JUDGEMENT AND SALVATION.
SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION
OF JEREMIAH 1

BY

DONGKWAN YI

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DECLARATION

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

Signature:

Date:

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an attempt to address the problem of the relationship between the Jeremianic judgement and salvation oracles, to prove our hypothesis that Jeremiah 1 functions as a theological introduction to the whole book of Jeremiah, and that references to judgement and salvation form a theological whole. Vernon Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach has been utilized.

In Chapter 1, we present a general survey of Jeremianic study, and show the scholarly tendency towards a diachronic or synchronic approach. By doing so, we justify our application of the holistic socio-scientific method to study the book more comprehensively. Our hypothesis about the relationship between judgment and salvation in the book of Jeremiah is then presented and the methodology described.

In Chapter 2, we offer a rhetorical analysis. According to our analysis, the centre of the prophetic call in the book of Jeremiah is the commission (Jer. 1:10) where the thematic phrase of judgement and salvation is highlighted. We identified passages containing this thematic catchphrase (Jer. 12:14-17; 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28; 31:38-40; 42:10; 45:4; etc.) and Chapter 3 discusses each one. The reoccurrence of that catchphrase in different circumstances was the reconfirmation and recontextualisation of the *Leitmotif* of Jer. 1:10.

In Chapters 4-6, a social scientific approach has been utilised to explore a considerably rich text which contains many diverse aspects of the social, cultural, political and theological environment. We identify diverse interest groups to whom Jeremiah addressed his message of judgement and salvation. They are "reformist", "conversionist", "revolutionist" and "thaumaturgical" from the social perspective, and "pro-Babylon", "pro-Egypt" and "autonomistic" from the political perspective. We next examine the intense controversy between Jeremiah and these groups, from social, cultural, ideological and theological perspectives.

In the conclusion (Chapter 7), we summarise what we have studied and present the prospect for a wider use of the socio-rhetorical method.

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OPSOMMING

Hierdie verhandeling ondersoek die vraagstuk rondom die verhouding tussen Jeremiaanse oordeel en verlossingsorakels, Daar word gepoog om die hipotese te bewys dat Jeremia 1 dien as teologiese inleiding tot die res van die boek en dat die verwysings na oordeel en verlossing 'n teologiese geheel vorm. Vernon Robbins'se sosio-retoriese benadering word gebruik.

In Hoofstuk 1 gee ons 'n oorsig van Jeremiaanse navorsing en wys hoe vakkundiges neig tot of 'n diakroniese of 'n sinkroniese benadering. Deur ons gebruik van die sosio-retoriese metode poog ons om die boek meer volledig te bestudeer. Ons hipotese oor die verhouding tussen oordeel en verlossing in Jeremia word dan aangebied en die metodologie beskryf.

In Hoofstuk 2, bied ons 'n retoriese analise, waarvolgens die kern van die profetiese roeping in die boek geidentifiseer word as die opdrag (Jer. 1:10) wat die temas van oordeel en verlossing beklemtoon. Dan identifiseer ons die verse wat hierdie temas bevat (Jer. 12:14-17; 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28; 31:38-40; 42:10; 45:4; etc.) en bespreek elkeen in Hoofstuk 3. Die herhaaldelike voorkoms van die temas in verskillende kontekste is die herbevestiging en herkontekstualisering van die *Leitmotif* van Jer. 1:10.

In Hoofstuk 4-6, word 'n sosiaal-retoriese benadering gebruik om 'n komplekse teks – wat diverse aspekte van die sosiale, kulturele, politiese en teologiese omgewing insluit – te ondersoek. Ons identifiseer verskeie belangegroepe tot wie Jeremia sy boodskap van oordeel en verlossing rig.

Uit die sosiale perspektief, is die groepe "hervormers", "bekeerders", "rewolusionêre", en "thaumaturge", en vanuit 'n politiese perspektief, "pro-Babilon", "pro-Egipte" en "autonome" groepe. Dan ondersoek ons die intense struweling tussen Jeremia en hierdie groepe, vanuit sosiale-, kulturele-, ideologiese- en teologiese perspektiewe.

In die slotsom (Hoofstuk 7) lewer ons 'n opsomming van die studie, en bied die verwagting vir 'n breër gebruik van die sosio-retoriese metode.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATION

AB ------------ The Anchor Bible (eds. W. F. Albright and D. N. Freedman)
ABD ---------- The Anchor Bible Dictionary
BA ------------ Biblical Archaeologist
BARev-------- Biblical Archaeology Review
BDB ---------- A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (eds. F. Brown, S. R. Driver,
　　　　　　　and C. A. Briggs; Oxford, 1962)
BETL --------- Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BH³ ----------- Biblia Hebraica (3ʳᵈ ed.; ed. R. Kittel, 1937)
BHS----------- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (eds. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph;
　　　　　　　Liber Jeremiae prepared by W. Rudolph; Stuttgart, 1970)
BMS ---------- Bibal Monograph Series
BR------------- Biblical Research
Brev----------- Bible Review
BTB----------- Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZAW-------- Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC----------- The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ ---------- Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EBDict-------- The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary
ET ------------- The Expository Times
EvTh ---------- Evangelische Theologie
ExpT ---------- Expository Times
GKC ---------- Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (2ⁿᵈ ed.; ed. E. Kautzsch; tr. A. E. Cowley; Oxford,
　　　　　　　1963)
HAR ---------- Hebrew Annual Review
HAT ---------- Handbuch zum Alten Testament (ed. O. Eissfeldt)
HDR ---------- Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HSM ---------- Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR----------- Harvard Theological Review
HUCA -------- Hebrew Union College Annual
IB-------------- The Interpreter's Bible (ed. G. Buttrick)
ICC------------ The International Critical Commentary (eds. S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and
　　　　　　　C. A. Briggs)
IDB ----------- The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (ed. G. Buttrick; New York, 1962)
IDBSuppl----- The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplements.
Int ------------- Interpretation
ISBE ---------- The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
ITC------------ International Theological Commentary
JAOS --------- Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL------------ Journal of biblical Literature
JBQ ---------- Jewish Bible Quarterly
JETS ---------- Journal of the Evangelical Theological society
JNES---------- Jorunal of Near Eastern Studies
JNWSL ------- Jorunal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JQR ----------- Jewish Quarterly Review
JSNTSS------- Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
Jsem----------- Journal for Semitics
JSOT----------- Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSS------- Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series

JSS ------------ Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS ------------ Journal of Theological Studies
LXX ---------- Septuagint, according to Septuaginta II (8th ed.; ed. A. Rahlfs; Stuttgart. 1965)
MT ------------ Masoretic Text, according to BH^3 or BHS
NCBC -------- The New Century Bible Commentary
NEB----------- New English Bible (Oxford and Cambridge, 1970)
NEncB -------- New Encyclopaedia Britannica
NICOT-------- The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE---- New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis
NIV ----------- New International Version (Grand Rapids, 1973)
Numen -------- International Review for the History of Religions (Leiden)
OTL----------- Old Testament Library
OTS ----------- Oudtestamentische Studiën
PC ------------- The Pulpit Commentary (eds. H. D. Spence and J. S. Exell)
PhTod--------- Philosophy Today
PTM ---------- Pittsburgh Theological Monograph
RB------------- Revue Biblique
SBLDS ------- Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS------- Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP-------- Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBT ----------- Studies in Biblical Theology
SEA ----------- Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok
SIDA---------- Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis
SJOT---------- Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
SJT ------------ Scottish Journal of Theology
SWJT --------- Southwestern Journal of Theology
TB ------------- Tyndale Bulletin
TDNT--------- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT--------- Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
THAT--------- Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament
ThEv ---------- Theologia Evangelica
TWAT -------- Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament
UF------------- Ugarit-Forschungen
VT------------- Vetus Testamentum
VT Supp------ Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC---------- Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT----- Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WThJ --------- Westminster Theological Journal
ZAW---------- Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ABBREVIATION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Ge ------------- Genesis
Ex ------------- Exodus
Lev ------------ Leviticus
Nu ------------- Numbers
Dt------------- Deuteronomy
Jos ------------- Joshua
Jdg ------------ Judges
Ru ------------- Ruth
1 Sa ----------- 1 Samuel
2 Sa ----------- 2 Samuel
1 Ki ----------- 1 Kings
2 Ki ----------- 2 Kings
1 Ch----------- 1 Chronicles
2 Ch----------- 2 Chronicles
Ezr ------------ Ezra
Ne ------------- Nehemiah
Est------------- Esther
Job ------------ Job
Ps-------------- Psalms
Pr -------------- Proverbs
Ecc ------------ Ecclesiastes
SS ------------- Song of Songs
Isa ------------- Isaiah
Jer ------------- Jeremiah
La -------------- Lamentations
Eze ------------- Ezekiel
Da ------------- Daniel
Hos ------------ Hosea
Joel------------ Joel
Am ------------ Amos
Ob ------------- Obadiah
Jhn ------------ Jonah
Mic------------ Micah
Na ------------- Nahum
Hab------------ Habakkuk
Zep ------------ Zephaniah
Hag------------ Haggai
Zec ------------ Zechariah
Mal------------ Malachi

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NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Mt ------------- Matthew
Mk ----------- Mark
Lk ------------ Luke
Jn ------------- John
Ac ------------ Acts
Ro ------------ Romans
1 Co ----------- 1 Corinthians
2 Co ----------- 2 Corinthians
Gal ------------ Galatians
Eph ------------ Ephesians
Php ------------ Philippians
Col ------------ Colossians
1 Th ----------- 1 Thessalonians
2 Th ----------- 2 Thessalonians
1 Ti ------------ 1 Timothy
2 Ti ------------ 2 Timothy
Tit ------------- Titus
Phm ----------- Philemon
Heb------------ Hebrews
Jas ------------- James
1 Pe ----------- 1 Peter
2 Pe ----------- 2 Peter
1 Jn------------ 1 John
2 Jn------------ 2 John
3 Jn------------ 3 John
Jude ----------- Jude
Rev ------------ Revelation

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 A survey of Jeremianic study

The book of Jeremiah is one of rich content. It is not only the largest prophetic book in the Old Testament, containing 21,835 words (Lundbom 1999:57) but also a complex of prose, poetry, biographical and autobiographical material without any apparent order. It reveals a variety of social, cultural and religious dynamics of the Judean society of the time, the most tumultuous time in her history.

For some scholars, the book of Jeremiah is not an easy book to interpret because of the complexity and arbitrariness of its order. Such scholars express their impressions of the obscurity and complexity of the book by referring to it as *incomprehensible as a book* (Carroll 1986:38, 82-85), *no arrangement* (Bright 1965:lvi), *rolling corpus* [1] (McKane 1986:xlix), *troubling Jeremiah* [2] (Diamond, et al. 1999).

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[1] The notion of a *rolling corpus* provides the key to McKane's (1986:xlviii-li) understanding of the compositional history of the book and its resultant forms (Stulman 1998:27). McKane's term *rolling corpus* conveys that small pieces of pre-existing text trigger exegesis or commentary. As a consequence of this process of 'triggering', the book of Jeremiah in its present shape has a 'piecemeal character'. In other words, McKane considers that Jeremiah 1-25 is not a 'well-ordered literary whole, with accumulative teleological significance'. For him, there is no evidence of a dominant editorial hand with a discernible theological *Tendenz*. Instead, one is confronted with a 'complicated, untidy accumulation of material, extending over a very long period and to which many people have contributed' (Stulman 1998:27).

[2] It seems that the title of the book, *Troubling Jeremiah*, is trying to remind us that the book of Jeremiah is difficult to read, and a jumble of poetry, biography and prose without any coherence. This book, *Troubling Jeremiah*, however, provides different possibilities for reading the book of Jeremiah. It (i.e. *Troubling Jeremiah*) deals with text-centred reading, reader-centred reading and the author-centred reading.

The editors of the *Troubling Jeremiah* point out a current scholarly tendency to abandon the author-centred reading by assuming that the book of Jeremiah is too diverse and that it has too many layers to single out the authentic words of the prophet Jeremiah. Part three of *troubling Jeremiah* is a collection of the responses to Leo Perdue's *The Collapse of History*. In his book, Perdue insists that the traditio-historical criticism that had dominated for a long time is now facing an impasse. Perdue, therefore, argues that it should be complemented by other useful tools, such as liberation theology, feminism, the literary approach to the text, the prophetic imagination, etc.

The last part of *Troubling Jeremiah* provides the prospect for the future studies of the book of Jeremiah. In this book we notice the current trend in studying the book of Jeremiah. Many are abandoning the traditio-historical approach to the text but pay more and more attention to the final form of the book of Jeremiah.

Some scholars, however, do not regard the book of Jeremiah as impossible to read and there have fortunately been significant shifts to alter the direction of Jeremianic study over the past two decades. Among those who have offered a wide variety of approaches and methodologies to the text are Thompson (1980), Carroll (1981, 1986), Holladay (1986, 1989), McKane (1986, 1996), Stulman (1986, 1998), Brueggemann (1988, 1991, 1998), Clements[3] (1988, 1996), McConville (1993) and Lundbom (1997, 1999). Such diversity in interpretation provides fertile ground for new and creative studies to make sense of the book of Jeremiah (Stulman 1998:14-15).

A review of the history of Jeremianic study indicates that a historical and diachronic approach to the book of Jeremiah dominated the scholarly discussion for the last century. This dominant trend in academic circles was started by Bernhard Duhm, who is regarded as a forerunner of modern critical study of the book of Jeremiah.

Duhm (1901) proposed that the *Urrolle* of the book of Jeremiah was expanded by Baruch and given its final shape by an editor or series of editors who added further material. He distinguished the prose section in the book from the poetry. He assumed that the poetry section is probably the prophet's *ipsissima verba*[4]. He thought that Jeremiah wrote only in pentameter (קינה) verse, the elegiac 3:2 (Duhm 1901:16). This comprises 280 verses of Masoretic text (Lundbom 1999: 64). As for the prose section, Duhm concluded that Baruch's book on the life of Jeremiah comprised 220

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[3] Clements favours two approaches in studying the book of Jeremiah: redaction criticism and canonical criticism. According to Clements, canonical criticism stimulates the reader to accept and interpret the biblical text in the form in which it now exists. For Clements, redaction criticism helps to raise the question about how and why prophecy exists as a literature. Redaction criticism shows that the seemingly intricate structures that took centuries to reach their final form, have intentional connections and and that the interrelationships between the parts were planned through its many stages of growth.

Clements also explains how the prophetic material was preserved for such a long period until the time of editing. He thinks that they were preserved when the prophecies were fulfilled and that their messages were consistent and coherent.

For Clements, the theological insights as well as the historical and literary questions are equally important because he argues that all three are deeply interconnected.

[4] He also regarded Jeremiah as a prophet of doom, and that these were therefore Jeremiah's exact words.

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verses, with the post-exilic Deuteronomic editors contributing a grand total of 850 verses (Duhm 1901: xvi).

Sigmund Mowinckel (1914) expanded on Duhm's idea. He identified three types of material in the book of Jeremiah - source A is poetry, preserving Jeremiah's authentic words, source B is biographical prose, written by Baruch, and source C is prose speeches that reflect a distinctive style, language and structure similar to what is found in the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic history (Mowinckel 1914:61-62). Mowinckel even considered the possibility of a source D originating from an anonymous collection for Chapters 30 and 31 (Carroll 1986:39).

Mowinckel was followed by W. Rudolph (1968). Rudolph supported Mowinckel's theory that the book of Jeremiah was amalgamated from four sources. Rudolph was interested in detecting which material originated from the authentic Jeremiah. He, like Mowinckel, thought it possible to reconstruct the original Jeremianic scroll (Odendaal 1992:15) and regarded the material from source A as important.

Mowinckel's work was further elaborated by J. Philip Hyatt (1942, 1951, 1956). Hyatt focused on clarifying the relationship between source C and the Deuteronomist as well as the relationship between C and the prophet's *ipsissima verba* (Hyatt 1942:156-73 and 1951:71-95). Hyatt argued, primarily on linguistic grounds, that the book of Jeremiah underwent a thorough Deuteronomic editing in order to make the prophet appear to be a supporter of the Deuteronomic point of view (Wilson 1999: 413-27). Hyatt argued that this Deuteronomic editing of the book was much more extensive than anything proposed by Mowinckel and assumed that most chapters of the book were influenced by it.

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Bright (1951:15-35; 1965: lxvii-lxxiii) also noticed the pervasiveness of the Deuteronomic vocabulary in the book of Jeremiah, as Hyatt perceived, and went further by concluding that some of the so-called Deuteronomic material was in fact distinctive to Jeremiah. Although Bright did not claim that all of the source C (i.e. prose section) was in fact the work of the prophet, he was inclined to accept whenever possible the claim of the book of Jeremiah itself, that the materials originate from the work of the prophet.

Thiel (1973, 1981), in a detailed two-volume analysis of the language of Jeremiah, revived the earlier thesis of Hyatt and argued for massive Deuteronomic editing throughout the book (Wilson 1999:416). For Thiel, the hand of the Deuteronomists is thus not confined to the source C material but is much more pervasive. Thiel, like Hyatt, regards the book of Jeremiah as a Deuteronomistic edition of the prophet's work.

The view that Weippert (1973) held, was contradictory to that of Thiel. She concentrated not on words and phrases in themselves (parole) but on their use in context (language) [Weippert 1973:22-24]. The conclusion of her contextual study of the prose speeches was that there are analogies between the diction of the prose and the poetry in the book of Jeremiah (McConville 1993:17; Wilson 1999:416).

When Weippert noticed that some examples of Jeremiah's poetic vocabulary were also found in the book's prose, she argued that the historical Jeremiah was responsible both for the poetry and for much of the source C prose. In other words, she understood that the prose material was part of the Jeremianic proclamations and the poetic material grew out of authentic Jeremianic texts (Weippert 1973:228-34; Carroll 1986:42; Odendaal 1992:18).

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The view Nicholson (1970, 1973, 1975) had, seems to be very similar to that of Thiel, because both argued that the text of Jeremiah was developed further by the Deuteronomistic worker(s). Nicholson (1973:10-11) agrees with the argument that prose sayings and sermons are so different to the poetic oracles in terms of theological content, as well as style and language, that it is very unlikely that both types of material could have come from one and the same author.

Nicholson maintained that the prose materials stem from the work of exilic preachers in Babylon, who, during the exile, developed the implications of Jeremiah's oracles for a new situation (Nicholson, 1970). For Nicholson, the so-called prose sermons reflect thematic links with Deuteronomic tradition, but he believed that many of the prose passages grew out of genuine sayings of the prophet (Wilson 1999:416). Nicholson insisted that the expansion and development of authentic sayings and oracles were done by a group of Deuteronomic authors for the Deuteronomic themes or motifs. He assumes at least two motifs: one for an explanation of the incident in 587 BC, the other for supplementing Jeremiah's message of hope to the exilic community (Nicholson 1973:10-16).

In taking a retrospective look at the efforts of these scholars to understand the book of Jeremiah during the last 100 years, we realize that a better method is still needed for approaching the text. Jeremianic study has been enriched and developed astonishingly under the influence of Duhm and Mowinckel. However, the dedicated scholarly exertion of approximately one hundred years still does not seem sufficient.

The book of Jeremiah is still difficult for us. For most of us, it is still too diverse a creation to be subsumed under some comprehensive theory of setting or purpose. Carroll (1989:65-82) argues that it is impossible to detect the authentic Jeremianic words in the book of Jeremiah, because the book

was the result of a long process of editing during the Exile and post-exilic era, a generation or two after the death of Jeremiah. For Carroll, the book was a mixture of disparate pieces that had no overarching scheme. In conclusion, he says that the book is difficult to read.

McKane (1986:l-lxxxiii; 1996) thinks that the present texts are a result of reinterpretation by later editors, not according to any overarching editorial plan, but rather haphazardly, in response to ever new situations. From that perception, he proposes the idea of a 'rolling corpus' for the book of Jeremiah, as mentioned elsewhere.

The views of McKane are not identical with those of Carroll in all respects, but he shares the view that the book of Jeremiah is an assemblage of traditions over time, and that it cannot be recovered or identified as the original work of the prophet. Because of that view, these two scholars can be regarded as the minimalists.

In comparing the view of Carroll and McKane, Bright (1965) and Holladay (1986, 1989) take a more conservative critical position. Their approach relies on the book of Jeremiah for the narrative of Jeremiah's life, his words and his deeds. In fact, this approach seeks to determine the date and exact historical setting of each textual unit. It asks specific historical questions of each passage.

Moreover, this approach is inclined to maximise the role of the actual person Jeremiah, by assigning as much material as possible to the prophet. Bright and Holladay are, therefore, regarded as the maximalists, because their works are prone to accept the claim of the book of Jeremiah itself, whenever possible, namely that the material does indeed stem from the work of the prophet (Brueggemann 1988b:8).

McConville's view (1993) is somewhat different to that of Bright and Holladay. McConville agrees with McKane and Carroll who stress the disparate character and the editorial complexity of the book of Jeremiah. McConville says that it should be agreed that the work is complex. For McConville, complexity is perfectly consistent with the fact that the book is the deposit of the approximately forty-year ministry of Jeremiah. McConville also agrees with the view that the process of the material's growth is difficult or impossible to trace.

