Samaritans and their Pentateuch was quite different from that of the rabbinic literature. While the Jewish rabbinic community found nothing useful about the Samaritans. It reads: "The post-rabbinic tractates are not helpful; later Hebrew books and early modern rabbinic literature are not helpful; only harsh words against Samaritans were written down" (Fine, 2013:xiii), for the early church, the Judeans were no better than the Samaritans. The same is noted about the church fathers; they considered the Samaritan Pentateuch as one of the ancient texts to be looked at. Thirdly, when the Samaritan Pentateuch entered Europe, the gap between Catholic and Protestant scholars became even wider than before. As Tov (1989:400) noted, "Many greeted it as a more original version of the Pentateuch than the MT", while others regarded it to be nothing but a mere sectarian reading in relation to the MT version. Now the question is how the Samaritan Pentateuch is related to other textual witnesses. That is the next search.

### **5.5. The Relationship between the Samaritan Pentateuch and other Textual Witnesses**

It has been frequently mentioned in biblical studies, including this one, that the Jewish Pentateuch, the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch represent the three major textual witnesses to the HB (Ulrich, 2000:52; Hendel, 2010:281; Lange, 2010:44). Callaway stated: "When scholars talk about the ancient texts of the biblical books, they speak of the Masoretic text (MT), the Septuagint (LXX), and Samaritan (Sam) text" (2011: 77). As to how these three versions are related to each other, all along it had been assumed that the answer was obvious, the Septuagint being a translation of the Judean Pentateuch and the Samaritan Pentateuch simply a sectarian version and, therefore, of little worth in the field of biblical studies (Flint, 2013:44). However, since 1946/7 onward, with the discovery and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, biblical scholars started to realize that the relationship of these three versions is not so obvious. While it is true that the Septuagint represents a translation of the Judean Pentateuch, it has been equally observed that the translators also used other sources. The same is said about the Samaritan Pentateuch. From the evidence given by the DSS, it has been tentatively proven that, although with some later sectarian changes, the Samaritan



Pentateuch had a certain degree of influence among the Jewish community in Judea in general, and the western shore of the Dead Sea in particular. The study now moves on to consider the differences and similarities, first, in relation to the Dead Sea Scrolls, then to the Judean Pentateuch, and lastly, to the Septuagint version. Before this, it would be important to start with a brief overview of the DSS also known to be ‘the greatest find of our times’ (Flint, 2013:xx).

### **5.5.1. An Overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls**

The story of the discovery of the DSS is attached to a group of three young Bedouin by the names of Muhammed edh-Dhib also known as ‘the Wolf’, Khalil Musa, and Jum’a Muhammed Khalil. It is said that one day in late 1946 or early 1947 the three boys went to tender their herds on the western shore of the Dead Sea, about 13 miles east of Jerusalem, and there they came across a walled cave lined with several tall jars. As they entered into the cave, they saw some abandoned old looking scrolls on the ground and took them to the small town of Bethlehem. A few weeks later the scrolls landed in the hands of George Isha’ya, who became actively involved in the discovery of the rest of scrolls. At the end of the search, roughly a year later, there was an estimate of 1050 scrolls and 2500-5000 fragments found in a total of 11 caves (Flint, 2013:xx-2).<sup>17</sup>

Out of the 1050 scrolls, 300 (about 29%) represented the scripts of the BH,<sup>18</sup> namely all five books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Songs of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and other Deutero-canon scripts: Tobit, Ben Sira, Jubilees, and Enoch, which are said to be very popular and most used by the Qumran community. Aware of the fact that this last set of scripts (the Deutero-canonical ones) is not recognized in some Christian circles as inspired and therefore authoritative, Callaway (2011:76) stated, “It seems, however, that the books of Jubilees and perhaps the book of Enoch served the theological needs of their original owners.” With regard to the language in which these scripts were written, it has been confirmed that the

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to note here that there are other discoveries that took place before and after the 1946/7 Qumran ones. Before DSS, one could mention at least three important archaeological discoveries that took place in the Judean desert, namely Wadi Murubba’ah (1951-1952) with an estimate of 120 scrolls; Nahal Hever (1951–1956) with over 70 scrolls; and Masada (1963-1965) with at least 15 scrolls (Flint, 2013:xx). After the 1946/7 discoveries, there is also at least one, as Flint pointed out, “In more recent times, archaeologists and Bedouin have searched for more caves in the Qumran area that might contain written material, even using ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to detect underground caves and archaeological remains. In 2004, some Bedouin made the first scroll discovery in 40 years, in a cave used by rebel fighters during the Second Revolt: four fragments with text from Leviticus 23-24” (2013:9).

<sup>18</sup> Except the book of Esther (Wegner, 2006:142; Callaway, 2011:74).