Even though McConville concedes that the present book of Jeremiah is a result of a long process of editing, as McKane and Carroll contend, he proposes the alternative approach. McConville (1993:11-26) wants to account for the material in its *present* form. He acknowledges that the book of Jeremiah is the result of Deuteronomic editing. His main concern, however, is not with the process of editing, but with the final form of the book. After having investigated the present text of the book of Jeremiah in his book *Judgment and Promise*, he concludes that most of the content of the book is related to the prophet Jeremiah of the 7th and 6th BC. McConville can, therefore, also be called as a maximalist.

We appreciate the argument offered by McConville that an alternative approach to the book of Jeremiah is necessary. In addition to McConville, many other scholars have expressed sympathy with the view that historical criticism alone is not sufficient for interpreting the biblical text. We think that the title of Leo Perdue's book, *The Collapse of History* (1994), is very suggestive of the fact that an alternative approach beyond historical criticism is necessary.

Fortunately a number of scholars have recently offered diverse new approaches to the text of the book of Jeremiah in their commentaries, monographs, articles and dissertations. The historical and diachronic approach to Jeremiah - while once viewed as the only scholarly treatment of the book -

is now recognised as one of many possible readings. Literary readings as well as readings informed

by the social sciences and recent hermeneutical approaches have opened up new possibilities for

exploration (Stulman 1998:15-16).

One of these is suggested by Louis Stulman. In his book, *Order amid Chaos*, Stulman offers a

synchronic reading of Jeremiah, paying attention to the final form of the text[5] (cf. Nasuti 1987: 249-

66). For Stulman, the source C prose that Mowinckel proposed is no longer troublesome. When he

carefully studied the prose section, he came to discover that the source C section provides important

interpretative clues for reading the book of Jeremiah in its final form, as a symbolic tapestry of

meanings with narrative seams. He proposes that the present book of Jeremiah is the result of

intentional arrangement.

At the same time, Stulman regards the book to be the outcome of the amalgamation of two books.

For Stulman, Jer. 1-25 is one book; Jer. 26-52 another. He demarcates each book into macro-

structural units and concludes that they function as integral parts of the architecture of the text,

bearing a theological message. He concludes that the book of Jeremiah is a two-part drama,

mapping out the death and dismantling of Judah's sacred world and new beginnings emerging from

a shattered world of exile (Jer. 1-25).

We think that Stulman contributes to Jeremianic study by taking an increasing interest in a

rhetorical strategy of the book of Jeremiah as a whole. However, we do not consider his study to be

a rhetorical study *per se*, because he does not pay attention to the rhetorical features in the book of

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[5] Stulman argues that the book of Jeremiah is the result of a long process of editing and that it is impossible to clarify the authentic words of the prophet Jeremiah in the book of Jeremiah, like Carroll. Stulman concentrates, therefore, on the final form of the book. He assumes that the final form of the book of Jeremiah was edited for a theological purpose by the editors. He presumes that the final editing occurred around the 4th century BC.

Jeremiah. Stulman's study would be more enriched if he had accompanied his research with the rhetorical analysis.

It should be emphasised that a rhetorical study is indispensable for better understanding of the text. Without due consideration of the rhetorical features of the text, it is impossible to detect the right meaning of the text.

What we do perceive as most lacking in current Jeremianic scholarship is a comprehensive rhetorical approach to the text. Such a lack seems to have resulted in the limited understanding of the book of Jeremiah. The rhetorical study of the book of Jeremiah should be utilised more by scholars to explore and enjoy its richness. The rhetorical study of the book of Jeremiah cannot be emphasized too much. In such a situation, Lundbom has contributed many articles and books for the rhetorical analysis of the book of Jeremiah. Lundbom indeed stands in a very unique position as a specialist in this regard.

Lundbom's *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (1997) is a result of his concentration of inner-textual rhetorical structures of the book of Jeremiah. The focus of his research was on the rhetorical features and functions of the book. He understands *rhetoric* as an art of composition (cf. Trible 1994:33-35; Patrick 1999:1-7).

Lundbom pays careful attention to the structure of the book of Jeremiah. According to him, the controlling structures of the book are *inclusio* and *chiasm*. For Lundbom, Jeremianic speeches are controlled, not by fixed genre structures, i.e., the letter, lawsuit, hymn, lament and judgement

speech, but by structures that were dictated by canons of Hebrew rhetoric[6] in the 8th-6th centuries BC (Lundbom 1997:147). He concludes that Jeremiah's rhetoric is a preacher's rhetoric, a rhetoric of totality, of argumentation and of descent.

Even though we think that the study by Lundbom contains some very good suggestions, we consider some problems in his approach. The main problem seems to lie in the fact that Lundbom confines the rhetorical techniques to *inclusio* and *chiasm*. Moreover, his criterion for determining a literary unit by means of a repeated word seems unconvincing. For example, he insists that Jer. 1:1 and 51:64 form an *inclusio*, because the phrase occurs in both sections (Lundbom 1999:221-22).

We are convinced that the occurrence of the same word cannot guarantee an *inclusio*. The phrase in Jer. 51:64 could be a deliberate rhetorical feature or an independent ancient closure form (cf. Fishbane 1977:422-23). Moreover, it also occurs in Jer. 26:20 (Fishbane 1977:422-23). Lundbom does not explain his criterion for what does or does not constitute an *inclusio*.

For another example: Lundbom argues that Jer. 1:5 and 20:18 form an *inclusio*. He then insists that the *inclusio* makes it possible to interpret the passage differently and that, whatever despair is conveyed in the original poem of 20:14-18, is replaced by an answer of hope and affirmation in the larger composition (Lundbom 1997:42-44). We are surprised when Lundbom comes to a conflicting interpretation that is opposite to what was originally meant in the context of Jeremianic confession. His rhetorical understanding does not seem to match to the historical context.

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[6] Lundbom (1986:108; 1999:92) assumes that a rhetorical school must have existed in Jerusalem during the late seventh century BC, presided over by Shaphan the scribe and his family of scribes (cf. Muilenburg 1969:18; 1970a:227-31). As related to this school, Mowinckel (1955:206) suggested that Solomon could have been associated with this school, and could also have founded a scribal school. These suggestions, however, are highly speculative and are not supported by any biblical evidence.

From there, we want to emphasise that the rhetorical analysis of the text should be in collaboration with its historical context. A rhetorical analysis which is contradictory to its historical context must be abandoned.

The book of Jeremiah provides rich rhetorical situations. The time when Jeremiah was active as God's prophet was the most tumultuous time in the Old Testament history. Jeremiah delivered the message of doom and restoration during that time. Jeremiah had a very diverse audience. Most of them were Jeremiah's antagonists whereas some of them supported him. Jeremiah had to interact with them. His audience included theologically biased people, politically biased people, kings, priests, scribes, officials, the rich, the poor, etc.

It is our opinion that such a dynamic rhetorical situation as the text provides, along with a rhetorical analysis, should be considered for a better interpretation of the text. Like interpretation without due consideration of the rhetorical perspective is insufficient, a rhetorical analysis without due consideration of its historical context is inadequate too.

Admittedly, ancient text is not an easy text for a rhetorical analysis. Many rhetorical structures can be made from a text. In this regard, rhetorical analysis is a game of choice. A better analysis of the text will be made when a rhetorical analysis is in accord with its historical context.

In evaluating Lundbom's suggestions, some of his examples seem illuminating, whereas some unconvincing. Lundbom's shortcomings seem to originate from his lack of due consideration of the historical context of the text. Throughout this study, Lundbom's rhetorical analysis will be discussed whenever necessary.

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In spite of such shortcomings, we need to pay attention to and develop Lundbom's rhetorical study of the book, because it not only contributes as a pioneering work in the field of rhetorical research on the book of Jeremiah, but it also provides the wide applicability of rhetorical studies to future study in the field.

1.2 Problem and hypothesis

We have surveyed the history of Jeremianic scholarship from the time of Duhm to the most recent studies. Though their positions are different, such studies embrace some common assumptions for studying the book of Jeremiah. Most scholars regard the canonical book of Jeremiah as having many layers. It is widely felt that the current shape of the book of Jeremiah is the result of a long history of editing.

Another general assumption is made, namely that the authentic message of Jeremiah mainly concerned judgement. Brueggemann (1985:156-68) suggests that literature from Jeremiah that is pre-exilic and that is essentially a statement of judgement, well reflects such a consensus for Jeremianic scholarship. For Brueggemann, the new message of hope and God's new work among the people of Judah began with the exile.

Recently, Sharp (2000: 421-38) proposed that Jeremiah's call in Jer. 1 was for amalgamation of the full judgement view (Jer. 1:4-8) and a conditional view (Jer. 1:9-10). For Sharp, the possibility of well-being in the conditional view pertains to that of the 597 group, whereas the full judgement view was that of the Judahite editors who needed to make sense of the fate of Jerusalem.

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Thus, a number of scholars separate the Salvation Oracles in the book of Jeremiah from the Judgement Oracles in the same book because they postulate that these two seemingly contrasting oracles could not have been created by the same hand (May 1942:139-55; Carroll 1981). The idea seems to originate from Duhm (1901), who considered Jeremiah primarily as a poet, and concluded that he was typical of the *Unheilspropheten* of the pre-exilic era. In opposition to Raitt (1977:106-27), who takes the view that the narrative of the book of Jeremiah indicates that the prophet not only preached judgement, but also salvation, Carroll argues that Jeremiah must have opposed any announcement of a hopeful future with the following:

> The conflict between oracles of doom and promise of salvation is not
>
> peculiar to Jeremiah, but the problem constituted by it is exacerbated
>
> by the strongly critical nature of Jeremiah's oracles. A prophet who
>
> said so many harsh things about the community can hardly have said
>
> such positive things without serious problems of interpretation arising.
>
> This general problem of the biblical prophetic traditions has its
>
> particular problematic aspects in Jeremiah. Schematic explanations
>
> which permit a volte-face after the destruction of Jerusalem
>
> presuppose a very superficial attachment between the prophet and his
>
> convictions (1981:8).

Those who separate the message of hope from that of judgement also believe that the Salvation Oracles were added to the Judgement Oracles, which might be the original work by Jeremiah, and these Salvation Oracles were added by the Deuteronomic editor(s) during and after the Exile, for the community of the Exile and the post-Exile. Although these scholars who separate the message of hope from that of judgement in the book of Jeremaih share such common assumptions, some

emphasise the historicity of the book while others subordinate historical questions to the canonical shape of the literature.

The problem addressed in this dissertation amounts to:

We are not convinced, however, that the Salvation Oracles should be regarded as works written by different people in a different time frame in the book of Jeremiah, as many scholars insist. Instead, we consider that both the material related to judgement and that related to salvation in the book of Jeremiah possibly belong with authentic Jeremianic work.

In this regard, we believe that Jeremiah 1 gives a decisive clue to a possible answer to the question raised in this study: *What is the relationship between judgement and salvation oracles in the book of Jeremiah?* In other words, we feel that Jeremiah 1 possibly provides sufficient ground for an alternative way of interpretation *regarding the relationship between an element of judgement and that of salvation in the ministry of Jeremiah.*

Jer. 1:1-3 provides historical data with regard to when the prophet Jeremiah worked among the nations as a prophet of God, establishing that the work by Jeremiah took place during the last phase of the decline of Judah. In this darkest hour of the nation, Jeremiah received a call from God to act as a prophet. Jeremiah's mission is summarised in Jer. 1:10. It was a mission of judgement and salvation. The mission was a by-product of the special historical situation that the prophet had to face.

On the other hand, Isa. 1:1 presents the historical time frame of the prophet Isaiah's ministry. His theological message is different from that of Jeremiah. Isaiah's theological core can be summarised as *either-or* (i.e. judgement or salvation, not judgement and salvation). Isaiah proclaims as follows:

> If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;
>
> but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword; for the
>
> mouth of the Lord has spoken (Isa. 1:19-20).

Gitay (1996:218-29) insightfully argues that Isaiah's speeches in the book of Isaiah present the concept of cause and effect, which restates the people's responsibility for their future as a consequence of their moral and ethical behaviour. Isaiah points out that people themselves determine their destiny: salvation or destruction.

Jeremiah's theological core is contained in Jer. 1:10. If Isaiah's theological core can be condensed as *either-or*, then that of Jeremiah can be condensed as *both-and*. The theological core of the book of Jeremiah is that salvation would come after judgement.

It was not a popular theology at the time and only incurred the displeasure of all who heard it. Jeremiah had to face severe opposition from the political and religious leaders of the time, from the people of Judah and even from his family and countrymen. It was difficult for the listeners to accept it, because it was not only an ominous message, but it also was an unfamiliar concept for them. Jeremiah's confession that he did not know how to speak (Jer. 1:6) seems to imply that he realized that it would be difficult to persuade his audience.

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The rest of the book is a realisation of the initial theological framework. The content of Jer. 1:10 is continuously visible throughout the book, in passages such as Jer. 12:14-17; 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28, 31:38-40; 42:10 and 45:4, etc.

To sum up, our hypothesis for a possible answer to the problem that we raised above is that Jeremiah 1 functions as a theological introduction to the book, and its references to judgement and salvation form a theological whole and we aim to investigate the potential of socio-rhetorical criticism that might be able to identify the different interest groups with whom Jeremiah is communicating in his theological introduction throughout this study.

1.3 Methodology

To speak briefly and to the point, our research in this dissertation is aimed at presenting a reasonable answer to the problem that we already raised (Section 1.2) and seeking convincing evidence for our hypothesis that we suggested before (Section 1.2) by applying Vernon Robbin's socio-rhetorical approach (1996a; 1996b) to the Jeremianic text.

There are many useful tools that scholars have implemented over the years to study biblical texts. None of these, however, can claim that one particular method is the best. Therefore, it is very unwise for us to restrict ourselves to one discipline and not to be open to any other method.

In broad outline, many available methodologies that have been suggested by diverse scholars up to the present can be divided into two groups: diachronic approach and the synchronic approach.

The same classification can be applied to Jeremianic studies. A variety of synchronic and diachronic investigations of the book of Jeremiah has been made by scholars. More correctly speaking, scholarly attention is now shifting from diachronic approach to the synchronic approach in Jeremianic studies.

It is our firm conviction that both perspectives should be used together for better interpretation of the text because of the reality that each methodology has its limits.

As already discussed elsewhere, many scholars pointed out the limitations that diachronic study (i.e. historical approach) has with regard to Jeremianic studies. The scholarly criticism on the synchronic approach is relatively little compared to that on the diachronic approach. It is not strange because the synchronic approach has rarely been taken to Jeremianic study, while the diachronic approach has dominated. It is quite certain that more criticism of the synchronic approach will arise when more use is made of it.

Lundbom's case seems to indicate the situation very well. Lundbom's rhetorical study on the book of Jeremiah is regarded as unrivaled one by scholars. However, we feel that his rhetorical approach[7] has turned out to be a disappointment and does not deserve unqualified scholarly recognition.

As pointed out elsewhere, Lundbom's rhetorical structure is unconvincing, and his demarcation does not match the historical, theological context of the book of Jeremiah.

Lundbom's failure seems to lie in his negligence of the historical and social scientific perspective in investigating the Jeremianic text. The book of Jeremiah is, in fact, a considerably rich text which

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[7] The rhetorical approach can be categorized as a synchronic approach because its investigation is focused on the present form of the text.

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contains many diverse aspects of the social, cultural, political and theological environment. Without due consideration of such an environment, the Jeremianic study will be limited.

The book of Jeremiah begins by suggesting a very provocative theme of doom and restoration. It must have caused much controversy among Jeremiah's audience. By intentionally putting such a controversial theological topic in the report of the prophetic call, Jeremiah anticipated dynamic feedback from his diverse audience. By relating his theological framework to the context of the divine experience with Yahweh, Jeremiah seems to have insisted on such a claim: "The experience of the divine revelation proves that I am right and you are wrong if you have a different view. You should listen to me". By doing it, Jeremiah most likely confronted a variety of people who had diverse views in terms of theology, politics, economics, justice and culture, etc. A heated debate for a better reading of the signs of the time most likely was conducted between Jeremiah and his audience.

To comprehend the message of Jeremiah, understanding the social, cultural, economic, political and religious mindset of the people at that time is a *sine qua non*. In this regard, Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach seems like an epoch-making discipline to help to interpret the biblical text in a more integrative and practical way.

As the title of Robbins's, (1996b) *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* accurately implies, the biblical text contains complex patterns and images, like an intricately woven tapestry. We must unravel such complicated texts for a clearer understanding by using all kinds of available methods in an integrated manner. We, therefore, believe that a multi-dimensional approach to the text is desirable when studying a biblical text.

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Using only one method will result in a very limited understanding of the biblical text. In this regard, we propose that the socio-rhetorical approach which Robbins suggests is the most comprehensive method at present for using all available tools interactively for a better understanding of the biblical text. In this study Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach will be applied to the discussion of Jer. 1.

The term *rhetorical*, as we are using it, must be distinguished from the classical rhetoric that was borrowed from Aristotle. The term *rhetorical* that we are using here refers to the means of communication among people in a text. For us, persuasion seems to be more important than eloquence (cf. Muilenburg 1969; Gitay 1981, 1991a, 1991b; Fox 1980: 1-4; Tribble 1994; Patrick 1999; *et al.*). The biblical text has its own unique rhetorical context and specific audience.

The prophet Jeremiah lived in the most tumultuous period in the history of Judah. Jeremiah 1:1-3 depicts the rhetorical situation in which the prophet Jeremiah had worked as God's prophet:

> The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the
> reign of Josiah, and throughout the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah
> king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of
> Zedekiah, son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem
> went into exile (Jer. 1:2-3).

During this particular period the people of Judah experienced both hope and despair. The prophet Jeremiah had to persuade the people, who felt complacent as God's chosen people and falsely optimistic about the future, that judgement was unavoidable. He also had to convince the people of Judah, who were at a loss in a time of destruction, that hope would come in the long run. Jeremiah continued his work until after the fall of Jerusalem and was last seen in Egypt, having accompanied

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a group of Jewish refugees to that country. Such a rhetorical situation made it necessary for him to focus on delivering the message of judgement and salvation.

In the section on the inner texture we are going to demarcate the literary structure of Jer. 1. This stage of analysis is the proper place from which to move to the actual interpretation of the text. We are going to pay careful attention to rhetorical elements, such as repetition, arrangement of words, shifts in voices, visions, metaphor and image, because these were the tools for communication.

According to the definition by Robbins, (1996a:7) *inner texture* is the texture of the medium of communication. Robbins provides six kinds of rhetorical resources for analysing and interpreting *inner texture* in a text: repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, argumentative and sensory-aesthetic texture.

Not all of the resources which Robbins suggests are applicable to the study of Jer. 1, because it is not a narrative *per se*, but a mixture of prose and poetry. Four resources will be applied in this study, namely repetitive, progressive, argumentative and sensory-aesthetic textures, excluding narrational and opening-middle-closing textures.

In the section on Inter Texture, Robbins focuses on oral-scribal intertexture, historical intertexture, social intertexture and cultural intertexture. In this study the focus will be on the oral-scribal intertexture, because it is possible that historical intertexture, social intertexture and cultural intertexture could cause confusion with social and cultural texture. These will be dealt with when the social and cultural texture is discussed.

According to Robbins, intertexture concerns the relation between data in the text and various kinds of phenomena outside the text (Robbins 1996a:96-143). There are five basic ways in which language in a text uses language that exists in another text: recitation, recontextualisation, reconfiguration, narrative amplification and thematic elaboration.

Patrick (1999:160-61) understands *intertextuality* as the "cross-pollination" of texts. This author likes the idea of interpreting texts through other texts. He examines the book of Amos closely and insists that the leverages of the book are the accusations and the certainty of impending judgement for the Northern Kingdom of Israel in approximately 750 BC. Patrick continues by saying that the accusations by Jeremiah against Judah transfer the accusations by Amos towards another segment of the people of God at a later stage.

For Patrick, the prophets are all announcing the same event of God, even though each prophet provides a different perspective on it. According to this author, the "event" involves judgement and then salvation, so that one provides the conditions for the other, and the effect of the two together will be a transformed Israel in a transformed world. Interpreters should therefore read synthetically, because not every book covers the whole event (Patrick 1999:156-61; cf. Clements 1988:189-200).

As Patrick insightfully admits, the synthetical reading of the prophetic books can result in the danger of homogenisation of prophecy. This type of reading cannot appreciate the particular message of each prophet or the differences between the prophetic books. The diachronic reading of each book of the prophet must therefore be undertaken along with the synthetical reading.

The book of Jeremiah stands in a very unique position in the prophetic books in that it covers the theme of judgement and that of salvation simultaneously. The theology of destruction and

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restoration in the book of Jeremiah seems to be a by-product of the unique historical, political and religious situation in the 7th and 6th centuries BC in Judah. In the most tumultuous time in the history of Judah, the book of Jeremiah pioneered the most profound theological frame of judgement and then salvation.

The idea of destruction and restoration in Jer. 1:10 is repeated in Jer. 12:14-17; 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28; 42:10 and 45:4, etc. Outside the book of Jeremiah, a similar expression is seen in Eze. 36:36. The book of Ezekiel probably borrows the idea of rebuilding that which was destroyed from the book of Jeremiah (Eze. 36:36). This study will look at how the mission of judgement and salvation in Jeremiah 1:10 was recited, recontextualised, reconfigured, amplified and elaborated in the rest of the book of Jeremiah.

With regard to the social and cultural texture, anthropological and sociological insights will be used in this study to interpret the book of Jeremiah.

Robbins (1996a:147-59) introduces major socio-religious responses to the world identified by Wilde (1974, 1978:47-67). These responses are *conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, gnostic manipulationist, thaumaturgic, reformist* and *utopian*. Jeremia's ministry to Judah and the neighbouring nations will be thoroughly examined through these seven responses.

Robbins also introduces the five different kinds of basic culture: dominant culture, sub-culture, counterculture, contraculture and liminal culture. The Israelite culture was deeply related to the Canaanite culture. The Israelite culture had been formed through a process of fighting with and accepting of the Palestine culture. This study will consider the dominant culture and sub-culture at

the time of Jeremiah's ministry. At the same time, the kind of culture that the book of Jeremiah is suggesting will be examined.

In the discussion of the ideological texture, the biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes of the people in the time of Jeremiah will be studied.

In the book of Jeremiah, some of the political groups of the time are identifiable. Among them were pro-Egyptian groups, pro-Babylonian groups and radical believers who claimed that God would protect the nation if they believed in Him. Such radicals can also be categorised as a political group who opposed the use of political tactics for the survival of the country.

The prophetic groups were also deeply involved in the political matters at the time. They were divided into two groups: true prophets and false prophets. The false prophets regarded Babylon as God's enemy. They believed in the people's speedy return from Babylon. The false prophets were heavily favoured by the King's Court. The true prophets considered Babylon as God's instrument to chastise sinful Jewish people. For the true prophets, the only way of survival was to submit to Babylon.

There was a power struggle between the true prophets and the false prophets (cf. the struggle between Jeremiah and Hannaniah in Jer. 28). The main political struggle, however, was between the pro-Egyptian groups and the pro-Babylonian groups. The prophet Jeremiah was taking a unique political-religious view at the time.

In this regard, Huffmon (1999:261-71) classifies Jeremiah as "pro-Israel". According to Huffmon, Jeremiah is not to be characterised as pro-Babylonian, though many of his contemporaries viewed

him as such. Huffmon continues that this stance did not demand political independence. For Jeremiah the survival of God's people Israel at that time meant submission to God theologically and submission to Babylon politically.

Huffmon's argument that Jeremiah is not "pro-Babylonian" seems reasonable because Jeremiah not only proclaimed the oracles against Babylon, but also gave a scroll that predicted all the disasters that would come upon Babylon to Seraiah (Jer. 51). In fact, Jeremiah did not choose to come with Nebuzaradan to Babylon although he was invited (Jer. 40:1-6). However, we do not consider Jeremiah as "pro-Israel", because we believe that those who were "pro-Babylon" and "pro-Egypt" had also chosen their politics for the survival of Israel (i.e. "pro-Israel").

Instead, we class Jeremiah as "pro-Yahweh". Jeremiah can be called "pro-Yahweh" in that he urged his contemporaries to keep the pure faith in Yahweh. The real problem for his contemporaries was that they had abandoned their trust in Yahweh (Jer. 2:13).

However, Jeremiah should be distinguished from the radicals, because he did not neglect the importance of wise political tactics. For Jeremiah, the only way of survival was submission to Babylon, politically, and submission to Yahweh, in terms of religion.

Jeremiah opposed military alliance with other nations such as Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt to fight against Babylon (cf. Jer. 27). He seemed to perceive that political strategy without trusting Yahweh would not succeed, and that God was using Babylon to chastise the Judean people who abandoned their faith in Him. Because of his political perspective, he was nearly put to death.

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In the ideological texture, the complicated political and religious opinions of that time will be examined.

The sacred texture will be discussed before the conclusion. The theological meaning of the book of Jeremiah will be consulted in this section. The book of Jeremiah was written with a rhetorical purpose. It was to persuade the audience. The social, cultural and ideological texts provided the rhetorical environment for the readers of the book so that they could obey the biblical text and experience the power.

In the sacred texture, a study will be made of how other textures (the social, cultural and ideological textures) helped and affected the community of faith (i.e. the audience) with regard to a right relationship with their God. As Chopp says, a rhetorical approach aims to stress the authority of theology as a product of persuasion in dialogue (Compier 1999:29-30). The sacred text should not be read merely for information, but for transformation (Combrink 1996:102-23). The rhetoric can be described as the author's means of controlling the reader (Combrink 1996:102-23).

We think that the least satisfactory texture with which Robbins provides us, is the sacred texture, as Doran (1998:584-85) points out. Robbins allows very little space for discussion of this, compared to other textures, and does not consult any scholar at all.

We believe that the sacred texture is no less important than the other textures. In fact, the book of Jeremiah is a theological book that was given to the community of faith for their own good. It was written to convict, convince, accuse and persuade the people of God, indeed. For us, sacred texture means "canon", "final form" and "authoritative text for a believing community". The present form of the book of Jeremiah has been recognised as "canon" by the community of faith for a long time.

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Believers have read the book that way. They were convicted, convinced, accused and persuaded by this authoritative text of God.

In this study the argument comprises that theological interpretation of the text is the most important aspect of studying the canonical text. Through this sacred texture some theological meanings will be derived from what we have learned through this study.

About fifteen years ago Brueggemann (1988a:268-80) pointed out the necessity of the theological interpretation of the book of Jeremiah. His article was an evaluation of three major commentaries on the book of Jeremiah that were published in 1986. In this article he evaluates what Holladay, Carroll and McKane did for Jeremianic scholarship and states that he is impressed with the intense criticism that these three scholars provide.

However, Brueggemann insightfully indicates that the interpretive outcome of these commentaries is characteristically thin. Brueggemann argues that the historical approach to the book of Jeremiah results in severe limitations when studying the book. For him, hermeneutical issues which move from "meant" to "means" are largely lacking in these commentaries. The issue of how or in what way these texts might be "true" (Brueggemann 1988a:268-80) is not raised. According to Brueggemann, there is no hint of a "second loyalty" to a community of faith that looks at these texts, of a probe into how the issues of truth and faith might impinge on such a community, or even of an awareness of a human community that yearns for authorising interpretation.

Brueggemann's argument does not seem to imply that the investigation of the historicity of the text is useless. In fact, the historical approach, too, is a useful tool in investigating the biblical text. Rather, Brueggemann seems to point out the limitations of the historical approach and emphasise

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the necessity of the contextualisation of the biblical passage. The intended meaning of the text can be located by the historical investigation of the text. Significance is created when the current reader of the biblical text applies what the text said (i.e. intended meaning) to his/her current situation. The Biblical reader's role is to trace an intended meaning of the text through historical investigation and to contextualize its principle to the current situation.

To summarize, Brueggemann's argument that a historical approach is not enough to interpret the canonical text is noteworthy. The biblical text, in fact, does not exist merely to give information of *what it said* to the readers. It exists for the community of faith to be persuaded and to act according to *what it says*.

As we have already mentioned elsewhere, Perdue also seems to realise the limitations of the historical approach. In this regard, we strongly believe that Robbins's multi-dimensional method provides a better way of reading the biblical text. His integrative approach provides all possible tools for interpreting the biblical text.

The justification for applying Robbins's multi-dimensional method to the study of the book of Jeremiah, is to avoid an one-sided approach in interpreting the text. Social scientific perspective, historical approach and rhetorical analysis should work together and complement each other for a better interpretation of the text. Robbins's socio-rhetorical criticism is believed to be a very fruitful tool to help to interpret the biblical text comprehensively.

The use of multiple approaches to the biblical text is urgently needed in Old Testament studies. Compared to New Testament scholarship, Old Testament scholarship is still very slow and limited in the utilisation of various possible readings.

The following are the proposed chapters of this study:

Chapter 1   Introduction

Chapter 2   Inner texture

Chapter 3   Inter texture

Chapter 4   The social and cultural texture

Chapter 5   Ideological texture

Chapter 6   Sacred texture

Chapter 7   Conclusion

Chapter 2 Inner texture

2.1 Definition

As mentioned elsewhere (See Section 1.3 [p.20]), inner texture is the texture of the medium of communication (Robbins 1996a:7). Inner textual analysis focuses on words as tools for communication (Robbins 1996a:7). This is a stage of rhetorical analysis of the text prior to that of social scientific analysis.

The purpose of this analysis (i.e. rhetorical analysis) is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meanings and meaning-effects (Robbins 1996a:7).

Jeremiah 1 is a combination of prose (Jer. 1:1-3) and poetry (Jer. 1:4-9). In this section, an analysis of the literary structure of Jeremiah 1 will be made first of all. Then the rhetorical features that we found in the text will be consulted. The last part of this section will be our application of the rhetorical resources which Robbins suggests, to interpret the text.

2.2 The literary structure of Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah 1 is mainly composed of poetry (1:4-19), which follows a short prose section (1:1-3). As was mentioned elsewhere, because of a certain mixture of style and motifs in the book of Jeremiah, prophetic scholarship following Duhm showed a tendency to distinguish between different literary strata to discover the original Jeremiah. As Gitay (1991:13-24) well posits, the difference in style is

not just an external means of distinguishing between prose and poetry, it has a functional purpose as well.

The rhetorical unit of Jeremiah 1 is constructed in the form of a superscription (Jer. 1:1-3) and the call of the prophet (Jer. 1:4-19). The superscription is not merely an introduction to Jeremiah 1 or the whole book. As a rhetorical unit, Jer. 1:1-3 functions as a historical context, so that the audience may feel that it is the right time for the prophet to start the ministry of judgement and salvation.

Then follows the call. The core of the call is in Jer. 1:10. The prophet was called to carry out the work of judgment and salvation. This ministry was carried out during the time indicated in the superscription.

An evaluation of whether Jeremiah 1 can be seen as an introductory chapter to the whole book concludes this section. In theological terms this has to be so, because Jeremiah 2-52 is a realization of the theological core stated in Jer. 1:10. However, when seen against the historical background, it cannot be, because some passages are beyond the time frame of Jeremiah 1:1-3[8].

2.2.1 Superscription (Jer. 1:1-3)

The superscription provides the audience with some basic information for understanding the book of Jeremiah. It contains Jeremiah's family background (1:1), his birthplace (1:1), his time of ministry (1:2-3), etc.

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[8] Karl Heinrich Graf (1862) and W. Rudolph (1968) feel that Jer. 1:1-3 could originally have introduced only Jeremiah 1-39. They think that Chapter 39 reports the end of Zedekiah's reign and Judah's exile to Babylon, and the report of happenings in Chapter 39 recorded the happenings that Jer. 1:3 mentioned in the last section of it. Lundbom (1999:96) says that a major break may occur in Jer. 40:1. However, it is not wrong to insist that Jer. 1:1-3 generally covers the entire book, because Jeremiah 40-44 record reports of what happened to Jeremiah and the remnants of his contemporaries immediately after Judah's exile to Babylon.

A long-term interpretation of Jeremiah emphasises his being a Benjaminite from the priestly village of Anathoth, and this associates him with Northern traditions, especially with the prophet Hosea (Welch 1928:33; Clements 1988:17). However, we agree with Huffmon's view that geography is not the key to understanding Jeremiah (Huffmon 1999:266).

It is not easy to identify Hilkiah in Jeremiah 1:1 because it is a very common name. Some consider him to have been the high priest Hilkiah (2 Kings 22:8) who found the book of the law in the time of Josiah (Wilson 1980:234), but we do not know for certain. If he were Jeremiah's father, he and Jeremiah would have been deeply involved in Josiah's reforms.

The time when the word of the Lord first came to Jeremiah, as indicated in this superscription (i.e. 1:2), is especially noteworthy. It is believed that the prophet Jeremiah received the mission of judgement and salvation at that moment. The task of judgement and salvation was received from the Lord in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. This implies that the proclamation of judgement had already begun in the time when most people were thinking about the possibility of full restoration of the Davidic dynasty through King Josiah.

2.2.2 The call of the prophet Jeremiah (1:4-19)

This literary unit depicts the call in sequence. It begins with God's word informing Jeremiah that he was called as a prophet to the nations (1:4-5), then follows Jeremiah's response (1:6), God's correspondent response (1:7-8), God putting His words in Jeremiah's mouth (1:9), the commission (1:10), two visions explaining the commission (1:11-16) and God's promise of protection and rescue for Jeremiah (1:17-19).

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The following is our suggestion for a literary structure of the call of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-9).

A   God's call and Jeremiah's response (1:4-6)

    B   I put my words in your mouth: explanation of the call (1:7-9)

        C   The commission (1:10)

    B'   Two visions: explanation of the commission (1:11-16)

A'   God's encouraging words (1:17-19)

Lundbom divides Jeremiah 1:4-19 into two sections (Lundbom 1991:193-210; 1999:221-48). He regards Jeremiah 1:3-12 as the call and Jeremiah 1:13-19 as a commission. Lundbom finds the clue for his delimiting of Jer. 1:4-19 in the word שֵׁנִית (second time) in vs. 13. His interpretation seems unconvincing, because the expression ויהי דבר־יהוה appears three times in Jeremiah 1 (vs. 4, 11 and 13), not twice. It therefore anticipated a word designating *third time* instead of *second time* if we follow his argument. At any rate, Lundbom thinks that there is a major break between vs. 12 and 13. He also thinks that there is a chiastic structure here:

A   Articulation of the Call (vs. 4-10)

    B   Vision of the Call (vs. 11-12)

    B'   Vision of the Commission (vs. 13-14)

A'   Articulation of the Commission (vs. 15-19).

As Lundbom's chiastic structure shows, he insists that there is a new beginning in vs. 13. He argues that the word relating to the call was fulfilled in vs. 4-12, and the Lord's second word to Jeremiah starts in vs. 13. However, his explanation does not help us to understand why the singular דברי (my

word) appears in vs. 12, even though God put דברי [his words (plural)] in Jeremiah's mouth in vs. 10. In other words, if vs. 12 serves as a conclusion of the call, it should be plural instead of singular. It is possible that this second vision (vs. 13-16) could be linked to the first vision (vs. 11-12).

It is also more natural to see the two visions as a detailed explanation of the Jeremianic ministry of judgement and salvation. The word דברי ('my word') in vs. 12 is referring to the word דבר-יהוה ('the word of Yahweh') in vs. 11, not דבר-יהוה ('the word of Yahweh') in vs. 4, nor דברי ('my words') in vs. 9. In vs. 13, a second word of explanation is given to Jeremiah. It is certain that vs. 13 is related to vs. 11-12. Verse 13 is related to Jeremiah's second vision in the same way that vs. 11-12 is related to his first vision.

By doing this, Lundbom argues that there is a time lapse between the call (vs. 4-12) and the commission (vs. 13-19). He assumes that Jeremiah delayed accepting the call because of his youth. He thinks that the age at which he received the call, ranged between twelve and thirteen years. Lundbom's assumption, however, is also problematic, because the word נער ('youth') is not used in that way. It is possible that it could have been used to convey a general idea of youthfulness; of about twenty years of age.

It seems very awkward to accept Lundbom's assumption, because it can result in a theological problem. The biblical text clearly shows that the omniscient and mighty God appears to His servants at the right time. God cannot appear at a wrong time. If God had been persuaded by Jeremiah that God's chosen time was too early for him to receive His call, Jeremiah would never have taken on such a difficult job from his misjudging God later. It would have been impossible to risk his life for the One who miscalculates. Anyway, Lundbom assumes that Jeremiah delayed God's call by four or five years, at least.

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In addition, God in the Old Testament is the One who values the decision of the people. In fact, God gave mankind free will. People can choose life or death according to their free will. If Jeremiah had refused to obey, God would not have appointed him over nations and kingdoms to uproot and build on the very day, against his free will (היום הזה in vs. 10). God, of course, can rebuke, persuade, command and urge, but he cannot proceed against the free will of the people. Jeremiah must have obeyed Yahweh's call on the very day.

It seems obvious that God's commission to Jeremiah already took place in vs. 10, before vs. 19. Verse 19 should rather be seen as God's promise of his presence and rescue to Jeremiah.

Lundbom also distinguishes vs. 15 from vs. 14, and connects vs. 17 with vs. 16. However, the first word כי in vs. 15 shows a nexus to the previous verse. Generally speaking, the word כי is an explanation of what has been said before. It seems more reasonable to regard vs. 15 as connected to vs. 14. It could be that vs. 11-16 compose a unit and that the B unit (vs. 7-9) is related to B' (vs. 11-16), because each has two כי clauses. The new unit begins at verse 17, because of the first word ואתה (but you!). Verse 17 therefore conveys a contrasting message, when read in comparison to the previous section. The previous section announced that the people of Judah would experience divine chastisement. In contrast to them, Jeremiah would experience divine protection according to this new unit.

To summarize, Lundbom's rhetorical structure seems unconvincing in many ways, as observed elsewhere. First of all, his rhetorical demarcation is problematic. Secondly, his interpretation of נער ('youth') as an early teenage boy is not a majority opinion. Lastly, his interpretation can cause serious theological problems. His rhetorical structure is to be rejected because of these reasons.

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An alternative literary structure is therefore suggested for Jer. 1:4-19. The first phrase

ויהי דבר-יהוה ('and it was the word of Yahweh') in 1:4 is different, from the previous verses Jer.

1:1-3, a prose section serving as an introduction to the whole book as well as to Jeremiah 1 and also

giving the historical setting of the Jeremianic ministry.

The poetry section starts in vs. 4. Some scholars think that Jeremiah 1 presents the call as a

narrative (Reventlow 1963; Habel 1965:297-323; Jones, 1992:66-72). However, it is more likely to

be poetry, because there is no אשר clause, which usually occurs in the prose sections in Jer. 1:4-19,

and many poetic elements, such as parallelism, chiastic structure, metaphors and images, etc., are

found here. Poetry intensifies the idea of intimacy between God and the prophet who receives

God's calling better than prose would.

Bright (1965:4-5) seems to recognise Jeremiah 1 as poetry. However, he sees it as is a mixture of

poetry and prose. He translates Jer. 1:4-10 and 1:15-19 as poetry, but 1:11-14 as prose. The RSV

also translates Jer. 1:4-10 as poetry, but Jer. 1:11-19 as prose. On the other hand, the NEB treats Jer.

1:4-13 as prose and 1:14-19 as poetry.

The incongruity seems to stem from the existence of the phrase ויהי דבר-יהוה ('and it was the word

of Yahweh'), which is seen as the beginning of the narrative in vs. 4, 11 and 13 and which presents

a typical pattern. We see Jer. 1:11-14 as poetry too, because B' (Jer. 1:11-16) in our rhetorical

structure has a similar literary structure to B (Jer. 1:7-9), which is poetry. This will be discussed in

detail later.

A (1:4-6) is composed of God's call and Jeremiah's reluctant response. Jer. 1:4 is regarded as a

general introductory statement, Jer. 1:5 is an announcement from the Lord to Jeremiah and Jer. 1:6

depicts the reaction of the prophet. The word ידע ('know') in vs. 5 and 6 is a key word, connecting God's call and Jeremiah's reply. In verse 5, God implies His omniscience, foreknowledge, predestination and selection. In verse 6, Jeremiah expresses his inadequacy for accepting God's call by implying his inferiority.

An interjection אהה ('Ah!') depicts Jeremiah's emotion well. Jeremiah knows well that he, as God's mere creature, should not refuse God's command. Nevertheless, he pleads that he is not the right person for such a mission by pointing out the awkwardness of his speech. The capacity of God's knowledge and Jeremiah's knowledge is contrasted here. Jeremiah seems to say: *God, you are omniscient. You know everything. You know me fully without any defect. God, don't you recognize that I don't even know how to speak? I am too young to do it.*

B (1:7-9) begins with the phrase ויאמר יהוה אלי ('and Yahweh said to me'). Jer. 1:7 portrays the Lord's response. It follows God's exhortation, promise (vs. 8) and act of endowment (vs. 9). This literary unit is related to a previous literary unit **A** (1:4-6) through the repetition of the phrase נער אנכי ('I am a youth') in Jer. 1:6 and 1:7. God is not angry with the hesitant Jeremiah. Instead, He elucidates why Jeremiah should not say that he is too young to know how to speak. God will give Jeremiah the words to speak and will send him where he has to go (vs. 8).

Further, God provides the reasons why Jeremiah should not fear the people. Because God will be with him and rescue him, he should not be afraid (vs. 9). The two כי clauses (1:7 and 1:8) furnish those reasons, and vs. 9 seems to fit this literary unit, because the repeated verb שלח ('send') connects vs. 7 and vs. 9. Moreover, the phrase ויאמר יהוה אלי ('and Yahweh said to me') is used twice here in vs. 7 and 9.

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C (1:10) is very distinctive. The first verb ראה ('see') is uniquely imperative in this rhetorical structure (1:4-19). Some verbs, such as אל-תאמר ('Do not say!', in vs. 7), אל-תירא ('Do not fear!', in vs. 8), ואתה תאזר ('But you, gird!', in vs. 17), וקמת ודברת ('And stand up and say!', in vs. 17), אל-תחת ('Do not be terrified!', in vs. 17) function as imperatives, but, strictly speaking, are not imperative verbs. The single imperative verb used is intentionally chosen to draw the listeners' attention, because this literary unit that is the centre of this rhetorical structure, is very important. This is a commission for Jeremiah.