Qumran community, although they tried to detach themselves completely from the rest of the society, was never in complete isolation, as far as language usage was concerned. The scripts discovered in the eleven caves were written in three prominent languages of their time, namely Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

It becomes important to mention here that, the DSS represent the oldest scripts of the Hebrew Bible known thus far. On the one hand, both the Judean and Samaritan versions are known to be products of copies of copies, being Leningrad Codex (1008 or 1009 C.E.), the earliest copy for the Judean version<sup>19</sup> and the Paris Polyglot (1632), the Samaritan version copied in 1100 C.E. (Flint, 2013:41). The Dead Sea Scrolls, on the other hand, are dated as far back as 250 B.C.E. – 70 C.E. In other words, the scripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls are over a thousand years older than the Judean scripts and almost a thousand five hundred years older than the Samaritan ones. It is in this sense that Ulrich (2000:52) stated categorically that the DSS should be considered the “best, oldest and authentic data we have to establish the state of the biblical text” and, therefore, it represents “One of the most important results of the discovery of the Qumran texts is an enhanced understanding of the history and relationship of these major versions” (Hendel 2010:281).<sup>20</sup>

### **5.5.2. The Samaritan Pentateuch in Relation to Dead Sea Scrolls**

Modern studies of the BH have identified some similarities between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Qumran Scrolls, an estimate of 5%- 6.5% of the total variant reading of the SP (Lange, 2010:49-57). The aim in this section is not to address issues relevant to textual critics, but rather to reflect on the issue of similarities between the two textual witnesses, as presented by biblical scholars, such as Wenger (2006); Hendel (2010), Callaway (2011); Flint (2013) and many others. One of the similarities is found in 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup> also known to be the largest biblical text from Cave 4 (Hendel, 2010:284; Barrera, 1995:102-103). Given the fact that one of the major characteristics of the SP is, as Flint puts it, “Additions and interpolations from parallel passages” (2013:43), this particular scroll shares this characteristic with the Samaritan Pentateuch. Callaway (2011:79), for example, noted that Exodus 7:16-18 in both SP and DSS is recapitulated in 7:18<sup>b</sup>; 9:1-5<sup>a</sup> is extended to 9:5<sup>b</sup>; 9:13

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<sup>19</sup> In real sense, the Leningrad Codex does not represent the earliest Judean complete copy; before this one there was another copy known as Aleppo Codex copied in 925 C.E. Wegner (2006:89) stated, “Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest, extant Hebrew manuscript of any significant portion of the Old Testament was from the ninth century C.E.” See also Flint (2013:41). The reason this one is not really referred to as the earliest manuscript for academic studies is that the most important part of it (almost all the Pentateuch), was supposedly damaged by fire (Flint, 2013:xxii). Deist (1988:78) wrote, “It is much to be regretted that this text was never photographed, for a quarter of it was destroyed by fire in the Israel-Arab war in 1948.”

<sup>20</sup> See also in Martínez (1995:6-11).

– 19<sup>a</sup> is added to 9:19<sup>b</sup>; and 10:2 has an addition which seems to be an introduction to 10:3. Moreover, Deuteronomy 1:9-18 seems to be a replacement of Exodus 18:25 and Deuteronomy 5:24-27 a supplement to Exodus 20:19, a text about the reading of the Ten Commandments. It is because of such expansions and harmonisations that Hendel (2010:284) contended, “4QpeleoExod<sup>m</sup> and SP are related texts whose common ancestor had the shared harmonizing expansions and secondary textual sequence...” Three other harmonizing expansions pointed out by scholars are 4QNum<sup>b</sup> (Callaway, 2011:80), 4QExod<sup>j</sup>, (Hendel, 2010:284), and 4QExod-Lev<sup>p</sup> (Flint, 2013:45). In fact, with regard to 4QNum<sup>b</sup>, Ulrich (2006:53) commented, “Generously preserved scrolls from Cave 4 – 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup> and 4QNum<sup>b</sup> – have demonstrated that the text adopted by the Samaritans was simply one of the available forms of the Pentateuch circulating in broader Judaism in the Second Temple period.” This leads into the next section.

### **5.5.3. The Samaritan Pentateuch in Relation to the Judean Pentateuch**

As mentioned above, the arrival of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Europe caused a great awakening in biblical scholarship, as far as the authenticity of the biblical text was concerned. Studies were conducted to find out what could be the earliest and most authentic text between the newly discovered – the SP, and the already existing one – the MT. As a result of these studies, about 6000 variant readings were identified in the Samaritan version versus the Judean Pentateuch, classified into eight categories. According to Flint (2013:43-44), the first four categories have to do with copying and grammar (“scribal errors, differences in grammar, replacement of old Hebrew forms with later ones, and removal of grammatical differences and replacement of rare constructions with more frequent ones”). The other four categories have to do with the content and meaning of the text “interpretation and clarification of the text by small changes; corrections to remove historical difficulties and objectionable passages; additions and interpolations from parallel passages, and addition of the Samaritan features or adaptation to Samaritan ideology” Flint (2013:43-44). If this number (6000 differences) is close to reality, it means the rest of the variant readings are similar in both Pentateuchs. Callaway (2011:78), for example, pointed out that both the SP and MT agree on the figure presented in Exodus 1:5, “All the people that came from the loins of Jacob were seventy, and Joseph was already in Egypt”, while the 4QExod<sup>b</sup> and LXX agree on a different figure – seventy five. Another example is found in Exodus 39:3-24. In his reference to 4QExod-Lev<sup>f</sup>, Hendel (2010:285) commented, “It shares an important indicative error with MT and SP in the secondary ordering of the fashioning of the priestly garments in

Exod. 39:3-24, against the arguably earlier ordering preserved in LXX (Exodus 36).” Looking closely at this example, one will realize that there are instances (probably the majority of them) where three of the four or all the four textual witnesses agree. This is the case of 11QpaleoLev<sup>a</sup> which agrees with the other three textual witnesses – the MT, SP as well as the LXX (Lange, 2010:47).

#### **5.5.4. The Samaritan Pentateuch in Relation to the Septuagint Translation**

The studies which were conducted in the seventeenth century by western scholars after the discovery of the SP resulted not only in finding the differences between the MT and the SP, but also identified some “non-Masoretic similarities between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX in one thousand nine hundred instances, that is, one-third of the total number of readings in which the Samaritan Pentateuch deviated from the MT” (Tov, 1989:400). It is not the aim in this study to highlight all these difference; nevertheless, a few of them will satisfy the researcher’s purpose. According to Flint (2013:45), both the SP and LXX read, “And Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘let us go out to the field’” (Gen. 4:8), while the MT only reads, “And Cain said to his brother Abel.” The difference in this case is the omission of the second part of the verse by the MT editors. In Exodus 1:22 we read, “And Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘Every son *who is born to the Hebrews* you are to cast into the river, and every daughter you are to keep alive’” [SP and LXX]; “And Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘Every son that is born you are to cast into the river, and every daughter you are to keep alive’” [MT]. The italics, in this case, represent the difference. Callaway (2011:78) has come up with two more examples. In Genesis 41:16 both the SP and LXX as well as the 4QGen<sup>h</sup> read, “And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘without God, the peace of Pharaoh will not be answered’”, while in the MT we read, “And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘Without me God will answer the peace of Pharaoh.’” The second example is found in Exodus 31:13, which reads, “And you speak to the Sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely keep my Sabbath, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Lord who sanctifies you.’” According to Callaway (2011:79), the three textual witnesses – SP, MT and LXX – have the same reading in this verse. In short, the discovery and study of the Qumran Scrolls represent one of the greatest turning points in the history of biblical studies. The Qumran Scrolls have revealed that at least in the last two centuries B.C.E. and the first century C.E. the circulation of the three major textual witnesses was not strictly limited to specific socio-religious and geographic boundaries, that is, the SP to the Samaritans in Samaria, the LXX to the Jewish diaspora in Alexandria, and the MT to

the Jewish community in Judea. This assumption is based on the fact that, firstly, all three textual witnesses are represented, some in low, others in high degree, among the Qumran Scrolls. According to Lange's (2010:49) calculations, 6.5% of the variants in the biblical scrolls represent the pre-SP; 4.5% the Vorlage of LXX; and 52% the proto-MT. One might wonder why the proto-Masoretic has a very high number of representations in the DSS. The researcher's assumption here is that, if it is true that the majority of the Qumran community were those who could no longer bear with Hellenization in Jerusalem,<sup>21</sup> then it is understandable that they moved away with a great part of their local Judean scripts. Secondly, there is no doubt that the similarities among the three textual witnesses outnumber the quantity of differences. Having given all these considerations about the SP, one relevant question to the present study remains: could one consider using the SP as one of the textual witnesses in a project of Bible translation?

### **5.6. The Samaritan Pentateuch in the Enterprise of Bible Translation**

The researcher's approach to this heading will be based on the assumption that unlike other ancient textual witnesses such as the LXX and Vulgate, the SP is not a translation (cf. 5.2). Like the MT version which represents the Hebrew text for the Judean Jews and has been translated into other ancient languages, so is the SP; it remains the Hebrew manuscript for the Jews in Samaria and has been also translated into Aramaic, Greek, and Arabic, as shown above. Now this being the case, two leading questions will determine the scope of this section, namely: a) Does it make any difference if one uses the SP whether in one or in another translation model, for example, the formal equivalence or the dynamic equivalence models or the functional theory? b) Would one model be more inclined to using the SP as a textual witness than the other?