The phrase היום הזה ('today') is noteworthy, because it is distinguished from vs. 5. In vs. 5 God told Jeremiah that he was chosen and predestined as a prophet to the nations. The exact time when Jeremiah was appointed as a prophet to the nations, is not clear. Seen in this context, it seems that as if he had been chosen as a prophet to the nations before he was born. This, however, cannot be regarded as a commission. The actual commission was given in vs. 10. Jeremiah was eventually given a mission on the very day when God called him.

The goals of God's mission are given in the six consecutive infinitives. Jeremiah was appointed over the nations in order **to uproot, to tear down, to destroy** and **to overthrow, to build** and **to plant**. The task for judgement is repeated four times, while that of salvation is repeated twice for the rhetorical effect of emphasis. Using the six successive infinitives is unique, not only in the book of Jeremiah, but also in the Old Testament. Its usage is so unique that it captivates our attention. It seems that its function is to emphasise the importance and the uniqueness of Jeremiah's mission of destruction and restoration.

B' (vs. 11-16) contains two visions explaining the Jeremianic mission. In this way it is related to a previous section (vs. 10). These visions have a similar pattern. Both begin with a general

introductory statement. Then follows a question from the Lord, an answer by Jeremiah, and God's explanation of the meaning of the vision, in that sequence.

The phrase אלי ויהי דבר-יהוה ('and the word of Yahweh came to me') in vs. 11 indicates the beginning of a new literary unit. In fact, the phrase אלי ויהי דבר-יהוה occurs three times in chapter 1 (vs. 4, 11 and 13). However, vs. 13 talks of the word of the Lord coming a שנית ('second time') and not a *third time*. The word שנית gives a clue that vs. 13 has no direct nexus with vs. 4 but with vs. 11. If it were closely related to vs. 4, vs. 13 would have used a term designating *third time*, instead. Two visions are closely related to each other by key phrases, such as אלי ויהי דבר-יהוה (vs. 11 and 13), מה אתה ראה ('What do you see?') [vs. 11 and 13], etc.

The first vision in v. 11 seems to symbolise hope for the future, because people usually consider that spring is near when they see the blossoms on the almond tree. Jeremiah's profundity lies in his consistent claim of the co-existence of hope and despair for the nation from the beginning to the end of his ministry. The second vision in v. 13 is a definite vision of judgement. Here we see a beautiful chiastic structure: judgement – salvation – salvation - judgement.

> a   The mission of judgement (1:10c)
>
>> b   The mission of salvation (1:10d)
>>
>> b'   The vision of salvation (1:11-12)
>
> a'   The vision of judgement (1:13-16)

B' (1:11-16) and **B** (1:7-9) are related to each other in that they have a similar structure. Both have two כי clauses as an exposition of what God had said before.

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B   Do not say (1:7b)

כִּי (1:7c) ---

Do not fear (1:8a)

כִּי (1:8b) ---

B'   You have seen correctly (1:12a)

כִּי (1:12b) ---

The Lord said to me, "Disaster will be poured out" (1:14)

כִּי (1:15) ---

A' (1:17-19) is distinguished from the previous section by the first phrase וְאַתָּה (But you!) in vs. 17, and from the following section by the first phrase וַיְהִי דְבַר־יהוה אֵלַי ('and the word of Yahweh came to me') in Jer. 2:1. This literary unit is composed of an address to the prophet by the Lord, containing His commands and exhortation to Jeremiah (vs. 17-18), and a concluding promise (vs. 19).

The word וְאַתָּה ('but you') creates a contrasting image to that in the previous section. The second vision (1:13-16) might have saddened Jeremiah as he learnt of God's impending judgement upon the people of Judah, his fellow countrymen. Or he might have felt concern about the objections of his brethren if he accepted the mission.

In this concluding section, God is encouraging a reluctant Jeremiah by giving him the promise of His presence and protection. The first phrase, וְאַתָּה ('but you') denotes a contrast with what is predicted for Jeremiah's contemporaries. Here, *you* (i.e. *Jeremiah*) is emphasized. The nuance of the phrase comprises: *Those who dwell in the land will face my judgement, **but you**, you alone will be safe because---*. In fact, it forms an *inclusio*.

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ואתה (the first phrase in 1:17):   But *you!*

להצילך (the last suffix in 1:19):   to rescue *you!*

God encourages Jeremiah by promising that He will make him a fortified city so that his enemies will not overcome him, and God will be with him to rescue him. Jeremiah alone, in contrast to the fate of all the inhabitants of Judah, will be delivered.

There are some notions of inter-relatedness between **A'** (vs. 17-19) and **A** (vs. 4-6). First of all, some key words appear repeatedly in each section, e.g. הנה ('behold'; vs. 6 and 18), נתן ('give'; vs. 5 and 18), etc. Secondly, each section contains the time reference, though differently. According to vs. 5, Jeremiah was known and consecrated by God before he was formed in his mother's womb. God was probably protecting Jeremiah continually as from his birth (even *before* the time of his birth), although Jeremiah never noticed it. In vs. 18, the privilege of consecration is expanded to the present time by the word היום ('today'; vs. 18). Each section is contrasted by the timing of *from then or at that time* and of *now*. Lastly, in vs. 6 in **A** (vs. 4-6), Jeremiah shows his hesitancy. In **A'** (vs. 17-19) God encourages him all the way. Fear seemed to be Jeremiah's hidden cause of reluctance. Verse 8 seems to imply it. God provides a final solution for this fear of people or of his mission, by giving Jeremiah an emboldening promise of deliverance and victory. Thus, **A** and **A'** are related to each other.

2.3 The rhetorical features of Jeremiah 1

Jer. 1:1-3 is written as prose. There is no specific rhetorical features in this superscription[9]. The following are the rhetorical features of the poetry related to the call (Jer. 1:4-19).

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[9] Lundbom (1999:222) says that Jer. 1:1-3 here – in both the MT and LXX – has a balancing colophon: in the LXX one added by Baruch (51:31-35), and in the MT one added by Seraiah, brother of Baruch (51:59-64).

2.3.1 Parallelism

Parallelism is one of the characteristic marks of the poetry (Lowth 1753). In this structure, parallel lines tend to cluster at the beginning (vs. 4-10) and at the end (vs. 15-19) [Yost 1975:54].

The following are examples of parallelism:

בטרם אצורך בבטן ידעתיך ובטרם תצא מרחם הקדשתיך ('Before I formed you in the belly I knew you and before you came forth from the womb I declared you holy'; vs. 5).

כי על-כל-אשר אשלחך תלך ואת כל-אשר אצוך תדבר ('For on all that I send you you shall go and all that I command you you shall speak'; vs. 7).

על-הגוים ועל-הממלכות לנתוש ולנתוץ ולהאביד ולהרוס לבנות לנטוע ('over the nations and over the kingdoms to uproot and to tear down and to destroy and to overthrow to build up and to plant'; vs. 10).

ועל כל-חומתיה סביב ועל כל-ערי יהודה ('against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah'; vs. 15).

ויקטרו לאלהים אחרים וישתחוו למעשי ידיהם ('And they have burned incense to other gods, and they have worshiped the works of their hands'; vs. 16).

אל-תחת מפניהם פן-אחתך לפניהם ('You must not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them'; vs. 17).

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לעיר מבצר ולעמוד ברזל ולחמות נחשת ('as a fortified city, and as an iron pillar, and as walls of bronze'; vs. 18).

These examples so clearly display their parallelism that further explanation does not seem necessary. Parallelism seems one of the most characteristic rhetorical features of Jeremiah 1.

As observed above, the strongest parallels occur in vs. 5, 7, 10 and 15-18. The parallels are in what could be called the 'commission' parts, the parts where the prophet's role is talked about[10] (Yost 1975:54). Paralleling these lines in the context of the commission, Yahweh's intimate knowledge of Jeremiah even before the cradle, His promise of the divine protection and presence are emphasised.

2.3.2 Chiasmus

As mentioned before, a chiastic structure is noticeable in vs. 10-16:

    a   The mission of judgement (1:10c)

        b   The mission of salvation (1:10d)

        b'   The vision of salvation (1:11-12)

    a'   The vision of judgement (1:13-16)

This is a beautiful chiastic structure: judgement – salvation – salvation - judgement. The structure strongly denotes that an element of salvation accompanies that of judgement in the ministry of Jeremiah. At the same time, the center of the structure is mission and vision of salvation. This signifies that salvation is an ultimate goal of Jeremianic ministry.

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[10] A real commission occurred at Jer. 1:10. We think, however, that Jer. 1:17-19 can be categorised as commission portion in that it was Yahweh's reconfirming word of promise of protection and presence for commissioning Jeremiah.

2.3.3 Repetition

Repetition is the most common rhetorical feature in this unit. Most of the words and phrases in the unit are repeated for emphasis or to tie the dialogue together. The catchword ראה ('see'), for instance, is repeated here to tie the dialogue together, because it occurs in all three parts of the dialogue between God and the prophet Jeremiah [vs. 10, 11 (two occurrences), 12 and 13 (two occurrences)]. An example of emphasis occurs in the phrase הנה נתתי ('behold! I put'), which is repeated to introduce the climax of both parts of the rhetorical unit (1:9 and 1:18).

The following are some of the repeated words and phrases in this unit: הנה, ידע, נאר אנכי כל אשר, כי, ל, את כל אשר ,על כל אשר ,על כל אשר את כל ,על כל ,על ,בטרם ,צוה ,פניהם ,פי ,נצל ,דבר ,שלח ,ראה, etc. Among them there are important key words for interpreting this unit.

דבר ('word') is one of the important thematic words in this unit. The true prophet had to receive God's words directly from Him, otherwise he had to be put to death (Deut. 18:20-22). It is shown in verses 6, 7, 9, 12, 16 and 17 of Chapter 1. The verb נתן ('give', 'place', 'put') occurs in 1:5, 9, 10, 15 and 18. The parallel term פקד (*qal*, 'visit', 'avenge', 'call up'; *hiphil*, 'appoint', 'assign') is also found in vs. 10 as a *hiphil* form.

It is worthy to note in vs. 10 that the six infinitives (see Section 2.2) are repeated, with the preposition ל ('to', 'for') for the rhetorical effect of emphasis (Alter 1981:93-94). Four verbs were used in vs. 10 to imply the prophet's destructive work whereas two are used for constructive work[11].

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[11] The *destructive* verbs are exactly double the number of constructive words in 1:10. T. K. Cheyne (1883) says that four verbs of destruction and two of hope point to the preponderance of judgement preached in the book. Interestingly, the idea of Yahweh's double repaying of the wickedness and sin of the people of Judah repeatedly appears in Jer. 16:18 and 17:18 (cf. Isa. 40:2). The people of Judah indeed received full chastisement from Yahweh. The exile in 586 BC was a culmination of Yahweh's punishment for what the people of Judah did.

The first word נתשׁ ('to uproot'), which is a term of destruction, is used 21 times in the Old Testament. It is used thirteen times in the book of Jeremiah and occurs 11 times in the passages related to vs. 10. The next word נתץ ('to tear down') is used six times in the book of Jeremiah, while it is used 31 times in the Old Testament.

The third word אבד ('to destroy') is a very common word for conveying the meaning of destruction. It is used 16 times out of 113 occurrences in the Old Testament as *qal* form. As *hiphil*, it is used six times in the book of Jeremiah, whereas it occurs 19 times more outside the book of Jeremiah. The last word הרס ('to overthrow') designating the judgment task of the prophet, is chosen intentionally. The verb חרם ('to devote to the ban', 'to dedicate to destruction') that denotes ultimate destruction, was not chosen here, because God did not suggest the ultimate destruction of the people of Judah. After the judgement that did not result in perdition, God was going to begin the work of recovery for them. Yahweh would use the remnant(s) to rebuild and replant His people.

Outside the book of Jeremiah, these four words of destruction had never been placed together by writers of the Old Testament. It can be assumed that those verbs were uniquely chosen to imply the inevitability of the judgement. The quadruple use of a similar verb for 'destruction' emphasizes the certainty of judgement. It delivers the message that God was determined to judge the people of Israel and would not change His mind.

The fifth word בנה ('to build') is the commonest word for the verb *to build*. It is used 336 times in the Old Testament. The objects of this verb are houses, altars, cities, walls and high places, etc. It is the word popularly used in Kings, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. It occurs 19 times in the book of Jeremiah. The last word נטע ('to plant') stands for *to plant*. It is used 15 times in the book of Jeremiah.

2.3.4 Assonance

The ך (ka) sound is repeated in vs. 5 (four times), 7 (twice), 8 (twice), and 9 (once). Assonance also occurs in vs. 15, in עךי ('cities of') and שׁעךי ('gates of'). We also find a similar sound in vs. 5, 10b and 18, etc. The repeated sound creates a rhetorical effect for the listeners when the prophet proclaims the oracles.

2.3.5 Punning

This occurs in the word שׁקד ('almond tree' in vs.11; 'watching' in vs. 12) in the verse 11 and 12. It also creates a rhetorical effect because they sound alike. Jer. 1:17b is another example of 'similar wordplay':

אל-תחת מפניהם פן-אחתך לפניהם ('Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them'). Jer. 1:14-15 contains one more example of this between תפתח ('it will be opened up') and פתח ('opening or entrance').

2.3.6 Accumulation

Accumulation produces a heavy and stereotyped effect: nouns are heaped up in twos, threes, and fours, and longer phrases balance rhythmically in parallelism (Lundbom 1999:126). The book of Jeremiah contains many examples of accumulation in both the prose and the poetry sections. Jer. 1:10 and 1:18 provide examples of accumulation.

In Jer. 1:10, six verbs are accumulated, namely *uprooting*, *tearing down*, *destroying*, *overthrowing*, *building* and *planting*. Like repetition, accumulation adds strength to discourse (Lundbom

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1999:127). The audience must have perceived the urgency of the situation when they heard these accumulated verbs.

In Jer. 1:18, Jeremiah is metaphorically depicted as a *fortified* city, an *iron* pillar and walls of *bronze*. This implies Jeremiah's invincibility. At the same time, it enumerates the people who are going to be against Jeremiah: the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, the people of Judah. By accumulating these words (kings, princes, priests, people), Jer. 1:18 implies that Jeremiah can expect opposition at all levels.

2.3.7 Imagery

The metaphor of *fortified city, a pillar of iron* and *walls of bronze* in vs. 18 conveys images that create a sense of an impregnable stronghold. Jeremiah was therefore intended to function as *an invincible city*, not a weak, weeping prophet.

2.3.8 Change of Meaning

The word על ('on', 'over', 'over against') is repeated in this unit, but with different meanings: In vs. 10, it means *over*, but it later denotes *against* (vs. 18). It seems to function as a type of pun. The word רעה ('wickedness', 'perverseness', 'misery', 'trouble', 'disaster') also appears twice, but with different meanings. In vs. 14, it indicates *misery, trouble* or *disaster*, but in vs.16 *wickedness, perverseness* or *crime*.

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2.3.9 Contrast

Contrasting words occur in this unit for rhetorical effect. The phrase לא-ידעתי ('I did not know') in vs. 6 is contrasted with ידעתיך ('I knew you') in vs. 5. Jeremiah used this contrasting phrase intentionally during a conversation with God in order to escape God's calling as well as he could.

God's chosen phrase למעשי ידיהם ('the works of their hands') in vs. 16 to designate the folly and wickedness of the people of Judah, compares with the phrase ידו ('His hand') in vs. 9 and לעשתו ('to do it', 'to accomplish it') in vs. 12. The people of Judah burned incense to other gods, even though they knew that these gods were the products of their feeble hands, compared to God's mighty hand. The idols could not do anything because they were man-made works (cf. Isa. 41:6-7, 21-24, 29). However, God would do what he had promised (Jer. 1:9, 12; Nu. 23:19; Isa. 55:11).

טוב ('good', 'goodness'), the contrasting word to the word רעה ('wickedness') in vs. 16, occurs in vs. 12 in the verbal form, יטב ('be good at'). God seems to be kindled with wrath against the people of Judah when he watches their wickedness, whereas He compliments Jeremiah for being good at seeing what God showed in the visions. Time is also contrasted in vs. 5 and vs. 10 and vs. 18.

2.4 Rhetorical resources in Jeremiah 1

All six resources identified by Robbins are not evident in the study of Jeremiah 1, because this chapter contains a mixture of short prose and relatively long poetry. The narrational resource and the opening-middle-closing resource can therefore be disregarded.

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As mentioned before, Jeremiah 1 is noteworthy because of the repetition that occurs in that chapter. This literary device of repetition can impact deeply on the audience, because people are inclined to pay attention to repeated words.

It is necessary to remember that the relationship between the superscription and the call indicates progression. In other words, the superscription serves as historical background to help readers understand the call.

In Jer. 1:6 the call also holds an argumentative element. Jeremiah hesitates to accept the calling as a prophet to the nations. He argues that he may not be qualified to do the job, because he is not eloquent. By letting the audience know that he was reluctant to proclaim the message of impending doom to them, Jeremiah seemed to try and induce them to have sympathy for him. Jeremiah seems to say; *I am too uneasy about delivering a message of destruction to you. Because of this, I was very reluctant when God called me as a prophet. Please open your hearts and listen to me.*

In discussing Jer. 1:6, Lundbom (1991:7-28) says that Jeremiah presents something new and different, compared to the earlier prophets. Lundbom suggests that Jeremiah is using more dialogue and more argument than other prophets. Lundbom concludes that, by using these aspects in his preaching, Jeremiah is showing that he is relatively lacking in authority in his preaching. This is not necessarily so, as Jeremiah could in fact have chosen this tactic especially in order to persuade his audience.

Gitay (1996:218-29) agrees with Lundbom that Jeremiah might have used argumentative resources to persuade the audience. All the prophets used strategies to persuade their audiences. Amos stirred

up the audience's emotions, instead of reasoning with them, whereas Isaiah presented his audience with the concept of cause and effect to remind the people of their own responsibility for their future.

Jeremiah chose dialogue and argument for rhetorical effect. The dialogue between Jeremiah and God functions to establish the prophet's credibility so that people would feel that they could not but listen him (Gitay 1991:13-24). By revealing his argument with God, Jeremiah conveyed the message that he did not really want to proclaim the message of judgement to the audience. Jeremiah probably used the argumentative resource deliberately so that the pained audience would open their hearts and listen patiently to the address.

As to the sensory-aesthetic resource, the beautiful chiastic structure in vs. 4-19 has already been discussed in this study.

This chapter comprises a literary study of Jeremiah 1 in terms of literary structure, features and resources. According to our research, the centre of the literary structure of the call of the prophet Jeremiah lies in Jer. 1:10, the commission of the prophetic call. The commission of Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations is that of judgement and salvation. The remaining sections of the call are Yahweh's explanation and encouragement to Jeremiah who is supposed to carry out a formidable task of judgment and salvation (Jer. 1:10).

In the next chapter, the question about how the rest of the book (i.e. Jeremiah 2-52) or even writings

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter (See section 2.1), the inner texture is the texture of the medium of communication. As a result of our rhetorical analysis, we suggested that the centre of this chiastic structure (See section 2.2.2, especially pp. 34, 39-40) is Jer. 1:10, the commission. In the centre of this literary unit (i.e. Jer. 1:10), the core concept of *judgement and salvation* is delivered to his audience in terms of the prophetic mission that Jeremiah had received from God.

To deliver the message of the imminent doom and restoration afterwards to his audience persuasively, Jeremiah seems to have used a unique literary strategy.

Jeremiah is drawing his audience's attention by beginning that section (i.e. the commission, Jer. 1:10) with the imperative verb, which is the only occurrence of such a verb in Jer. 1:4-19. At the same time, Jeremiah is commanding their attention by ending that section (i.e. Jer. 1:10) with the singular use of six consecutive, infinitive verbs without inserting any objectives.

This literary strategy seems to have been used intentionally by Jeremiah as a medium of communication with his audience. In other words, by beginning with uniquely used the imperative and ending with unparalled six consecutive infinitive verbs, Jeremiah seems to have caused his audience's careful attention and dynamic feedbacks. Jeremiah's message must have been a point of dispute at that time.

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Chapter 3 Intertexture of Jeremiah 1

3.1 Definition

Intertextuality refers to the ways by which a new text is created from the metaphors, images, and symbolic world of an earlier text or tradition. Intertextuality provides the hermeneutical lens through which to read the newly created work (O'Day 1990:259-67).

Kristeva (1980 [1969]; 1984 [1974]; 1986) developed the idea of *intertextuality* (Carroll 1993:57), following the development of the concept of *dialogism* by the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1984a; 1984b).

By *dialogism*, Bakhtin suggests the open-ended, back-and-forth play between the text of the sender (subject), the text of the addressee (object) and the text of culture (Beal 1992:29). In so doing Bakhtin introduces a dynamic instability which is not allowed in traditional formalism and structuralism (Beal 1992:29). In other words, Bakhtin replaces the static hewing out of texts with a model in which literary structure does not simply exist, but is generated in relation to another structure (Kristeva 1986:37). Inherent in language itself, this back-and-forth play between and among texts explodes, or "dynamites", the supposedly closed structure and univocal meaning of any particular text, opening it to further and further reappropriations, reinscriptions and redescriptions (Beal 1992:29).

Drawing from Bakhtin, Kristeva (1986:37) writes,

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What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is his conception

of the 'literary word' as an intersection of textual surfaces rather than

a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that

of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or

earlier cultural context. . . Any text is constructed as a mosaic of

quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.