A fairly comprehensive overview of these translation theories has been given in section 1.5 above and, therefore, it would probably be appropriate, at this point, simply to reiterate a few and yet important aspects related to the most prominent recent models – dynamic equivalence and functional theory – and then attempt to answer these two questions. The emergence of the dynamic equivalence model was in response to the most archaic theory of translation, namely, the formal equivalence which aimed at preserving as much as possible the linguistic

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<sup>21</sup> Martínez (1995:33) describes the Qumran community as comprised of those who abandoned the city because of the incorrect interpretation of the Law: "The calendar, the sacrifices of the gentiles, the transmission of the impurity by flowing liquids, defilement brought into the holy city by animal skins, dogs, the blind, the deaf, lepers, corpse, unlawful unions, marriages of priests with the laity, tithes, etc."

features/forms of the source language (SL). Given the fact that, on the one hand, every language experiences change from time to time and from place to place and, on the other hand, languages differ, whether in high or low degree, from each other, it was noticed that the literal or formal equivalence did not meet all the core objectives of a translation. In the last few decades, however, due to social pluralistic phenomena (language dynamics, cultural differences, feminism, post-colonialism, etc), both linguists and biblical scholars realized that any translation from one language to another not only involves linguistic aspects but also cultural elements as well as personal ideologies on the side of the translators. It is in this context that the dynamic model was revised, and functional theory came into play. Until now this theory tends to dominate the discipline of Bible translation, whose main objective is to fulfil the skopos of the translation expressed in its respective translation brief. Among many questions included in the translation brief are: what is the purpose of the translation (e.g. discipleship, evangelism, liturgy, biblical and/or theological studies, etc.)? Who is the audience of the TL (mature Christians, new converts, men, women, children, youth, academics or all these)? How much does the audience know about the biblical text? What does the audience need to know in order for the biblical message to attend to its purpose in his/her life? How can the biblical truth be translated in such a way that it is natural and relevant to the target audience, yet remaining faithful to the SL? Having highlighted these aspects, the researcher turns to the leading questions.

With regard to the first question as to whether it makes any difference if one uses the SP as one of the textual witnesses in one or another of the translation models, the answer proposed in this study is yes, it does. The formal or word-for-word model which aims to preserve the linguistic features of the source language will not be able to accommodate any of the differences already outlined above (cf. 5.5.3) between the MT and the SP versions, be it grammatical or ideological. For example, linguistically speaking, there is no way that one sentence can accommodate at the same time both *qatal* and *yiqtol* represented in the MT and SP, respectively. Another example is the expansion of verse 14 of Exodus 20 in the SP, already pointed out above in 1.8.2. There is no way that a translation can accommodate in the same text both the short version of the MT and the expanded version of the SP and still make sense. The same can be said in relation to the dynamic model, which aims to pass the information to the audience of the TL in the same mood it was transmitted to the audience of the SL. By so doing, the expectation is that the reaction of the audience of the TL towards the message be the same as that of the SL's receptor. In this case, to bring in the SP with all its



grammatical and ideological differences from the MT (for instance, the ideology of place of worship), may be quite problematic.

This takes the researcher to the second question: would one model be more inclined to use the SP as a textual witness over the other? Again, the answer proposed here is yes. By trying to identify the TL's audience and to place him/her in his/her socio-cultural context, the functional theory would likely be more inclined to use the SP. At least two examples shall be sufficient to illustrate this point. One example is already stated in 5.2.2 above. One would agree that even today there are Samaritan Yahwists from Nablus or Halon living outside their homeland, say in Europe, or in the United States of America, Africa or any other part of the world, and are in need of the Torah being translated into their current language. One should wonder which textual witness could be used as a SL, the MT or the SP? The second example is related to the question about the *skopos* of any translation project. What would be the response of a translation committee after learning that the translation brief asks for a translation for academic purposes? The researcher's suggestion is that this type of translation should accommodate other textual witnesses, including the SP, by giving references outside the text, such as in footnotes. In short, due to the nature and objectives of the previous two translation models, namely formal and the dynamic equivalences, to include the SP among other textual witnesses such as MT and LXX in a given translation project would be problematic. However, as the most prominent and recent translation model – the functional model – has a significantly high regard not only for the communication methods of the TL but also on the socio-cultural contexts of its audience, the possibility of using the SP as one of the textual witnesses remains open.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

The present chapter has addressed the fourth and last task of this study – the synthetic task – as an attempt to reflect on the place/role of the Samaritan Pentateuch in biblical studies in general, and the field of Bible translation in particular. This has been a concern of many other biblical scholars, such as Flint (2013:44), who have come up with a very difficult, straight forward and yet keynote question: “How important is the SP for understanding the text of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament or for establishing the best text from which translations are to be made?” Throughout the pages, the researcher of this study approached this concern by looking at the Samaritan Pentateuch and its early translations and, firstly, came to agree with other biblical scholars who rightly noted that, like the Judean Pentateuch and unlike the



Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch is not a translation; it is an original version of the Hebrew Script. Secondly, due to major socio-political changes in the region, such as conquest and diaspora, the Samaritans, both in the homeland and the diaspora, found themselves engaged more and more in the languages of their conquerors. Consequently, the need for a translation of their holy and authoritative scripts into those languages became compulsory. They first translated them into Aramaic (Samaritan Targum), Greek (Samareitikon) and into Arabic language (Samaritan Arabic Pentateuch). The Hebrew version, however, remained the religious script, although there are some indications that, at a certain point, the Arabic version was used for ritual purposes.