As her last sentence denotes, all texts are embedded in a larger web of related texts (Fewell 1992:17). There is no isolated text. Texts are always spilling over into other texts. Intertextuality, therefore, is a covering term for various approaches to reading texts in relation to other texts (Miscall 1992:44). Because of interrelatedness, intertextual reading is inevitable for better understanding of any text.

Although the exact terminology was not used, such an idea of intertextuality was noted by scholars such as Michael Fishbane (1980:343-61; 1985) and James A. Sanders (1972; 1991; 1999). Canonical criticism by James A. Sanders, for instance, presupposes the conceptual framework of intertextuality.

Sanders (1972), who coined the term canon criticism, and Childs (1979) are proponents of the canonical approach to the biblical text. Sanders, *inter alios* (1999:35-44), expresses the intertextuality of the Bible in this way:

The Bible is very intertextual; it is full of itself. From the earliest

literary forms to the latest, earlier traditions and texts, national and

international, are interwoven, developing new meanings out of old ideas.

For Sanders and Childs, shared texts and traditions, used and reused throughout the history of a particular faith community, provide the critical interpretive pieces in this method (O'Day 1990:259-67).

Intertexture concerns the relation of data in the text to various kinds of phenomena outside the text as mentioned elsewhere (Robbins 1996a:96-108). Robbins provides four spectrums of intertexture: oral-scribal intertexture, historical intertexture, social intertexture and cultural intertexture. In this section of the study the focus will be on oral-scribal intertexture. The remaining spectrums will be studied under Socio-Cultural Texture.

Analysis of oral-scribal intertexture includes recitation, recontextualisation and reconfiguration of other texts, both oral and scribal, in the foregrounded text (Robbins 1996b:97). As mentioned before, Robbins suggests five basic ways in which language in a text uses language from another text: *recitation*, *recontextualisation*, *reconfiguration*, *narrative amplification* and *thematic elaboration*. In applying Robbins's suggestion, our study will be focused on investigating the relationship between the foregrounded text (*inter alia* Jer. 1:10) and its related texts in terms of theology as well as language. We will, namely, we will examine the evidence of intertextuality contained in other texts and identify the language that is used in them. Intertextuality usually occurs in verbal parallels, structural parallels or theological parallels.

Benjamin Sommer (1999:646-66) refers to these parallels by saying that the influence of the book of Jeremiah on Isaiah 40-66 and Isaiah 34-35 is obvious. According to Sommer, there are many

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examples of parallels between these sections of the Bible. Sommer, however, distinguishes between parallels that constitute genuine literary allusions[12] and parallels that result from some other cause or from coincidence. He further says that allusions fall into a limited number of thematic categories, namely *confirmation*, *reprediction*, *reversal*, *historical recontextualisation*, *typology* and *response*. We will return to these thematic categories in a later section.

3.2 Intertexture of Jeremiah 1

According to Sanders (1999:38), there are three principal ways in which the term *intertextuality* is currently used in the literature. It is used, firstly, to focus on the chemistry between two utterly different adjacent blocks of literature, large or small. A second way in which the term is used is in the recognition that all literature is made up of previous literature and that it reflects the earlier work through citation, allusion, use of phrases and paraphrases in order to create newer literature, references to earlier literary episodes, even echoes of earlier familiar literature. The third common way in which the term is used, is in the recognition that the reader is also a text and that reading, in essence, is an encounter between texts.

The third application reminds us that it is the reader who might notice intertextuality of the text and who can decide whether it is intertextual or not. The first application however, suggesting that the intertextuality does not necessarily mean similarity of repetition, is the most noteworthy. Intertextuality can subsume differences between the texts (cf. Carroll 1993:58). Miscall (1992:41-56) seems to understand the dual nature of intertextuality well when he says the following:

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[12] Quoting Ben-Porat's definition of allusion, Beal (1992:21) describes that allusion is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts. According to Beal, the emphasis is on how the process of allusion evokes for the reader a larger textual field.

The relationship between two texts is equivocal. It includes, at the same time, both acceptance and rejection, recognition and denial, understanding and misunderstanding, and supporting and undermining. To recognize that a text is related to another text is both to affirm and to deny the earlier text. It is affirmed as a type of model and source, while it is denied by being made secondary to the later text, precisely by being regarded as a model and a source that has been superseded. The later text displaces its model.

The book of Jeremiah is a rich text for intertextuality, not only in terms of language, but also in terms of theological theme. It contains many repetitions, echoes, supplements, allusions, variations, adaptations, reversals, confirmations, transformations, and recontextualisations throughout the book. In addition, there are strong intertextual relations with other prophetic books such as Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel.

3.2.1 Superscription (Jer. 1:1-3)

We do not find any recitation or thematic elaboration of Jer. 1:1-3 in the rest of the book of Jeremiah. The superscription gives the audience some historical information to help them understand the book.

The common pattern for the beginning of the prophetic books lies in the superscription. Among these books, the book of Jeremiah provides the most detailed information. It reveals Jeremiah's priestly family background, his birthplace, names of the kings of Judah during his ministry, the date of the call and the period of his ministry.

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The superscription of the book of Ezekiel (Eze. 1:1-3) is similar to that of Jeremiah in that Ezekiel also reflects a priestly background, the date of the call and follows it up with recording the call from the Lord to be a prophet. There is, however, some difference between the book of Jeremiah and the book of Ezekiel. In the book of Ezekiel, the vision is related as occurring first, that is before the calling of the prophet whereas, in the case of Jeremiah, the vision follows the calling.

The superscription to the book of Isaiah (Isa. 1:1) is little different from that of the book of Jeremiah (Jer.1:1-3). The word חזון ('vision') is chosen, instead of דבר-יהוה ('the word of Yahweh'). The most distinctive feature is that the call does not follow immediately after the superscription, but later, in Isaiah 6. The superscriptions in the book of Hosea (1:1) and Micah (1:1) show greater similarity to the superscription to the book of Jeremiah.

3.2.2 The prophetic call (Jer. 1:4-19)

Regarding the pattern of the call as accounted by Jeremiah, Habel (1965:297-323) already emphasised the close connections between the calls of Moses and Jeremiah on the one hand, and the striking literary associations between the calls of Isaiah and Ezekiel, on the other, a long time ago. He found an analogous *Gattung* between the calls of Gideon, Moses and Jeremiah. He insists that they all consist of the divine confrontation, the introductory word, the commission, the objection, the reassurance and the sign. Habel further believes that the calls of Isaiah and Ezekiel also had a similar *Gattung*, but with a slight modification regarding the portrait of the divine confrontation and the introductory words. He then concludes that the *Gattung* concerns the commissioning of messengers in God's service. His thesis is well expressed in the following statement:

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If the *Gattung* arises from the practice of an ambassador publicly presenting his credentials before the appropriate audience, then it seems logical that the goal of the prophetic formulation of the call in this *Gattung* is to announce publicly that Yahweh commissioned the prophet in question as His representative. Thus the word of the call narrative gives the individual's credentials as a prophet, messenger, and ambassador from the heavenly council. This word summarizes the ultimate commission from the Master.

The call account of Jeremiah has a rhetorical purpose: to convince the audience that Jeremiah is indeed Yahweh's true prophet. The people of Judah had to realise their urgent need to listen to Jeremiah, even though his messages were not entertaining.

On the other hand, the phrases and words that appear in the prophetic call (i.e. Jer. 1:4-19) are noteworthy, because they recur throughout the book in the exact same forms or in modifications. Among those recurrences, there are some significant uses of vocabulary and phrases. The following provides some examples of repeated words:

The contrasting idea of טוב ('good') and רעה ('evil') occurs in Jer. 1 (vs. 12, 14 and 16). The idea of good is seen in verbal form in vs. 12. The ideas of טוב ('good') and רעה ('evil') continually appear in juxtaposition throughout the book: 21:10, 24:1-10, 39:16 and 44:27, etc. In Jer. 29:11, however, the word טוב ('good', 'goodness') is exchanged for שלום ('peace', 'weal').

In the book of Jeremiah, the basic idea of *good* is equated with *obeying the Lord*. The rewards of *obeying* are well-being, salvation and life. The wages of *disobeying* are disaster, evil, and death.

These ideas are from Deut. 30:15. Jeremiah obeyed God's command and gave a report of what he saw, to God. Because he obeyed, God promised him His presence and salvation (Jer. 1:19). In contrast, the people of Judah experienced disaster.

The word צָפוֹן ('north') is found throughout the book of Jeremiah. It occurs twenty-five times in the book, namely in Jer. 1:13, 14, 15; 3:12, 18; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; 15:12; 16:15; 23:8; 25:9, 26; 31:8; 46:6, 10, 20, 24; 47:2; 50:3, 9, 41 and 51:48. Before it turns out to be Babylon, the word צָפוֹן ('north') sets an ominous tone and stirs up suspense in the readers.

The reference to war (Jer. 1:14-15) reoccurs throughout the book (4:5-31; 5:1-31; 6:1-30; 8:4-7; 8:13-17; 9:16-21; 10:17-25; 11:18-12:6; 12:7-13; 13:20-27; 14:1-15:9; 15:10-21; 17:1-4; 18:13-17, 18-23; 22:6-7; 29:16-19; 32:3-5, 27-35; 34:1-3, 17-22; 37:6-10; 38:17-23, *passim*). In spite of repeated strong warnings about the impending war, the people of Judah did not listen. These verses indicate the hardness of their hearts.

The practice of idolatry (Jer. 1:16) is also mentioned repeatedly throughout the book. A few examples of this occur in Jer. 2:1-19, 20-28; 3:1-3, 6-11; 5:7-8, 19; 7:30-31; 11:13; 13:20-27; 32:29-35; 44:15-19. Idolatry was so rampant that it became a main cause of the divine punishment at the time.

The concept of battle between Jeremiah and his contemporaries reoccurs in Jer. 11:19, 15:20 and 20:11, with the implication that his contemporaries will not prevail against him, because Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, will be with him.

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The idea of the divine chastisement through the war between the foes from the north[13] and Judah, is

the realisation of the ministry of tearing down, which is the first part of the *Leitmotif* (Jer. 1:10) of

the book.

3.2.3 *Leitmotif* [Jer. 1:10]

The content of Jer. 1:10 recurs repeatedly throughout the book of Jeremiah. Jer. 1:10 is the core of

the book and a hermeneutical key to interpreting the book. Olyan (1998:63) regards Jer. 1:10 as an

influential text in the book. Carroll (1993:70-71, fn. 25), however, prefers to use the term

intertextual rather than *influential*. He even regards Jer. 1:10 as the *Leitmotif* that reflects the use of

the phrase (i.e. Jer. 1:10) throughout the book. His consideration seems to be very pertinent.

The central idea of the book of Jeremiah is disclosed in verbal forms in Jer. 1:10. The six infinitives

(*to uproot, to tear down, to destry, to overthrow, to build* and *to plant*) in Jer. 1:10 can be divided

into two categories: the first four verbs are related to the ministry of judgement (*to uproot, to tear

down, to destroy* and *to overthrow*) and the last two to that of salvation (*to build* and *to plant*).

Four different verbs that denote judgement (*to uproot, to tear down, to destroy* and *to overthrow*)

are used in Jer. 1:10. These verbs emphatically imply that the judgment is inevitable. They also

convey that the people of Judah are going to experience Yahweh's discipline in its fullest sense. It is,

however, worth noticing that the verb חרם (devote to ban, dedicate to destruction) is not selected as

one of them. The main connotation of the verb חרם is annihilation.[14] By not choosing the verb for

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[13] According to Lundbom (1999:93-95), Jer. 2-10 are built upon a substratum of poetry in two collections: 1) an apostasy-repentance collection; and 2) a foe-lament collection. For Lundbom, the foe-lament collection consists of poetry within Jer. 4:5-9:21, expanded later to Jer. 10:25.
[14] The Hebrew word חרם (devote to ban, dedicate to destruction) does not appear frequently in the book of Jeremiah. It only appears in Jer. 25:9, 50:21, 26 and 51:3. The last three occur in the context of *oracles against nations*, in other

annihilation, the book seems to imply that a process of restoration will occur in the future; there will be hope in the end.

This reminds us of Isaiah's vision at the time of his call in Isa. 6. As God's prophet, Isaiah was given the task of judgement. However, there is a hint of regrowth after the judgement (Isa. 6:11-13). In Isa. 6:11-12, the people of Israel seem to face an ultimate judgment. Isa. 6:13 suggests the hope that the promise of restoration will be verified through the remnants after the judgement, like stumps of trees that were cut down and are growing again.

The book of Jeremiah implies that kind of hope after the judgement by not using the verb that denotes absolute destruction. Moreover, Jer. 1:10 makes it clear that salvation will follow after the judgement through the use of two verbs that denote restoration, namely *to build* and *to plant*. In short, the heart of the theology of the book of Jeremiah is both judgement and salvation.

Parallel expressions are seen in Jer. 12:14-17, 18:7-10, 24:6, 31:28, 42:10 and 45:4. The evidence of intertexture here is verbal parallelism. The verses that contain these verbs, are discussed in the next section.

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words they were not aimed at Israel. In Jer. 25:9 alone, the verb חרם (devote to ban, dedicate to destruction) is directed to idolatrous Israelites. However, it includes Israel's neighbouring nations, too. It seems that the verb חרם (devote to ban, dedicate to destruction) was never used to single out Israel in the book of Jeremiah.

It is also noteworthy that the verb חרם (devote to ban, dedicate to destruction) has a sacral connotation in Jer. 25:9. Stern (1991:197-99) thinks that Jeremiah was accusing Israel of rather more than a ritual offence in this context. Stern agrees with Bright (1965:157) who argues that החרים should not be translated here as *utterly destroy* as the New Jerusalem Bible would have it, but as *consecrate to (wholesale) destruction*. Stern thus argues that there is no good reason to reduce it in the instance of Jer. 25:9 merely to *utter destruction*. A suggestion by Stern which implies that the emphasis is on its sacral connotation, not on conveying thoroughness of destruction is noteworthy.

It is also noteworthy that the subject of the verb is Yahweh. Yahweh is determined to punish his idolatrous people of Israel. Stern concludes that this is a prediction of Yahweh's dooming of Judah through the instrumentality of foreign powers, in order to punish idolatry.

3.2.3.1 Jer. 12:14-17

The fundamental idea of *uproot*, which occurs in Jer. 1:10, is dominant as a verb in this section. The idea of *uprooting* is expanded to the nations. In other words, the primary focus of this passage in on neighboring nations. This section implies that Jeremianic ministry is to be international, as Jeremiah was called to that end (Jer. 1:5 and 10). Judah is of secondary interest here.

The language of Jer. 1:10 is employed in three ways in this passage: in the announcement of impending exile, both for Judah and its neighbours (*I am about to uproot them. . . I will return them, each to its inheritance portion, each to its land*); in the description of the blessed future of alien nations which turn to Yahweh (. . . *they will be built in the midst of my people. . .*) and unmistakably in the description of the future destruction which will result if the surrounding nations do not obey Yahweh (Olyan 1998:67). The condition for restoration is *if only they listen to me*. The same condition was applicable to the neighbouring nations.

3.2.3.2 Jer. 18:7-10

This section is a part of the incident at the potter's house, which places it not later than the early years of Jehoiakim's reign (609 - 608 BC, Yost 1975:207). Jeremiah is commanded to go down to the potter's house. There he received the message from the Lord.

This is a conditional sentence. The fate of the nation depends on the choice of the people of that nation. There is an important word that is not used in Jer. 1:10, namely *repent* or *turn back*. If the people will turn back to God and listen, God will not pluck them out, but build them up. But if the people do evil in God's eyes and do not listen to His voice, God will repent concerning the good

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that He thought to do. The verb *repent* does not mean that God commits sin. The close meaning of this anthropomorphic expression is *God relents* as the NIV translates it.

Read in the context of Jer. 18:7-10, the implication is that the Lord has utter liberty to shape or remold the clay at his discretion, as the potter also does, although His freedom will be based on Judah's conduct and their response to the prophet's message. If the people of Judah act rightly, they will gain a good response from the Lord.

The concluding part (But they said: *It is hopeless! For after our own plans we will go; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart* [Jer. 18:12]), however, indicates that there will not be a good result because they adamantly refuse to act rightly. The Hebrew ואמרו ('but they say') is a perfect form with *waw consecutive*. It, however, should not be taken in a future sense, but an iterative sense, i.e. *they keep saying*. A past tense appears in the LXX, along with the Targum, Syriac and Vulgate. The narrator is not anticipating words people will say in the future but reporting a resolve already made about now and for the days that lie ahead (Lundbom 1999:816). The stubborn people had already made up their mind and would not change.

3.2.3.3 Jer. 24:6

The historical background to the vision is reported here in Jer. 24:1. After the first deportation of the people, including Jehoiachin and the officials, had taken place, the Lord showed Jeremiah two baskets of figs placed in front of the temple of the Lord. This is followed by God's explanation of the vision to Jeremiah. According to the elucidation, God regards the exiles from Judah as good figs, while He regards Zedekiah, his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem as bad figs, whether they remain in the land of Judah or whether they live in Egypt.

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This is a message of hope for the deportees to Babylon. This message of salvation is also given to the people who were taken to Babylon. The message of judgement, however, is given to the people who remained in Jerusalem or who fled to Egypt. There is no chance of salvation without first experiencing judgement. Salvation will be given to the people who experienced the judgement. To sum up, God here gives the message of restoration to the exiles, but that of dire judgement to the people of Judah who did not go with the exiles.

3.2.3.4 Jer. 31:28

This verse also contains a promise of salvation. The context of this promise is contained is the book of consolation (Jer. 30 – 31). The promise of salvation is given to the exiled people.

Jer. 31:28 recasts Jer. 1:10 in light of Jer. 1:11-12, producing a new text which announces a change in fortune for the Judean exiles:

> Just as I watched over (שקד) them *to uproot* (נתש) and *tear down* (נתץ),
>
> *to overthrow* (הרס) and *destroy* (אבד) and *to do evil* (רעע), so I will
>
> *watch over* (שקד) them *to build* (בנה) and *to plant* (נטע), declares
>
> Yahweh.

The setting for the acts of destruction is the past; the future is the context for constructive action (Olyan 1998:68).

Five infinitives (*to uproot, to tear down, to overthrow, to destroy* and *to do evil*) are used here to describe Yahweh's punishing acts upon the people of Judah, while Jer. 1:10 uses four infinitives (*to*

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uproot, to tear down, to destroy and *to overthrow*). These words are not mere repetitions. The list is a nuanced development in which the meaning of each succeeding word increases the negative element, with the last (*to do evil*) predicating Yahweh's destructive deed (Bozak 1991:116).

The theme of Yahweh's *watching over* (שֹׁקֵד) the people in Jer. 31:28, is derived from Jer. 1:12, a text in which Yahweh says *he will watch over his word to accomplish it*, meaning that Yahweh is committed to doing what he says he is going to do (Olyan 1998:68). In the past, Yahweh watched over the people of Israel and Judah in order to act destructively. Now Yahweh will watch over them to build and plant. Yahweh's vigilance to accomplish what he promised, is the same. The direction of Yahweh's ministry, however, is the exact opposite: from tearing down to building up. As Yahweh sincerely fulfilled the work of judgement, he will surely carry out that of salvation from now on. Indeed, the curses have been accomplished, but the blessings are yet to come, for Yahweh will do what he has promised (Olyan 1998:69).

3.2.3.5 Jer. 42:10

Jer. 42:10 reconfigures Jer. 1:10 in its early exilic setting. The historical context of Jer. 42:10 is presented in Jer. 41:16-42:3. The time is the period soon after the disasters of 587 BC. After Gedaliah, the governor, had been assassinated, all the army officers, including Johanan, son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, son of Hoshaiah, and all the remaining people of the land came to Jeremiah and sought Yahweh's word about where they should go and what they should do.

Ten days later, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah. Jeremiah delivered Yahweh's message to them. The message was clear. They had to remain in the land and should not flee to Egypt. Yahweh promised them that He would *build* (בנה) them and not *overthrow* them (הרס); Yahweh would *plant*

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(נטע) them, and not *uproot* (נתש) them, only if they remained in the land[15]. The fortune of the people was dependent upon their choice at that stage[16]. Yahweh would bless the remaining Judean people if they stayed, there would be an end to the destruction and the Babylonians would do them no harm. This implied that they would be destroyed if they should flee to Egypt. Later the warnings of disaster were explicitly declared to those who were determined to go to Egypt and settle there (Jer. 42: 13ff.). Unfortunately, the people disobeyed the command God had given them through Jeremiah.

3.2.3.6 Jer. 45:4

Jer. 45:1 provides the historical setting for the words in Jer. 45:4. The text says:

> It is what Jeremiah, the prophet, told Baruch, son of Neriah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, after Baruch had written the words Jeremiah was dictating on a scroll.[17]

It was 605 BC, the year that the Babylonians became the preeminent power in the region as a consequence of the victory over Egypt at Carchemish and Hamath[18].