Moreover, it is noted that unlike the rabbinic literature and late Old Testament writings, both the New Testament writers and the church fathers had a positive attitude towards the Samaritan community and their Pentateuch. According to the New Testament writers, Jesus' ministry was not exclusively restricted to the Jews in Judea and Galilee only, but also attended to the Samaritan Jews. Both Jesus and His disciples were committed to reaching the Samaritans. When Jesus commissioned his disciples to be His witnesses to the world, Samaria and Samaritans were in third place on his list, after the Jews in Jerusalem and in Judea respectively. This positive attitude towards the Samaritans was handed over to the church fathers (second – third centuries C.E.) who are said to have equally given reference/mention to the Samaritan's scripts, either in their translations or in their critical studies of the Old Testament. In the next fifteen centuries, supposedly because of the negative influence of the rabbinic and Christian ideologies towards the Samaritans and their Pentateuch, the positive attitude that both the early church and the church fathers had died out. Early in the seventeenth century a copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch was discovered in Damascus and brought to Europe where it became part of textual analysis. From that time on, biblical scholars remained divided in their opinion as to whether the MT version should be still considered the only original and authentic text of the Biblical Hebrew or not. This phenomenon got even worse when further studies revealed that there was an estimate of about six thousand variants in the SP against the MT.

A new phase, however, opened with the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls. Although biblical scholars remain divided in their opinions about the authenticity of the Samaritan Pentateuch in relation to the Jewish Pentateuch, the data collected from the Qumran Scrolls have shown that, firstly, the two versions were equally used by the Qumran community. In addressing the relationship between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Qumran Scrolls, Barrera (1995:103)

reckoned, “The Qumran texts related to the Samaritan traditions are one more proof of the textual pluralism of the Bible and the social religious pluralism of Judaism in the period prior to the birth of Christianity and the formation of classic Rabbinism.” Secondly, because of the similarities they have with the DSS, the possibility of sharing the same ancestral origin is high; and thirdly, given the estimated time the Qumran Scrolls were copied (250 B.C.E. – 70 C.E.), one can argue that both the MT and SP are equally ancient manuscripts. With regard to the question as to what should be the place of the SP in the enterprise of Bible translation, it is noted that in the present and most prominent translation theory the possibility of using the SP as one of the textual witnesses is open. Before coming to the last part of this study where the researcher shall lay out his conclusions, he shall close the present chapter with very sensitive and yet stimulating questions by modern Jewish scholars, “Do we truly consider the Samaritans to be foreigners and hence to not establish a covenant with them? Do we not all have the same Father? They too have Torah and Commandments like us, and they serve the Lord our God!” (Fine, 2013:xiii).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1. Introduction

The present study aims to make a contribution towards, first, the understanding of the theological implications of the centralization of the Yahweh worship in Deuteronomy 12 according to the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs. Second, it is an attempt to understand the different wording between the two Pentateuchs in Deuteronomy 12, and third, it aims to understand the implications that the different wording between these two Pentateuchs might have in a given project of Bible translation. In this last chapter the researcher will revisit the objectives and their respective research questions outlined in *chapter 1* above in light of the historical reconstruction of ancient Israel which is addressed in *chapter 2*, the textual analysis outlined in *chapter 3*, the historical overview and theological significance of the phenomenon of centralization of worship in *chapter 4*, and the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in *chapter 5*. The chapter will also present the findings of this study, the expected contribution to the field, as well as suggestions for further research.

#### 6.2. Revisiting the Objectives

In section 1.3 above the researcher has outlined three objectives for this study, namely a) to search for the most plausible historical hypothesis about the origins of the Judean and Samaritan communities in ancient Israel; b) to understand the development of the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs and their respective sectarian readings in relation to the phenomenon of the centralization of worship; and c) to identify the relationship between the two Pentateuchs. What follows is an explanation of the conclusions drawn out of these objectives.

##### 6.2.1. The Origins of the Judean and Samaritan Communities

It has been observed in this study that the biblical accounts of the origins of the Judean and Samaritan communities are not consistent. In some narratives, one gets the impression that the two communities constitute the twelve tribes of Israel with common patriarchal ancestral origins and the same Mosaic traditions and customs. However, in other narratives, there is a sense that the two populaces are not related at all, the Judeans being the real and genuine offspring of the Patriarch Abraham, while the Samaritans are not. It is on this basis that the present study chose to approach the topic from the historic-scientific point of view and

concluded that the two communities share to some extent a common origin. Firstly, from both historical and archaeological viewpoints, the origin of ancient Israel goes as far back as the Iron Age I period (ca. 1200-1000 B.C.E.). This assumption is based on the fact that during this period, in the southern Levant, different tribes/clans came together under the worship of one deity known by the name of Yahweh and later were politically unified in one kingdom under the leadership of one king known by the name of David. Secondly, recent studies on genetics have demonstrated that both Judeans and Samaritans share the same Y- chromosome lineage, which is estimated to go as far back as the Assyrian period. Thirdly, historically speaking, the two communities had been in mutual relationship all along until the last two centuries B.C.E. It is also noted that besides political and economic factors, the ideology of the place of Yahweh worship remains the main factor for the ultimate separation between the two communities (Mt. Gerizim for the Samaritans and Jerusalem for the Judeans). From then on, each community approached their common tradition – the Torah – differently according to their respective site of worship. These different approaches gave origin to and development of the different readings, namely the Samaritan and Jewish Pentateuchs.

### **6.2.2. The Development of the two Pentateuchs and their Sectarian Readings**

The researcher approached this objective by addressing three questions. The first question has to do with the factors that contributed to the development of the two readings, and he identified at least three factors, namely religious, political and economic. As mentioned already, the major difference and the dividing element between the two communities is the place of Yahweh worship explicitly expressed in each community's Pentateuch. When the Jerusalem temple community gained political influence, which reached its highest point in the Hasmonean period, Samaria was banished and Jerusalem declared the only site of Yahweh worship and, therefore, all the economic privileges that were part of worship had to be directed to Jerusalem. The second question is with regard to the development of the wording and different readings, and this study noted it was due to editorial reasons. Each community used wording that would support its favoured site of worship. The third question is to what extent these different wordings and readings could be attributed to different ideologies. This question is directly addressed in section 4.6 above, and it is noted that the wording in the Jewish Pentateuch, in particular, points to at least two leading ideologies – concerning the Jerusalem temple and the Davidic election. In response to these developments, the Samaritans opted to exclude any traditions found inside and outside the Pentateuch

related to both the Jerusalem and Davidic ideologies, thus declaring the Mosaic traditions as the only authoritative scripts.

### **6.2.3. The Relationship between the two Pentateuchs**

The researcher approached this aspect by asking three questions. The first is whether the two textual representatives have any similarities, and the answer is positive. Historically speaking, it is argued in section 1.8.2, the two Pentateuchs are based on a common tradition – the Torah of Moses. To demonstrate this commonality of tradition, it is noted further in section 2.6.2 that both Pentateuchs represent the first five books of Moses, also known by the name of Torah with one key ideology – Yahwism. Moreover, from a textual viewpoint, it is noted in section 5.5.3 that the degree of similarities between the two Pentateuchs is higher than the differences thus far identified. Having acknowledged these similarities, the researcher then came to the second question as to what could be the difference between the two Pentateuchs. It has been repeatedly noted throughout this study that one of the major differences (if not the only one) between these two readings is found in the ideology of the centralization formula, in Deuteronomy 12. On the one hand, the place of Yahweh worship in the Jewish Pentateuchal corpus is unknown. It needs, in this case, external support (e.g. 1 Kgs. 8) to explicitly indicate where Yahweh should be worshiped. The final editors of the Samaritan Pentateuch, on the other hand, seem to know the specific site of Yahweh worship. Although Deuteronomy 12 does not clearly mention the specific place, it receives significant support, whether directly or indirectly, from other traditions within the Pentateuch. Besides, as noted in the previous chapter, an estimate of six thousand different variant readings in the Samaritan Pentateuch, classified into different categories such as linguistic, ideological and contextual, have been identified.

The third and last question addressed in this objective is: what could be the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in both biblical studies, in general, and the enterprise of Bible translation, in particular? Chapter 5 is almost entirely dedicated to this question, and it is noted that, firstly, like the Jewish one, the Samaritan Pentateuch is not a translation, like the Septuagint, the Vulgate and many other ancient translations. Secondly, texts containing similar readings to which were unique to the Samaritan Pentateuch were added to among the Hebrew texts used by the Qumran community probably in the last three centuries B.C.E. This means that for the Qumran community, different versions of the Pentateuchal books were probably equally authoritative. Thirdly, at least until the third century C.E. the Samaritan Pentateuch was known by the church fathers, as they gave reference to it in their writings

and/or translations. This study takes all these observations into consideration and agrees with other biblical scholars who have found no reason that the Samaritan Pentateuch should be excluded from among other textual witnesses in the field of biblical studies. The same observation goes to the subject of the Samaritan Pentateuch in relation to the field of Bible translation. Because the most prominent recent translation model (functional theory) aims to provide a translation that addresses the most eminent questions/needs of the audience of the TL, that is, to accomplish the skopos of that particular translation, the issue whether the Samaritan Pentateuch could serve as a text base or simply as a reference source remains open.