In this historical context Yahweh reveals his plan for the destruction in the near future:

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[15] Carroll (1986:717-19) argues that this positive response from Yahweh was due to divine repentance. Carroll thus interprets כי נחמתי אל-הרעה אשר עשיתי לכם as: 'for I repent of the evil which I did to you'. On the other hand, Holladay (1989:300) interprets the phrase as follows: 'for I shall have retracted the disaster which I have done to you'. The general meaning of 'feeling sorry for…' or 'regret' seems to be preferable to the suggestions put forward by Carroll and Holladay. The context denotes that the positive response was not dependent upon Yahweh's repentance as Carroll posits, but was dependent upon the people's right decision. The first word אם ('if') implies this.

[16] Olyan (1998:66) thus says: "Yet the writer asserts that the range of action Yahweh could take at this juncture depends completely on the behaviour of the people, in this case the decisions made by the Judeans remaining in the land after the devastation of 587 or 586. Destruction is over only if the people remain in the land".

[17] Holladay (1989:308-10) is a strong proponent of this view when he says: "The most economical view is that the passage is what it says it is".

[18] Explaining the historical and political context which the text provides, Olyan (1998:64-65) says that Jer. 45:4 is probably the earliest surviving text recasting Jer. 1:10.

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Behold, what I *built* (בניתי) I am going to *overthrow* (אני הרס) and

what I have *planted* (נטעתי) I am about to *uproot* (אני נתש).

Two occurrences of a pronoun with the following participle (בניתי אני הרס and נטעתי אני נתש) grammatically convey the nuances of imminence[19] (Olyan 1998:65). Thus the focus of the announcement is on Yahweh's impending destructive intervention. This verse implies the certainty of the impending judgement.

3.2.3.7 Jer. 31:38-40

Another recast of Jer. 1:10 is given here. The three verbs which were used in Jer. 1:10 reappear here: *building* (בנה), *uprooting* (נתש) and *overthrowing* (הרס). The subject of the verbs is the city, i.e. Jerusalem (Olyan 1998:69). The text is similar to Jer. 24:6 in its promise not to destroy again. The promise, however, is stated even more emphatically by the added phrase *never again*. In Jer. 31:38-40, Yahweh guarantees that there will be not any kind of destruction of Jerusalem at all in the future[20].

As was shown above, the six infinitive verbs in Jer. 1:10 repeatedly appear throughout the book of Jeremiah. They were echoed, recited, reconfirmed, recontextualised and reconfigured according to the different situations. Such a consistent reuse of the phrase by the prophet Jeremiah seems to have caused his audience to feel the urgency of the situation and certainty of catastrophic happenings in the near future. Not only Jeremiah's contemporaries, but also any current reader of the book of Jeremiah can perceive Jer. 1:10 as the foreground of the book.

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[19] Olyan refers to GKC (par. 116p) and Joüon (par. 121c and e) for further discussion.
[20] Carroll (1986:618) comes to a similar conclusion: "Yahweh's city, facing a prosperous future under permanent divine protection with its terrible past completely reversed".

To elaborate, the concept of *judgement and salvation* which was expressed in the six infinitive verbs (*to uproot*, *to tear down*, *to destroy*, *to overthrow*, *to build* and *to plant*) in Jer. 1:10, reappears many times throughout the book. Even though the words sometimes recur with slight variations, it cannot be denied that the recurrence conveys that the basic concept of *judgement and salvation* is a very important idea in understanding the book and Jeremiah's ministry. In fact, *salvation after the doom* is the *Leitmotif* of the book. The thematic catch phrase of *tearing down and building up* is used consistently throughout the whole book by the prophet Jeremiah. It was a real tragedy that his contemporaries did not pay attention to such a profound theological concept.

3.2.3.8 Eze. 36:36

This verse definitely alludes to Jer. 1:10:

> Then the nations around you that remain will know that I, Yahweh,
> have *rebuilt* (בנה) what was *overthrown* (נהרסות) and have *planted*
> (נטע) what was desolate. I, Yahweh have spoken, and I will do it.

In this *waw consecutive* sentence, Ezekiel, who probably knew what Jeremiah had said, is expecting the fulfillment of the positive part of his words in Jer. 1:10 in the near future. It is quite possible that Ezekiel knew what Jeremiah had said, because Jeremiah delivered the message of salvation to the exiles in Babylon. If this assumption is right, it is very likely that Ezekiel was influenced by Jeremiah.

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3.2.3.9 Am. 9:11, 14-15

The last part of the book of Amos is the prophecy of hope for Israel's restoration after Yahweh's judgement upon her. Here we can find some of the words that appear in Jer. 1:10. Yahweh promises that He will restore the *ruins* (והרסתיו), and *build* (ובניתיה) it up as it used to be (Am. 9:11). The root of הרסתיו (ruin) is הרס (to overthrow). In Am. 9:14-15, Yahweh also says that they (i.e. Yahweh's exiled people of Israel) will *build* (ובנו) the ruined cities, they will *plant* (ונטעו) vineyards, Yahweh will *plant* (ונטעתים) them (i.e. the exiled people of Israel) in their own land and that they will never again be *uprooted* (ינתשו). Jeremiah seems to have used Amos's vocabulary in declaring Yahweh's word to his audience. If that is the case, Jeremiah seems to have been profoundly influenced by Amos.

3.2.4 Evaluation

The focus of our investigation in this Chapter was to find the relationship between the foregrounded text (Jer. 1) and its parallel texts in terms of language (verbal and structural) and *Leitmotif*.

Robbins suggested five basic ways in which language in a text uses language from another text: recitation, recontextualisation, reconfiguration, narrative amplification and thematic elaboration, as mentioned before (Section 3.1).

On the other hand, Sommer (See Section 3.1) distinguished parallels that constitute genuine literary allusions and parallels that result from coincidence or other cause. Then he elaborates thematic parallels into the categories of confirmation, reprediction, reversal, historical recontextualisation, typology and response.

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Sommer seems to have itemized the thematic parallels (according to Robbins, thematic elaboration) into six categories. In other words, Sommer's suggestion should be subcategorized under Robbins' thematic elaboration. We utilized Sommer's suggestion when investigating thematic parallel between the texts.

The following are what we found through the investigation:

Firstly, from the perspective of verbal and structural parallels, the characteristic feature of the book of Jeremiah was a mixture of recitation, recontextualisation and reconfiguration. For example, the word צפון ('north') was recited repeatedly throughout the book of Jeremiah. However, it was reconfigured later from the obscure term "foes from the north" to "Babylonians" (See page 62 in this Chapter). For another example, the reference of the idolatrous practice was recontextualised repeatedly throughout the book whenever necessary (See page 62 in this Chapter).

Secondly, in the light of thematic parallel, the prominent features were confirmation and recontextualisation. In other words, the six consecutive infinitive verbs, which convey the thematic phrase of judgement and salvation, were not exact recitation but recontextualisation with slight change of their words or order. However, the thematic idea of judgement and salvation was not changed. The repeated use of the thematic phrase of judgement and salvation was reconfirmation of what had been said in Jer. 1:10.

Lastly, all these literary and thematic parallels in the book of Jeremiah were not the result of coincidence but intentional choice to confirm the validity of the message of judgement and salvation. In this regard, Sommer's view that there are some parallels that result from coincidence does not apply to the book of Jeremiah.

3.3 Conclusion

As mentioned elsewhere, Jeremiah's key thematic idea was *doom and hope*. In other words, he understood that Yahweh's salvation work would be realised after the fulfilment of his punitive work.

It is not clear whether Jeremiah originated the concept of *rebuilding after tearing down* or borrowed from others. He was probably influenced by other prophets, such as Hosea and Isaiah. It is certain, however, that Jeremiah fully developed the idea of *judgement and salvation*. He seemed to be convinced that it was the way God would carry out his word, and therefore delivered the message of *judgement and salvation* with confidence, in spite of people's severe antagonism.

Moreover, he not only proclaimed the message of *hope after doom*, but also lived according to that conviction. He, for instance, purchased the field at Anathoth from his cousin Hanamel by paying seventeen shekels of silver to him under the conviction that Yahweh would eventually let his people come back and live in the land (Jer. 32:9).

In this regard, Applegate's argument (1997:51-90) that the purchase of the field at Anathoth was the turning point of Jeremiah's ministry, is noteworthy. Applegate assumes that Jeremiah's message of hope started from that very hour. If this assumption is right, Jeremiah's life was a prophetic message too.

Jeremiah's concept that God would restore his people after an arranged period of chastisement had elapsed, seemed to influence the exilic and post exilic community profoundly. Ezekiel (Eze. 36:36) and Daniel (Da. 9:2) were definitely influenced by Jeremiah.

In addition, Jeremiah's thematic concept very likely influenced the process of canonisation of the prophetic books. Influenced by Childs (1979), Clements (1996:191-202) insists that the overarching thematic pattern of the prophets is *judgement and salvation*. Clements's thinking was well expressed when he said:

> Rather we must see that prophecy is a collection of collections, and that ultimately the final result in the prophetic corpus of the canon formed a recognizable unity not entirely dissimilar from that of the Pentateuch. As this was made up from various sources and collections, so also the Former and Latter Prophets, comprising the various preserved prophecies of a whole series of inspired individuals, acquired an overarching thematic unity. This centered on the death and rebirth of Israel, interpreted theologically as acts of divine judgement and salvation.

Clements's argument that *judgement and salvation* is the core concept of the prophetic message is noteworthy. This argument should be furthered, namely that Jeremiah fully elaborated this key concept of *judgement and salvation*, which was vaguely grasped by a very few prophets such as Isaiah and Hosea, and which profoundly influenced the exilic and post-exilic community of faith. It, therefore, does not seem absurd to say that Jeremiah originated the idea of *judgement and salvation*. In other words, we can consider that the thematic concept of *doom and hope* is Jeremianic. Jeremiah was indeed a profound and influential thinker of the time.

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In this chapter, we attempted to answer the question of how some important portions of Jeremiah 1 had been recited, recontextualised, reconfigured, amplified and elaborated in other portions of the book of Jeremiah and other prophetic books such as the books of Ezekiel and Amos.

According to our investigation, Jer. 1:10 is the *Leitmotif* (central idea) of the book of Jeremiah. We deliberately avoided to describe Jer. 1:10 as the central *theological* idea of the book because we are going to discuss its theological perspective in detail in the chapter dealing with the sacred texture. In other words, we just attempted to investigate Jer. 1:10 in the light of the intertextuality, not in the light of the theology in this chapter (i.e. intertexture of Jeremiah 1).

As you may notice, Chapters 2 and 3 of our research are related to the rhetorical study. From now on, the focus of the study will be shifted from the rhetorical perspective to the social scientific perspective. Social, cultural, ideological and theological meanings and their significance will be sought from the text in the following chapters in our study.

Before concluding this section, it seems necessary to remind the reader that moving into the social scientific perspective does not signify severance from the previous sections, as strongly emphasised elsewhere. In other words, the rhetorical perspective and social scientific perspective are not discordant. Each perspective can be collaborative to help to interpret the text comprehensively.

As a first step towards the social scientific approach, social and cultural texture will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 Social and cultural texture in Jeremiah 1

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned elsewhere, the socio-rhetorical criticism that Robbins (1996a:1-6) proposed, is a method that brings together social-scientific and literary-critical approaches to explore the biblical text. The term *socio-* is the short form of the term *social-scientific*.

The social-scientific approach to Old Testament studies has developed considerably in the last 30 years. This approach subsumes the perspectives of historical sociology, cultural anthropology and social theory (Chalcraft 1997:13-19). The idea of employing the social-scientific approach to the biblical text originated from Max Weber (1864-1920). In a discipline normally dominated by philological, theological and humanistic approaches, Weber held the point of view that the social science are able to open new vistas and settle old *crux interpreti* (Weber 1952; Chalcraft 1997:13-19).

The idea was in hibernation for a long time until Gottwald published *Tribes of Yahweh* in 1979. In this book, he proposed *Social Revolutionary* model against *Conquest, Nomadic* and *Amphictyonic* models (Gottwald 1979; 1985:261-88; 1993:37-70). Since Gottwald's *Tribes of Yahweh* was published, many scholars have applied a *social-scientific* method to the whole field of Old Testament studies.

The most profoundly affected of all the areas of Old Testament research studied from a social-scientific perspective, has been the study of ancient Israelite prophecy (Kselman 1985:120-29). According to Kselman, Peter Berger was the first scholar to speak of the social location of Israelite

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prophecy in an article which outlined his thesis on the social location of the נביא (prophet) in the cult, and of a subsequent radicalisation that pushes the prophet beyond the boundaries of the cult, accompanied by the insight that God might abandon Israel (Berger 1963:940-50; Kselman 1985:120-29).

Since Berger, many Old Testament scholars have contributed to the 'social-scientific' approach to Hebrew prophetic studies. Among them, Robert R. Wilson (1977a:1-19; 1977b:117-24; 1979:321-37; 1980; 1984), Petersen (1981), Carroll (1977:135-51; 1979; 1980:108-29), Long (1975:46-60; 1977:3-20; 1981:30-53; 1982:243-55) and Overholt (1981:55-78; 1982:3-31; 1989; 1990:3-29) are prominent figures.

Wilson (1980:1-19) examines the social functions of the Hebrew prophetic phenomena in the light of contemporary anthropological and sociological perspectives, and contends that these anthropological and sociological studies provide comprehensive accounts of the ways in which the prophets were related to their societies. For Wilson, the Israelite prophets played "intermediary" roles in Israelite society. He also thinks that the Israelite prophetic traditions were very complex. He divides the Israelite prophetic phenomena into two traditions: the Ephraimite tradition and the Judean tradition. For Wilson, the prophets played "peripheral" roles in the Ephraimite tradition, whereas they played "central" roles in the Judean tradition[21].

Petersen (1981:16-34; 2001:1-23), in contrast to Wilson, challenges a consensus view that ecstasy is characteristic of Israelite prophecy. Instead, he argues that the Hebrew prophets could enact their roles through at least four different levels of organismic involvement: *ritual acting, engrossed*

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[21] Wilson (1980) in fact applied I. Lewis's (1971) investigation of the role of shamans (mediums) in their societies to the Old Testament prophetic study in his book. His main thesis, however, that the northern prophets played a peripheral role in Israel and the southern prophets played a cenral role, is highly speculative and generally unconvincing. There is no Biblical evidence for that assumption.

acting, *classical hypnotic role-taking* and *histrionic neurosis*. Petersen, however, accepts the differentiation of peripheral and central prophets adopted by Wilson (Wilson), but applies the distinction in a different way, as will be discussed below.

Petersen argues that the different Hebrew words designating the prophets denoted the different roles of the prophets. For Petersen, איש אלהים ('a man of God') emerges as the peripheral prophet, and the Judahite חזה ('seer') and the Israelite נביא ('prophet') emerge as central morality prophets[22].

As we saw above, both Wilson and Petersen accepted the view that the Israelite prophets had different in Northern Israel (peripheral social role) and Southern Judah (central social role). However, it is questionable whether the application of its distinction is suited to the Israelite prophets as mentioned elsewhere. It seems that the Old Testament never gives any hint that Judahite prophets played "central" roles while the Israelite prophets played "peripheral" roles. Wilson and Petersen's achievement, however, should not be regarded lightly, because their works have

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[22] Petersen (1981) says that such different words designating the prophets were not synonyms. He claims that each of them denotes a different prophetic role and different social context. According to Petersen, the role of ראה ('seer') was enacted at the high place in the city. In other words, its role was enacted publicly, whereas איש-האלהים ('a man of God') was peripheral.

His assumption inevitably draws some problems. For an example, he alleges that the term איש-האלהים ('a man of God') appeared only in time of Elijah and Elisha around 9th century BC, and disappeared from the history of Israel since then.

The reason why he says so seems to be clear. He is trying to defend his presupposition that the deities (i.e. Yahweh, in this case) of איש-האלהים ('a man of God') were peripheral and amoral. He thinks that Baal played a central role when Ahab and Jezebel ruled over Israel, while Yahweh played only a peripheral role.

We are very doubtful about his assumption, because the Bible never gives such a connotation that Yahweh was amoral and peripheral at a time. The Old Testament constantly testifies that Yahweh is Sovereign over the whole universe as well as over Israel.

Moreover, his description of איש-האלהים ('a man of God') was also problematic. For Petersen, איש-האלהים ('a man of God') was a very special prophet who fought on his own to retrieve God's sovereignty from the Baal in the time of Ahab. He contends that איש-האלהים ('a man of God') appealed to the people of Israel to restore Yahweh's Sovereignty upon the land of Israel by exerting Yahweh's miracle working power. He further contends that morality was not an important issue for איש-האלהים ('a man of God').

The most obvious problem of his assumption is that the term איש-האלהים ('a man of God') was not exclusively used for Elijah and Elisha. It occurs twenty one times in the Old Testament. It was applied to Moses, David, an anonymous prophet in the time of Jereboam and Shemaiah (Ne. 12:4; 2 Ki. 23:17; 2 Ch. 11:2 and 30:16). It seems to be very absurd to consider that God was peripheral in the time of Moses and David too. His assumption, therefore, is very unconvincing. The term איש-האלהים ('a man of God') seems to be an honorary appellative as Jay Holstein (1977:69-81) suggested.

provided a new perspective on Israelite prophecy and have induced lively responses among the Old Testament scholars.

Overholt (1977:129-50; 1981:55-78; 1982:3-31) proposes an *interactionist* model as a way of understanding the prophetic process. According to Overholt, the process of interaction begins with the divine revelation. The prophet delivers the divine messages to his contemporary society as a consequence. There were three possible ways in which his society could react: *acceptance*, *rejection* and *indifference*. Here, Overholt emphasises that the acts of power from the prophets served primarily to legitimate the authority of the prophets, rather than their testimony that they have received a divine revelation (Overholt 1982:3-31).

In his study of prophetic conflict, Long (1981:31-53) argues that conflict is complex as well as normal, and that it involves personal, social, economic and political dynamics and ideologies. For Long, the conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah reflected a larger political debate in the last years of Judah's national existence - a dispute between "pro-Babylonian" and "autonomist" groups within the royal court. According to Long, such social, non-theological dimensions of the prophet's conflicts were largely, if not entirely, overlooked. As Long rightly comments, social factors, including political factors, should be considered for better understanding of the prophetic conflict.

With regard to the previously mentioned scholars, Cyril Rodd has a different viewpoint. After discussing *cognitive dissonance theory*, which was proposed by Gager and Carroll, he concludes that historical sociology is impossible (Rodd 1981:95-106). Rodd's conclusion comes from his assumption that there is a world of difference between sociology as applied to *contemporary society* (where the researcher can test theories against evidence which is collected) and *historical sociology*

(where there is only fossilized evidence that has been preserved by chance or for purposes very different from that of the sociologist) [Rodd 1981:95-106].

It is utterly dependent upon the reader to decide which of the two contrary judgements is correct. The fact should not be disregarded, however, that Old Testament studies have benefitted richly from a *social-scientific* approach.

4.2 Korean social and cultural texture

4.2.1 Social and cultural texture

Korea is proud of her long history and her ethnic homogeneity. In fact, the people of Korea have been homogeneous with regard to race, language, history, culture, custom and even social attitudes in general, throughout their long history of 5000 years. It was, however, a long history of survival as a lesser power. The Koreans are known as *Han* people. The term *Han* has many meanings. One is *one, united, not-mixed* ; another is *bitter feeling*. Koreans are indeed one ethnic group, but they are also a people with bitter feelings because of the suffering they have experienced throughout their whole history.

The Korean people became very humble and religious because of incessant hardship. Even in the twentieth century this is no exception. The Korean people were under the rule of Japan for thirty-six years (1910-45). Then they went through the Korean War between North and South Korea (1950-53). When an armistice was reached, most of the cities had been laid in ruins. Poverty, widows, orphans and diseases were the part of the nationwide social problems of that time.

Until the 1970s, the basis of Korean industry was agriculture. A radical social change occurred around the seventies under the leadership of the president Jung-Hee Park. Korea suddenly became a complex industrial society as a result of the enormous economic growth took place during Park's eighteen-year rule.

Considering the political history of Korea, her earliest recorded history dates from around 57 BC. For the next seven hundred years, Korea was divided into three small kingdoms, until the *Shilla* kingdom conquered the other two (AD 668). Since then, *Shilla* maintained political independence and established a cultural and ethnic identity that laid the foundations of modern Korea (John T. Kim 1996: 22). The unified *Shilla* kingdom was replaced by the *Koryo* (918-1392) kingdom. The current name of Korea was derived from the name *Koryo*. The founder of the *Koryo* kingdom, Wang-Kun adopted Buddhism as the state religion. Thereafter, Buddhism has played – and is still playing today - an important role in the culture, ideology and way of life in Korea. In the last days of the *Koryo* kingdom, the corruption of Buddhism incurred many problems and resulted in the end of the *Koryo* kingdom. Then, the *Chosen* kingdom (1392-1910), which is known in the West by its dynastic name, *Yi*, began. Different to the *Koryo* kingdom, the *Yi* dynasty replaced Buddhism with Confucianism. Confucian ethics and values came to dominate the social structure and behaviour throughout the whole period of the *Yi* dynasty. However, Buddhism was still the prevalent belief among the people during Yi dynasty, even though the state religion changed into Confucianism.