### **6.3. Conclusions of the Research**

This study has shown that, firstly, a reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel has to be approached from a scientific viewpoint. More often, biblical scholars and specialists in other fields related to this subject are tempted to take the Hebrew narratives as the main source of information. While it is true, that the biblical text remains a valuable resource, it is equally important to keep in mind, as mentioned above, that it is not a research document. It is on these grounds that, in line with the first objective, this study brought the biblical narratives into conversation with other areas of study, such as history, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, and came up with an alternative model. This study suggested that the origins of ancient Israel (northern and southern kingdoms) is not an exception from the rest of the Mediterranean region in general, and the southern Levant in particular. Moreover, with regard to the relationship between the two communities, the hypothesis arrived at in this study is that, genetically, they are from the same ancestral origins. The conflicts, however, between them throughout their life time were mainly motivated by political and religious agendas.

Secondly, according to this study, the phenomenon of centralization of worship should not be attributed to a single factor and viewed as an all of a sudden event. Instead, it was a long process, and different factors, such as political, religious and socio-economic played a significant role. Politics represented a strong agency to divide people, even legitimate brothers/sisters. The presence of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and later the Romans in the region intensified conflicts among different communities, including the southern kingdom of Judah against her genetically related northern kingdom of Israel also known as Samaria. It was a norm in the ancient societies to use religion as a tool to maintain and sustain political powers. In this case, the temple, at a certain point, became the hub of

power control, simply because, on the one hand, political power was directly linked to a supreme deity and, on the other hand, the temple was the primary means for economic income through, taxes, tributes, tithes, offerings.

Thirdly, the textual differences between the two Pentateuchs, with regard to the ideology of the centralization of worship, has to be addressed from an editorial point of view. Each reading aimed to justify its particular worship site, in this case, Jerusalem for the southern Judeans and Mt. Gerizim for the northern Samaritans. The major difference between the two readings identified in this study rests on the so-called centralization formula in Deuteronomy 12. Addressed from the big picture of the editorial phenomenon, it is noted that the *qatal* form in the MT version and the *yiqtol* form in the SP reading seem to fit well the purpose of their respective editors. Lastly, despite these sectarian differences between the two Pentateuchs, they were both accepted as authoritative by their respective communities. The Mosaic tradition, also known as the Torah, remained the foundation and the reason of the existence of two communities as well as of their relationship until the parting of their ways. Later, in the last three centuries B.C.E., different versions, including versions similar to the one represented by the Samaritan Pentateuch (but without the unique Samaritan readings) were among the scrolls discovered in the caves of the Dead Sea. Furthermore, it is noted in this study that giving reference to or quotation from the Samaritan version was most likely acceptable. If the two readings were equally accepted as authoritative by both communities for centuries, and probably by the church fathers in the first three centuries C.E., then the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Biblical studies and Bible translation projects must be reconsidered, based in at least six respects:

### **6.3.1. The Editorial Phenomenon**

The discussion on the growth of the book of Deuteronomy under Deuteronomistic influence as well as the comparison between the Samaritan and Jewish Pentateuchs outlined above (cf. 3.2 and 3.3 respectively) agrees with other biblical scholars who pointed out the fact that the biblical text, most likely in its entirety, has gone through heavy editorial processes for an extensive period of time and by editors from different socio-historical and religious contexts. This note can be, with little doubt, helpful to an exegete or Bible translator, as he/she aims to understand the meaning embedded in a word or in a given text before the actual translation takes place. Of course other ancient translations such as the Septuagint, Vulgate or some exegetical and translation programs such as Translation's Workplace, Paratext, Logos Bible Software and more are very useful tools to be consulted. Being a Hebrew text and not a



translation, what would the outcome be, if the exegetes and Bible translators listen to the voice of the Samaritan Pentateuch alongside other textual witnesses and translation tools?

### **6.3.2. Textual Multiplicity**

In addition to the discussion in section 1.7.3 above, the study of the Samaritan Pentateuch and its relationship with other textual witnesses, in chapter 5, has attempted to demonstrate that at a certain point in the history of textual transmission the Hebrew text experienced the phenomenon of textual multiplicity. Different communities and/or scribes had the same text and, in the course of time, each community and/or scribe began to adjust the text to their/his socio-historical and religious contexts. Once again, the ancient translations outlined above and other exegetical tools might be helpful in situations such as this. However, it should be mentioned here that there is no innocent translation, that is, a translation without any influence of the target language's worldview. Can anyone suggest that the Septuagint and Vulgate, for example, are free from any expressions or feelings based on the Greek or Roman worldview? What would one say about the worldview of the Samaritan Hebrew text in relation to the MT version? It is on these grounds that this study, in agreement with other scholars, finds the Samaritan Pentateuch extremely important in biblical studies and in the enterprise of Bible translation.