Because of her geopolitical location, surrounded by super powers such as Russia, China and Japan, Korea has been a battleground in the struggle for power in the area of East Asia for a long time. The *Yi* dynasty ended in 1910 when Korea was annexed by Japan. Korea lost her political freedom for 36 years, until Japan capitulated during World War II (1945). Russian armies occupied the northern territory of Korea, while US forces occupied the southern part of Korea. In 1948, Korea was

divided into North and South Korea. North Korea became a communist country, whereas South Korea became a democratic nation. On 25 June, 1950, the tragic Korean War (1950-53) broke out, when North Korean forces invaded South Korea. North and South Korea were severely ravaged by this tragic war, as mentioned elsewhere.

South Korean casualties are estimated at 150 000 dead, 200 000 missing, 250 000 injured and the number of war refugees reached several million. North Korean casualties were several times these figures (Lee 1984:69-73). After the Korean War, South Korean people established a democracy, while North Korea opted for communism.

The rapid social and political change over a short period of time was accompanied by a change in the sense of values. The traditional loyalty and filial piety to parents, teachers, political leaders and the state are diminishing among the Korean people nowadays. Furthermore, the people are becoming more and more pragmatic and materialistic. For ordinary Korean people, the prosperity, security and happiness that they did not have for a long time, are more attractive than truth and loyalty.

4.2.2 Shamanistic influence on society and culture in Korea

Shamanistic influence in Korea is much deeper and older than both Buddhism and Confucianism. Large numbers of Koreans still practice shamanism, which dates back to the dawn of Korean history. It is agreed that Korea was a shamanistic nation from the very beginning of its establishment in 2333 BC (G. Kim 1999:55; Soon-Im Lee 2002:16).

The most typical original Korean religious phenomenon can be called *animistic shamanism*, which is the oldest form of religious practice in Korea (John Kim 1996:30). Korean shamanism is essentially animistic. It involves a strong belief in the influence of departed ancestral spirits, as well as nature spirits who inhabit trees, rocks and other natural phenomena (John Kim 1996:30). These in turn must be propitiated or otherwise controlled, either by individuals or by priests (i.e. shamans) to ensure health, fertility and success in life's ventures.

The central idea of shamanism is to establish the means of access to the supernatural world through the shaman who exercises certain priestly functions on behalf of a human group (Soon-Im Lee 2002:18). There is a strong emphasis on exorcism and healing, with extensive use of chanting and drums.

Before Confucianism and Buddhism entered Korea, this Korean animistic faith had been established in every part of the Korean culture. Even though Buddhism and Confucianism permeated the social and political life of the Korean people, Korean shamanism retained the most powerful religious influence on the population as a whole (Hong 1960:316-22).

Korean shamanism is actually a kind of animistic folk religion indigenous to Korea. Korean culture and its folk religious faith are so closely entwined and difficult to separate that Korean culture is often regarded as shamanistic faith culture. Shamanism is still perhaps the most fundamental and influential religious faith of the Korean people (Hulbert 1906:126). It has made a profound impact on the social, economic and political realms in Korea (Soon-Im Lee 2002:18-19).

To summarise, shamanism has been dwelling in the hearts of the Korean ancestors from the time of preliterate societies. Although it was rejected by people in the dominant classes, Korean shamanism

has infiltrated the higher religions and has maintained its influence on religious life as a cultic worship among common people (John Kim 1996:46). It is believed that all the customs and thought patterns, the mentality, and the practices of the people of Korea had their roots in animistic shamanism, which had preceded the major religions and had influenced and remained the underlying religion of all Korean people (Ryu 1978:103-14).

4.2.3 Shamanistic influence of the Korean church

It is believed that shamanism originated in and was transmitted from the Paleolithic age, approximately 20 000 years ago (Suh and Park 1974:183). It is not known, however, exactly when this old shamanism was introduced to the Korean people. Nevertheless, it is certain that shamanism became a deeply-rooted belief system for the Korean people.

A *shaman* is a religious specialist who uses the technique of ecstasy to transcend the profane condition, to attain sacred power and to channel that power for the benefit of the community (Eliade 1964:8; Robert Wilson 1980:23-24; Canda 1983:22). Koreans call the shaman 'mu (•)'. This term is borrowed from the Chinese language. Two people (in the Chinese language '•' designates *a person*) are dancing in the letter. Dancing implies a certain act of ritual. To the Koreans, the shaman is the person who does mediatorial work between heaven and earth by practicing a certain ritual.

The functions of shamans are as follows: firstly, a priestly function for intermediating between human beings and divine spirits; secondly, a prophetic function for conveying the will of the divine spirit to the followers; thirdly, the role of relieving the sick of their diseases; fourthly, entertaining the public with singing and dancing (John Kim 1996:41; Clark 1961:173).

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There are two types of shamans: those who operate through ecstasy, and those who operate through possession (Robert Wilson 1987:1-13; Tae-Gon Kim 1983:6-7). The *ecstasy* type is the shaman whose soul enters into the realm of the deity, while the *possession* type is the one who lets the spirit(s) come into his body. Lewis describes the *ecstasy type* as "ascensual metaphysic" and the *possession type* as "incarnation" (Lewis 1971:50). Korean shamans are regarded as of the possession type (Tae-Gon Kim 1983:6).

Shamanic practice is aimed at solving human problems through communication between the deity and man. In other words, the objects of shamanism lie in fortune, happiness, driving out calamities and latent bad-luck, healing of diseases and dealing with other practical daily problems (Clark 1961:173; Tae-Gon Kim 1983: 20; John T. Kim 1996:42-46). It seems proper that John Kim refers to 'shamanism' as a *beneficial religion* (John Kim 1996:42).

Many point out that Korean Christianity and the Korean church were deeply influenced by shamanism. It is true that Korean churches promise material blessings, miracles, spiritual experiences, healing and happiness, etc. Korean people no longer need go to the shaman to receive such rewards. They now have a better choice: the church. It seems, however, that the Korean churches were influenced by the shamanistic faith. In order for sound growth to take place, these shamanistic elements should be removed from the Korean churches.

However, we should not neglect the fact that the God who is depicted in the Bible, is the Good and Sovereign One. He promises to answer prayer, heal the sick and grant blessing to the believers. Therefore, we should not assume that to seek material blessing and happiness is shamanistic. It might be shamanistic or it might not be. Our criteria should be more fundamental.

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From a personal point of view shamanism is seen as manipulative. Shamans are specialists who try to appease gods to get what people want. Korean Christianity should not be manipulative, but submissive to God. Koreans should also examine the motivation for seeking God: in other words we should make sure whether we are seeking God only, or whether we are seeking God in order to get what we want. God is to be the focus of our faith. If we focus on God, God will decide our fortune. Material things should not be our focus, neither our criteria for evaluating the Korean churches.

The Israelite prophets emphasised Yahwistic faith. It would have sufficed if Jeremiah's contemporaries had sought Yahweh with all their heart, might and mind. Because they failed to do it, Jeremiah had to remove all perverted religious acts that pleased the Judean people and not Yahweh.

Now is the time for such a fundamental call for Yahwistic faith in the Korean churches. When Korean churches respond well to this call, the real revival will begin.

4.2.4 Shamanistic understanding of the prophetic call

The social position of the shaman in Korea is unstable. The Korean people are disdainful of shamans, even though they sometimes consult them. Shamans find it very hard to maintain a good relationship with their spouses. Shamans think that they are in marital relationship with spirits. They concerned about that their intimate relationship with their spouses might cause jealousy of spirits. They believe that their divination will not be accurate when spirits do not give correct information because of their jealousy. Therefore, it is not easy for shamans to maintain healthy marriage relationship with their spouses. For these reasons, people have been very reluctant to become shamans.

There is a common phenomenon that precedes shamanic initiation. People develop "queer sickness" before they become shamans. The Koreans call it *sinbyung*, which translates to, *spirit sickness, caught by spirits* or *fingered by spirits*. The symptom of sinbyung (i.e. spirit sickness) only disappear once the person accepts the call to become a shaman (most shamans in Korea are female). It is believed to be a "spirit-sent illness" and taking medicine does not help for it. This phenomenon of sinbyung is also not exclusive to Korean shamans. This type of experience occurs commonly and everywhere (Eliade 1964:33-64).

The prospective shaman suffers much while he or she is considering the call. When he or she finally decides to become shaman, a date is set for a special ceremony. One veteran shaman comes to lead the ceremony of acceptance of the spirit. Afterwards the veteran and the new shaman maintain a mother-daughter relationship. At the ceremony, the prospective shaman receives the spirits fully. The illness disappears at that moment, but reoccurs when he or she quits shamanistic work.

According to Canda (1983:28), these initiatory ordeals, both spontaneous and ritualised, which are a prerequisite for fully opening the vision of the shaman, can be extremely severe. For Canda (1983:29), these deadly ordeals were given in order to be reborn as a sacred healer. These symptoms constitute a type of ritual; that is, they transform the profane, pre-"choice" individual into a *technician of the sacred* (Eliade 1964:33). Canda (1983:21-47) refers to this shamanic initiation as *therapeutic transformation*. Halifax comments likewise:

> The shamans who have sacrificed themselves to the "great task" and
>
> become the sacrament for spirit forces learn the art of dying and
>
> acquire the knowledge of healing particular illnesses from the spirits
>
> that have consumed their flesh.

The shaman learns to integrate the experiences of sickness, suffering, dying, and death, as well as to share the special knowledge of these powerful events with those who face disease or death for the first time (Halifax 1979:6).

It seems as if Jeremiah noticed the difficulty of the task and the inevitability of sacrificing his personal life keenly when he hesitated the prophetic call (Jer. 1:6). Jeremiah abandoned marriage. He experienced solitude. Sometimes he suffered sickness (Jer. 17:14). Jeremiah knew suffering. Looking at Jeremiah from the point of view of the Korean culture, it is likely that Jeremiah could have had sinbyung, the "divine sickness". It seems as if Jeremiah tried to quit the prophetic work (Jer. 20:9). Whenever he tried to quit, he probably experienced weariness, i.e. sickness (Jer. 17:14 and 17:14).

Some scholars have raised questions about the prophetic authorship of confessions. They consider the confessional sections in the book of Jeremiah to be later additions to the book without any relation to Jeremiah (Diamond 1987:124-25; Bultmann 2001:83, fns. 1-3). It is not clear why some assume that these confessions did not originate from the person Jeremiah. They are Jeremiah's personal testimonies about what he experienced. Jeremiah seemed to try and quit the prophetic task a few times subsequent to his primary hesitation to accept the prophetic call. It is certain that he suffered sickness whenever he quit his prophetic work (Jer. 17:14; 20:9). He then experienced the healing of his illness again whenever he repented and resumed his prophetic mission. He actually suffered a kind of "sinbyung", i.e. the divine disease. Through such a repeated process of quitting-sickness-repentance-healing he became a mature servant of Yahweh.

4.2.5 Relevance of Korean understanding of prophecy

Pioneering work on the cognitive-inferential approach to communication, which has come to be known as the *relevance theory*, was done by Sperber and Wilson (Sperber and Wilson 1986). They posited that every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1986:158; Wendland 1996:127; Rouchota and Jucker 1998:2).

Considering that relevance is a matter of degree, Sperber and Wilson suggested two conditions for maximising the relevance: Firstly, *an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large*, and secondly, *an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small* (Sperber and Wilson 1986:125).

Sperber and Wilson (1993:1-25) developed their relevance theory by distinguishing between *conceptual meaning* and *procedural meaning*. They assumed that an utterance is optimally relevant on a given interpretation if it is relevant enough to be worthwhile for the addressee to process it and if it is the most relevant one compatible with the speaker's means and goals (Rouchota and Jucker 1998:2). According to these authors, the first type of meaning contributes to the content of the speaker's assertion and therefore, typically, to the cognitive effects of the utterance, and the second type of meaning encourages the hearer to consider certain interpretive hypotheses rather than others, thus saving him or her some processing effort in interpreting the utterance (Rouchota and Jucker 1998:2). Their distinction is worthy of note.

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Many scholars are sceptical about the relevance of the Old Testament. However, the problem of relevance of the Old Testament has nothing to do with the documents we are reading, but everything to do with our methodology and the world view which functions as our hermeneutical framework (Deist 1990:49).

To sum up, we must try and find the conceptual meaning that the author of the text first intended, then we can extract the procedural meaning (i.e. significance) by means of interaction between the text and its audience. Wendland states the necessity of this procedure very well as follows:

> A means of manifesting to people today more of the overall "relevance" of the Scripture is to augment their understanding of the Word on its own terms first of all and also to increase their appreciation for the artistic and rhetorical nature of the biblical text itself. But secondly, the aim is to sharpen their awareness of the Bible's indispensable significance for their own lives, times, and circumstances" (Wendland 1996: 137).

As Deist (1990:50) insists, applying a fresh approach to biblical interpretation may - and will – help us to interpret ourselves and our solutions to contemporary problems critically. This can be done in the light of religious answers arrived at by faith communities and believing individuals. These communities and individuals were confronted with similar enigmas of human existence at a time when the universe was still experienced as one with God.

Deist's insistence seems to come from his assumption that human problems are common throughout the whole history of mankind. In other words, the social, economic, political or religious problems

of the biblical period continually re-emerge throughout human history. And it is the timelessness of the prophet's message that gives it its relevance (Miller 2001:577). For an example, Dearman (2002:41), in his recent commentary on Jeremiah and Lametations, poignantly argues that Jeremiah's strictures against other deities are timely warnings applicable in any age, given the human tendency to "hedge one's bets" or to divide one's allegiance among several powers as a safety precaution. The idolatrous tendency of humans cannot be confined to the time of Jeremiah. It is indeed a deep-seated, everlasting tendency of us all.

Admittedly, there is a disparity between the social, religious, political, economical and cultural context that the biblical text presents and the modern social, religious, political, economic and cultural context. From this notion, Rodd (1981:95-106) raises a very negative judgment on the social-scientific approach, as mentioned in Section 4.1.

There is also, however, the similarity between the Judean religious culture of the 8th to the 7th century BC and contemporary Korean religious culture. This similarity originates from the common human tendency to pursue happiness and blessing from above, and to attain a peaceful relationship with the divine. We can, therefore, justify applying the social, cultural and religious context that the biblical text furnishes to the current Korean social, cultural and religious context from this notion of commonality. To summarise, the prophetic message in the Old Testament was not only a timely one, but also a timeless one, indeed (Miller 2001:577).

4.3 Social texture in pre-exilic Judah

4.3.1 Definition

As mentioned elsewhere, the *social-scientific* approach subsumes the perspectives of historical sociology, cultural anthropology and social theory. In this section the perspective of historical sociology will be discussed, while the remaining two perspectives are discussed in subsequent sections.

Research on the historical sociology regarding the prophetic book, involves three realms: author, the audience and the historical context provided by the text. According to Blenkinsopp (1996:30-39), the issue of social location forced itself on the attention of scholars through form-critical study of the prophetic material, an essential aspect of which was and is the relation of literary types to their social matrices.

The *Sitz im Leben* ([social] life situation) of pre-exilic Judah was very turbulent. Her troublesome circumstances, especially social stress, and the political and military crises in fact induced the emergence of prophetic phenomena. There was a severe power struggle between Neo-Assyria, Neo-Babylon and Egypt for possession of the land between the Euphrates and Sinai, including the land of Israel and Philistine. For Assyria, this period ranges from stark ascent to drastic descent. Neo-Babylon and Egypt competed with each other to occupy the lands which Neo-Assyria had lost.

In the vortex of struggles among these three superpowers, Judah had to choose wisely to survive. There were dividing opinions among the leaders in Judah. Some took a pro-Babylon stance, others

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were anti-Babylon, and the rest were autonomistic. The struggle between them will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, which deals with ideological texture.

Pre-exilic Judah was an agricultural society. The primary concern in an agricultural society was fertility. The ordinary people were very diligent to increase their products, but did not have any political power to influence the king and his officers. At the same time, pre-exilic Judah had a monarchic government. Typically, monarchy included hereditary succession for the ruler and the control of other key offices by influential families (Ishida 1977; Dearman 1992:51). Under the hierarchic monarchy, there is a strong possibility of social inequality. The lowly, the poor and women must have been extremely underprivileged. Whether the prophets worked for the underprivileged or not in those periods, is one of the very interesting questions that we can raise.

4.3.2 Current literature

According to Blenkinsopp (1996:31), until fairly recently the discussion on prophetic identity has been carried on without reference to the social location of the prophet and the social determinants of prophetic states of consciousness and behaviour. Blenkinsopp's remark still seems to be relevant. It is all the more pertinent when commentaries on the prophets are considered.

For example, most of the current commentaries on the book of Jeremiah do not give any detailed social environment, as the book of Jeremiah itself provides. The two most recent commentaries on the book of Jeremiah, by Patrick D. Miller and J. Andrew Dearman, do not discuss any particular sociological issue, but only give a general idea of the historical and political situations at the time (Miller 2001:555-60; Dearman 2002:19-41). These authors just give a general idea of the historical and political situations at the time.

Here, two interesting commentaries need to be mentioned, namely one by Kathleen M. O'Connor (1992:169-77) and by Philip J. King (1993).

O'Connor wrote a very brief commentary on the book of Jeremiah from a *feministic* viewpoint. She has made a keen study of women's roles and positions in the last days of Judah, which would have been more useful if her feministic research for the book were more fully elaborated.

Philip J. King (1993) published a very unique commentary on the book of Jeremiah, elucidating the text of this book by providing large volumes of archaeological evidence.[23] By doing so, King contributed to the understanding of the historical context and social and cultural circumstances in the time of Jeremiah.

4.4 Cultural texture in pre-exilic Judah

4.4.1 Definition

Clyde Kluckhohn (1949; Geertz 1973:4-5) gives the following definitions of *culture* :

1. the total way of life of a people;

2. the social legacy the individual acquires from his group;

3. a way of thinking, feeling, and believing;

4. an abstraction from behavior;

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[23] Yamauchi (1972:146-58) points out the fragmentary nature archaeological evidence. He then divides it into three categories: traditions (written or oral from Old Testament and other sources), material remains (pottery, debris, etc) and inscriptional evidence. He says that conclusions are stronger when there is overlapping evidence from more than one source.

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5.   a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave;

6.   a storehouse of pooled learning;

7.   a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems;

8.   learned behavior;

9.   a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour;

10.   a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men;

11.   a precipitate of history, and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix.

These enumerated concepts of culture help us form a general idea of what culture is. Geertz (1973:4-5) thinks that the concept of culture is essentially semiotic. *Culture* denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (Dearman 1992:1-2; Geertz 1973:87-125). In other words, culture is the webs of significance humans themselves have spun. The analysis of it is an interpretive science in search of meaning. The aim of the study of culture is an analysis of social discourse, not therapy (Geertz 1973:26).

4.4.2 Current Literature

There is no particular commentary on the book of Jeremiah that deals with cultural issues in the time of Jeremiah. Dearman (1992), however, helps us to understand the cultural environment from Israel's pre-monarchic state to the Persian period.

Reflecting on Israel's cultural history, Dearman (1992; 2002:39-41) suggests that the Israelites were profoundly influenced by the materialistic and idolatrous cultures in Canaan. John Day (2000) also thinks that the Israelites were deeply affected by the Canaanite polytheistical concept. The Baal religion promised fertility and prosperity, along with sexual promiscuity. This seemed to have had great allure for the people of Israel.

Even though Dearman thinks that the Israelites were affected by the Canaanites, he feels that during the pre-exilic era the people of Judah were even more profoundly influenced by the Assyrians. In other words, Assyrian influence on Israel was enormous, according to Dearman. Assyrian imperialism of the 9th to the 7th century BC was the catalyst for several cultural developments in the eastern Mediterranean. Dearman (1992:78-84) concludes that idolatrous practices in Israel were primarily the result of the Assyrian influence. He supplies some examples of Assyrian influence on the people of Judah, namely the practices of human sacrifice, solar worship, astrology, divination, etc. According to Dearman (1992:153-98), the rise of the *writing prophets* in Israel, and Judah, too, resulted from this Assyrian cultural imperialism, because the Israelite prophets arose in order to indict the people of Judah of such involvement in idolatrous practice.

Idolatrous worship of other gods seems to have been quite prevalent in pre-exilic Judah. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, enumerated cases in detail. He referred to Judah's idolatrous

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practices as *the worship of Baal and other deities* (Jer. 7:9; 2:8; 23:13, 27), *abominations* (Jer. 7:10), *the Queen of Heaven* (Jer. 7:17-19; 44:17-19, 25), *detestable things* placed in the temple (Jer. 7:30; 4:1; 13:27; 16:18; 32:34), and the *high places of Topheth* in the valley of Hinnom where children were burned in a fire (Jer. 7:30-32; 19:5; 32:35). Jeremiah contains polemical language against polytheism, idolatry and syncretism on the part of God's people (Dearman 2002:39). In his poetry, Jeremiah uses the analogies of harlotry and sexual desire to describe such practices, and he also makes fun of images of divinities (Jer. 2:14-37; 5:7-9; 17:1-4).

It is certain that the quest for fertility of family, flocks, and crops was a powerful inducement for religious activity on the part of cult officials and worshippers alike in pre-exilic Judah (Dearman 1992:179).

Together with biblical texts, archaeology also attests to the Israelite use of cult figurines (King 1993:106). A large number of nude goddesses dating from the 8th and 7th century BC have been discovered at Israelite sites, even near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (King 1993:106). This idol worship must have been a serious problem at that time.