### **6.3.3. The Choice of Words or Textual Traditions**

The choice of words in the composition of the text or of a particular textual tradition was not solely based on religious principles but also on political, economic and socio-ethnic motives. The question that needs to be asked here is “why did this community or scribe choose this and not that word, or this and not that tradition?” One example would be the place of worship. Why do the Judeans say the place of worship is Jerusalem and not Samaria or somewhere else, and the Samaritans say it is on Mt. Gerizim, as it reads in John 4? A second example would be the centralization formula. Why did the editors of the MT version choose *qatal* instead of *yiqtol*, while the SP version opted for the *yiqtol* instead of *qatal*? A third example would be the expansion of Exodus 20:14. Why did the editors of the SP decide to expand Exodus 20:14 by attaching the ideology of Mt. Gerizim to the Ten Commandments and the MT did not? A fourth example would be Genesis 2:2. Why does the MT version state that God finished his work of creation on the seventh day instead of sixth day, and the SP employs the opposite? These and other similar differences can most likely be treated responsibly when they are addressed taking into account their socio-historical contexts. In

this case, the conversation should be first between the MT and the SP versions before other translations are brought in.

#### **6.3.4. The Format of the Printed Translation**

Before the translation starts, part of the translation brief is to make some preliminary reflections and decisions with regard to the format of the future translation. If different readings are available in the manuscripts and, from a textual point of view, they are equally “legitimate”, which seems to be the case with the Samaritan and Jewish Pentateuchs, which readings would the translation committee recommend to be included in the actual translation? What would the criteria be for deciding which readings should be included, and which ones should not? If the translation committee decides to include footnotes, depending on the skopos of the translation, which readings would the committee recommend to be included in the footnotes and which ones would be recommended to be in the main text? What are the criteria for making these and/or other relevant decisions?

#### **6.3.5. The Audience of the Translation**

In the case of the centralization of the cult, if the target audience are Orthodox Jews or Samaritans, for example, the choice of the source text would be quite obvious. However, in cases where the audience of the target language does not have any particular issue or ideology with regard to the centralization of worship, which wording would the translation committee recommend to be the source text and/or included in the footnotes? Moreover, most translations are based on the MT version for no other reason than being the most convenient choice. What happens in cases where a particular text in the MT version is quite difficult and almost obscure because of the editorial activities mentioned previously? Would the decision be to change or to adjust the wording in order to make it understandable to the audience of the target language or to leave it as obscure? Either way, would this be the best way to solve the problem? If not, would the choice of only the MT as a base text for translations be really justifiable?

#### **6.3.6. Responsibility to Larger Traditions**

This note is based on the assumption that the biblical text is owned and monitored not by individual scholars, schools or communities but by the entire body of faith (Jews, Samaritans, Orthodox, Evangelicals, Charismatics and even to some extent politicians). Bible translation committees do not only have to decide on the translation model that will be used, but they are also obligated to make decisions about the source text. Should they not be responsible and accountable to the international body of faith, to the audience of the target language as well

as the funding organization(s) for that particular translation projects? Do they not also have the responsibility to do justice to the larger community of faith and the ecclesiastical traditions of which they are no doubt a part? It has been mentioned earlier in this study that not all the differences in readings found in the available texts should be attributed to scribal errors, but also some of them represent deliberate changes, thus affecting the content of the text to some extent to the larger traditions. If this is the case, why should the source text be based only on one version, and other versions, which could be equally useful in solving textual issues, be neglected?

#### **6.4. Expected Contribution to the Field**

It is the hope of the researcher that this study has gathered enough data, not only for the scholarly understanding of the origins of ancient Israel and the phenomenon of centralization of worship according to the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs, but also to stimulate the current scholarship with regard to the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch in biblical studies in general, and in Bible translation projects in particular. Methodologically, this study has attempted to show that to reconstruct the history of ancient Israel is a challenge; it needs more than what the biblical text can offer. This is why the call for an integrated approach to all biblical students in any context and field of study is ultimately important and necessary. From a textual point of view, this study has also tried to show that the two Pentateuchs have the same roots – the Torah of Moses – despite their sectarian differences related to the place of worship. It is also expected that the conversation this study facilitated between the two versions – the MT and SP – has brought forth both an encouragement as well as an alert for a responsible use of all the available textual witnesses, including the Samaritan Pentateuch. Moreover, the researcher has tried to use as much updated literary sources as possible. Any future study in this and other related fields may benefit from the list below of very carefully selected books and articles.

#### **6.5. Suggestions for Further Research**

The researcher has approached the theme of the present study from different angles, such as the historical, textual and theological. One more approach not addressed, yet of high relevance, not only to both biblical studies and Bible translation projects but also to the modern context, is the missiological angle – what could be the missiological implications of the centralization of worship? This factor is very important in the sense that, as already mentioned above, the purpose of translating the Bible into ancient languages was and

continued to be precisely to convey the biblical message into another language, hoping that the audience of the TL will read and understand the translated message, then behave accordingly.

Another area the researcher finds crucial for further study is how the Samaritan Pentateuch can best serve either as a base text or simply a potential tool in Bible translation projects. This can probably be done by opening a space for it in the translation programs and other exegetical tools. It seems like up to this day the voice of the Samaritan Pentateuch is not known as much as the MT and other ancient translations among ordinary biblical scholars in general, and Bible translators and their respective committees in particular.

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