Jeremiah and the Jewish refugees in Egypt were on a theological collision course over the interpretation of history (Jer. 44). Jeremiah considered the cultic practice of the Queen of Heaven as responsible for the disaster in Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC. In the eyes of the people of Judah, all their troubles began with the reforms of Josiah, which outlawed the cult worshipping the Queen of Heaven, a religious devotion that they had seen as the reason for their earlier prosperity. Jeremiah insisted that exclusive loyalty to the Lord, the God of Israel, had been the only reason for success in the past (King 1993:106).

Barker (2002:141-59) recently deals with this issue of the cultic practice of the Queen of Heavens in detail.

To grasp the true character of the Queen of Heaven, Barker (2002:141-59) identifies the Queen of Heaven with Wisdom. She also identifies the Queen of Heaven with the Glory of the Lord that left Jerusalem in the vision of Ezekiel.

According to Barker, the clearest written evidence for the Lost Lady is found in Jer. 44, where the prophet tried to convince refugees in Egypt that the recent destruction of Jerusalem was a punishment for the way they sinned when they burnt incense to other gods. The refugees would have none of it. The reason for the disaster, they said, was the fact that they had abandoned the worship of the Queen of Heaven. They had stopped burning incense, pouring libations and making loaves ("cakes") to depict her, a long-established practice in Jerusalem and Judah (Jer. 44:16-19; cf. Jer. 7:18). When the Queen of Heaven had been honoured, they prospered, but since she had been abandoned, there had been nothing but disaster. Refugees from Jerusalem who settled in Egypt then, were accustomed to worship, with libations, incense and moulded loaves, to the Queen of Heaven who protected Jerusalem and Judah.

It is interesting that the Yeb (Elephantine) papyri found in the south of Egypt depict a community with Judean roots, but who offered only cereals, incense and libations at their sacrifice that caused local unrest and the people were therefore permitted to resume their only bloodless offerings (Barker 2002:142-43). According to Barker, the Queen of Heaven was abandoned just before the first temple was destroyed, and some of her devotees had fled to Egypt (Barker 2002:147). Barker also insists that the pillar figurines (between 8 and 14 cm high) were those of the Queen of Heaven (Barker 2002:158-59).

According to Kletter (2001:179-216), 854 of these figurines that were found, are distinctive Judean pillar figurines. According to him these are not identified with the Asherah, despite many scholars' opinion. They were possibly used as a protecting figure in domestic houses, more likely a figure which bestowed abundance, especially in the domain of female lives.

Barker's identification of the Queen of Heaven with Wisdom, in Pr. 8, and with the Glory of the Lord leaving Jerusalem, as portrayed in Ezekiel's vision, is problematic. Jeremiah severely indicted his contemporaries' practice of worshiping the Queen of Heaven. If the Queen of Heaven were regarded as the Glory of the Lord, Jeremiah would not have indicted the practice. He must have indicted the idolatrous worship of the people.

The most popular view is that the Queen of Heaven refers to Astarte (Day 2000:148-50). The more accurate identification is likely Astarte in syncretism with her Mesopotamian equivalent, Ishtar as Day (2000:150) concludes[24].

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[24] For the identification of 'Queen of Heaven', Day introduces several proposals that were raised by scholars. The following are some examples of their proposals.

M. H. Dahood holds that Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven is the Canaanite sun-goddess Shapash (Day 2000:145-46). Day (2000:145-146), however, does not think this view is very convincing.

The view that the Queen of Heaven was the goddess Asherah has not been widely followed. However, it has gained a little support in recent years (Keel and Uehlinger 1998 [ET]:338-41). Koch, Keel and Uehlinger believe that Asherah was syncretistically equated with Ishtar, but this is unlikely, since the West Semitic equivalent of Ishtar was not Asherah, but Astarte (Day 2000:146).

Another goddess who has been proposed as equitable with Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven is the Canaanite goddess, Anat. Albright (1968:113), Porten (1968:176-77) and Cogan (1974:85-86) are proponents of this view. Day thinks that Anat does not seem to have been as prominent as Astarte in first-millennium Palestine, but that Asherah and Astarte appear to have been the dominant goddesses in first-millennium Palestine and they consequently are the ones against whom the Deuteronomist polemicises (Day 2000:147).

It has sometimes been supposed that Jeremiah's Queen of Heaven referred to the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar. Proponents of this view are Rudolph (1947:47), Weinfeld (1972:133-54) and Rast (1977:167-80). However, there are serious problems in supposing that the Queen of Heaven is simply to be equated with the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar. The chief problem is that the text in Jer. 44 makes it abundantly clear that the worship of the Queen of Heaven was deep-seated among both the ordinary people and rulers of Judah and Jerusalem and had gone back several generations. This strongly suggests that her worship was a popular folk custom, that is, she was a Canaanite goddess, and not some recently implanted cult from Assyria (Day 2000:148). If their view is right, the people of Judah seemed to be influenced heavily by Assyrian idolatrous practice as well as Canaanite practice.

Surveying these proposals, Day (2000:150) then concludes that the most popular view is that the Queen of Heaven refers to Astarte, and the most plausible case can indeed be made for this goddess. Proponents of this view are Fitzmyer (1966:285-97), Olyan (1987:161-74) and Day (2000:148-50). Astarte is the Canaanite goddess who was most

Jeremiah must have indicted the idolatrous practice of the people of Judah at that time when mentioning the Queen of Heaven. Despite Jeremiah's denunciation of this cultic practice of the Queen of Heaven, the Jewish refugees persisted in worshiping the mother goddess as the way to guarantee security and prosperity in Egypt (King 1993:106).

4.5 Social texture of Jeremiah 1

The superscription (Jer. 1:1-3) gives some basic information that sets the prophet and his words in a historical setting. Jeremiah carried out his prophetic work in the land of Judah and at the time of Josiah, Johoiakim and Zedekiah. Jeremiah therefore worked as a prophet to the nations in the last phase of the Judean monarchy.

Jeremiah's prophetic activity covered a long period of time and took place over a vicissitudinous period of Judean history. This period included one of Judah's greatest moments, the reign of King Josiah, who sought to reform the religious life of the nation, but it also included its lowest moment, the fall of Jerusalem and Judah, the exile of many in Judah to Babylon, and even Jeremiah's own exile to Egypt.

Historically, therefore, the prophecy of Jeremiah begins in a time of glory and ends in a time of judgement and disaster. The superscription informs the reader where the book is heading – to the captivity and exile of Jerusalem. It prepares us for the heavy focus on that city and the hortatory

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frequently associated with the heavens in the first millennium BC. Although certainty is not possible, the best case can be made for the Queen of Heaven being Astarte. Nevertheless, the fact remains that an Akkadian loan word is used for the *cakes* in Jer. 7 and 44, so it is possible – as Ackerman (1989:109-24; 1992:5-35) argues – that what we have, is not simply Astarte, but Astarte in syncretism with her Mesopotamian equivalent, Ishtar (Day 2000:150).

words as well as the condemning words that are directed toward its leaders and citizens (Miller 2001:576).

The leaders were kings, princes, priests, prophets and wise men. A fundamental assumption of Jeremiah's judgemental prophecies is that the leadership of the people had been in the forefront of corporate failure (Dearman 2002:37). Monarchy, priesthood and prophecy, all stood against Jeremiah and diverted the people away from *God's word* (Dearman 2002:37.) The primary sin of the people of Judah were their idolatrous practices. Because of these practices, the people of Judah had to experience the exile eventually.

In biblical times Israelite society was primarily agricultural after the conquest. Every aspect of life, including the domestic, economic, cultural, and religious life was affected by agriculture (King 1993:143). Agriculture was the basis of biblical metaphors, as it was the inspiration of art, architecture, and poetry (King 1993:143). Well knowing the people's familiarity with the land, the trees and the plants, Jeremiah often expressed his ideas in the language of nature. To name a few examples: flora (Jer. 17:6, 8), wheat (Jer. 23:28; 31:12), choice vine (Jer. 2:21; 6:1; 8:13; 23:9; 31:5, 12; 32:15; 35:7; 48:33), fig (Jer. 5:17; 24:2; 40:10, 12; 48:32), pomegranate (Jer. 52:22-23), olive (Jer. 11:16; 25:20), date honey (Jer. 41:8), cedar (Jer. 22:14-15), almond (Jer. 1:11-12), balm (Jer. 8:22; 22:6; 46:11; 51:8). Jeremiah's choice of such agricultural terms must have had a rhetorical effect on the audience: to let his audience understand Jeremiah's message with ease.

For example, Jeremiah reports that he saw a vision of an almond tree (Jer. 1:11-12). This is not a mere pun between שֹׁקֵד ('watch over') and שָׁקֵד ('almond tree'). The people of Judah would have known the almond tree as the herald of spring. The audience might have perceived this image of

almond tree as a sign of hope. If this assumption is right, it implies that the hope of salvation was already given at the time of the prophetic call.

The book of Jeremiah also addresses the people of God by way of a number of terms which come from the spheres of family life and social relationships.

For example, the immediate context of the divine call (Jer. 1) is Jeremiah's calling to preach of indictment (Jer. 2:1-4:4). These passages (i.e. Jer. 2:1-4:4) indict the people of Israel for their sin and infidelity in terms of intimate relationship between husband and wife by reminding that they were in matrimonial relationship with Yahweh.

In other words, one of the unifying features of these passages is the motif of a woman as an unfaithful sexual partner (O'Connor 1992:170-71). A youthful Israel was set apart for Yahweh at the time of wandering in the wilderness (Jer. 2:2-3). Unfaithfulness to Yahweh is described in the familiar terms of sexual infidelity and promiscuity (Jer. 2:20-3:10). Infidelity makes this partner so dirty and defiled that, even with lye, she cannot wash herself clean (Jer. 2:22). The analogy of divorce depicts the estrangement between Yahweh and Israel (Jer. 3:1-5).

Another analogy depicts Israel and Judah as faithless sisters (Jer. 3:6-11). It accuses northern Israel of polluting the land with harlotry, but Judah bears even greater guilt. She too played the whore (Jer. 3:8), and *because she took her whoredom so lightly, she polluted the land* (Jer. 3:9). For the prophets, the moral quality of human life directly affected the well-being of the land (O'Connor 1992:171). Judah's whoring disturbs the flocks, the herds, and the people (Jer. 3:24), and it brings drought upon the land (Jer. 3:3; 13:25-27; 14:1-6).

This analogy makes sense only in the context of family relations where the conduct of the sisters shames the parents (Dearman 1992:168). As in the case of divorce and remarriage in Jer 3:1-5, the sphere of family relationships defines the proper relationship between the people and Yahweh, as well as the consequences of breaking the family's integrity (Dearman 1992:168).

The people of Judah did not listen to Jeremiah's indictment regarding their unfaithfulness and his warning of God's impending judgment. In fact, they rejected him and persecuted him. Their obstinate response to Jeremiah was anticipated from the time of his prophetic call (Jer. 1:17-19). In fact, Jeremiah endured much opposition from his contemporaries and his opponents were not confined to ordinary people, but included the political and religious leaders such as the kings, princes, priests and prophets. Even his family and relatives in his hometown of Anathoth considered him insane and rejected him. The conflict between Jeremiah and his contemporaries at that time was obvious. The conflict resulted from their different perspectives, not only in terms of theology, but also of as far as sociology, economics and politics were concerned.

Jeremiah's theological and political viewpoints were well known, compared to the question of what kind of sociological perspective he had. It is possible that Bryan Wilson's research could be helpful here.

Bryan Wilson's typology of sects, based on a cross-cultural spectrum of religious groups, offered seven types of social rhetoric, organising data from a wide variety of religious groups in a taxonomy of seven kinds of religious responses to the world (Robbins 1996a:72-75; 1996b:147-150; B. Wilson 1970: 36-47; 1973:18-26). B. Wilson's seven classifications will be applied in order to figure out whether the conflicts that arose between Jeremiah and his contemporaries were caused

by differing social understanding as well as differing theological perspectives between them. B. Wilson's classifications are as follows:

4.5.1 Conversionist

The *conversonist* response to the world is characterised by the view that the outside world is corrupted because humans are corrupted. If people can be changed, then the world will be changed. This type takes no interest in programmes of social reform or in the political solution of social problems and may even be actively hostile towards them (B. Wilson 1969:364). According to this view, what people need is a "heart experience", and only when people have had such an experience of salvation, can society hope for betterment (B. Wilson 1970:38).

4.5.2 Revolutionist

The *revolutionist* response declares that only the destruction of the world - the natural world, but also, more specifically, the social order - will be sufficient to save people. Supernatural powers should perform the destruction, because people lack the power, if not to destroy the world, then certainly to re-create it (Wilde 1974:41; Robbins 1996a:72).

4.5.3 Introversionist

The *introversionist* response is to see the world as irredeemably evil, and salvation to be attained only by the fullest possible withdrawal from the world (B. Wilson 1973:23-24). This response is indifferent to social reform, to individual conversion and to social revolution.

4.5.4 Gnostic manipulationist

The *gnostic manipulationist* response is narrower than the previous three types. Whereas *revolutionists* seek a transformed world, *introversionists* a purified community and *conversionists* a transformed self, the *manipulationist* response is to seek only a transformed set of relationships - a transformed method of coping with evil (B. Wilson 1973:23-24).

4.5.5 Thaumaturgical

The *thaumaturgical* response focuses on the individual's concern with relief from present ills, whether physical or mental, by special, almost magical dispensation. There is no conception of the world being saved, but only of immediate release from tensions and difficulties, and vague ideas of transformation into conditions of bliss (B. Wilson 1970:39).

4.5.6 Reformist

The *reformist* response views the world as corrupt because its social structures are corrupt. If the structures can be changed so that the behaviours they sanction are changed, then salvation will be present in the world (Robbins 1996a:73).

4.5.7 Utopian

The *utopian* response searches for salvation through an attitude which wishes neither to abandon nor to overturn the world, but is an attempt to find a basis for a radical reconstruction, based on religious principles. According to this type, the world is evil because men have created an evil

system. Salvation is to be attained by returning to the basic principles by which the Creator intended men to live (B. Wilson 1970:40). Berlinerblau (1993:3-26) seems to think that the Hebrew prophets were *utopians*. For Berlinerblau, the Israelite prophets were biased elites, with only the intelligentsia having some sorts of ideology. This categorisation is not really pertinent.

According to B. Wilson's classification, the prophet Jeremiah is most likely a conversionist and revolutionist. As mentioned above, the conversionist considers the core of social problems to lie in people's serious depravity. Jeremiah was keenly aware of the gravity of people's sinfulness. Jer. 17:9 declares that the heart (of people) is עקב הלב מכל ואנש ('deceitful above all things and beyond cure'). Israel's wound was incurable (Jer. 30:12).

Jeremiah's view that Israel's sinful condition was incurable seemed to incur severe objection from those people who had different perspectives. Jeremiah seemed to face antagonism from those who had a reformist view at that juncture. According to B. Wilson, the reformists recognise evil, but assume that it could be dealt with according to supernatural insights about the ways in which social organisation should be amended. For the reformists, amendment of the world is the essential orientation (B. Wilson 1973:25).

Josiah, the king of Judah, realised that the people of Judah, including himself, did not live according to the words of the Law when he heard Shaphan reading it (2 Ch. 34:14-21). Josiah then carried out the reformation (2 Ch. 34-35). Many of the religious leaders, especially the priests, welcomed Josiah's structural reform and hoped for the revival of the nation. Those who believed that people's sinful condition could be improved by outward reform, would have joined Josiah's movement with delight. Many (false) prophets at that time were dealing with people's depravity slightly differently to the way Jeremiah dealt with it. In fact, the prophets and the priests healed the fracture (i.e.

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wound) of the people of Yahweh superficially (Jer. 6:14 and 8:11) in that period. The *niphal* participle feminine נקלה suggests the meaning of *superficially* when it follows the preposition על. For the priests and the (false) prophets, people's defilement was not so grave. The priests and the (false) prophets seemed to believe that ritual and a change of the social and religious structure would suffice to solve the problem. The priests and the (false) prophets can therefore be categorized as the reformists.

Contrary to them, Jeremiah perceived that the real problem was in the hearts of the people, not in society (Jer. 4:14; 5:23; 17:1, 9). It seems as of the religious leaders did not agree with Jeremiah; in fact, they probably were in enmity with Jeremiah. As a consequence, Jeremiah very likely experienced much opposition from them.

Jeremiah should not be regarded as introversionist or utopian. The introversionist has a perception that society is too corrupt to solve the problem. This initial interpretation seems to be very similar to the conversionistic view. It is, however, totally different in that the introversionist is prone to shun the evil society as much as possible, whereas for the introversionist, the way to salvation is to be separate from society and to establish an isolated, separate community. A community, such as the Essenians, can be classified into this group. Jeremiah cannot be classified into this group, as he was deeply involved in the Judean society.

The utopians are those who seek to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely-given principles, rather than simply to amend it from a reformist position (Robbins 1996b:74). The utopians seek radical change of the society in constructive way.

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It seems as if Jeremiah did not agree with this view. For Jeremiah, it was impossible for people who were totally corrupt to remake the world themselves. Jeremiah surely held the revolutionist's view. The revolutionist says that the only possible way to salvation is to overturn the world (B. Wilson 1973:23). The most important element of Jeremiah's ministry was that of destruction (Jer. 1:10). His message of doom, however, certainly was not appreciated by his contemporaries.

In that period the people of Judah were likely to be the thaumaturgicals. They seemed to want immediate success and solutions instead of enduring the long process of destruction and recovery. Jeremiah's message definitely was to the people's dislike. The false prophets knew well what the people wanted. The false prophets were those who listened to the voice of the people (*vox populi*) instead of to the voice of Yahweh (VanGemeren 1990:19-27). The false prophets offered the people of Judah peace and immediate recovery from the Babylonians (Jer. 28:1-4). Those who longed for an immediate effect of faith, would surely have defied Jeremiah.

4.6 Cultural texture of Jeremiah 1

Instead of rejecting the idolatrous allure of the Canaanite culture, the Judean people succumbed to it and became deeply influenced by this idolatrous and material culture. The promise of fertility and material blessing seemed too attractive for the people of Judah to reject it. Baal worship also involved promiscuous acts in the Baal temple where there were male and female temple prostitutes. This also seemed to be an attraction for the people of Judah.

As said before, the Judean people succumbed to the material and idolatrous culture of Canaan. Dearman (1992:89) argues that the surge of Neo–Assyria propelled the Judean people to be accused of their apostasy regarding the Yahwistic faith in order to seek material benefit and security.

The influence of Canaanite culture is revealed through archaeological discovery, which has revealed a considerable number of female figures from the 8th and 7th centuries BC, most of which are the terra-cotta "pillar figurine" models (Dearman 1992:89). The sheer frequency with which female figurines appear in the material culture of Judah - especially in the 8th and 7th centuries BC - reflects a society deeply concerned about human fertility and the fruitfulness of the land (Dearman 1992:89).

At the time of the divine call, Yahweh informed Jeremiah that idol worship was the main reason for God's judgement against Judah (Jer. 1:16). In this regard, the tragedy of the exile was indeed a self-incurred danger to the people of Judah (Dearman 2002:41). Jeremiah reconfirmed that the capitulation to the Babylon was the result of the people's idolatrous practices (Jer. 44:10). The people of Judah practiced all kinds of idol worship in the hope that they might obtain fertility and material blessings, but they reaped total destruction. It was a real tragedy for the people of Judah that they succumbed to the dominant culture of idol worship of the Philistines.

Developing an idea by Roberts (1978:111-26), Robbins (1996a:86-89; 1996b:167-70) identified five major modes of culture pertaining to world in which Jeremiah lived, in order to help modern people to understand that culture, namely *dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, contraculture* and *liminal culture*. His identifications are as follows:

4.6.1 Dominant culture

A *dominant culture* is a system of attitudes, values, dispositions and norms supported by social structures that are vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial

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region (Robbins 1996a:86). *Dominant cultures* are either indigenous or conquering cultures (Robbins 1996b:168).

4.6.2 Sub-culture

The term *sub-culture* refers to the cultural patterns of a subsociety which contains both sexes, all ages, as well as family groups, and which parallels the larger society in that it provides for a network of groups and institutions extending throughout the individual's entire life cycle (Gordon 1970:155; Robbins 1993:447).

4.6.3 Counterculture

A *counterculture* is an alternative miniculture that provides a constructive image of a better way of life (Roberts 1978:114; Robbins 1996b:169).

4.6.4 Contraculture

A *contraculture* is a short-lived, counter-dependent cultural deviance. *Countercultures* are groups that do not involve more than one generation, which do not elaborate a set of institutions that allow the group to be relatively autonomous and self-sufficient, and which do not sustain an individual over an entire life span (Robersts 1978:113, 124; Robbins 1993:451).

4.6.5 Liminal culture

A *liminal culture* is at the outer edge of identity (Bhabha 1992:444; Robbins 1996b:170). In some instances, a *liminal culture* will appear as people or groups going through transition from one cultural identity to another. In other instances, a *liminal culture* exists among individuals and groups that have never been able to establish a clear social and cultural identity in their setting (Robbins 1996a:88).

After presenting these five cultural modes, Robbins (1996a:86-89; 1996b:167-70) applies them to the New Testament period. According to Robbins, the Gospel in the early New Testament period was *contracultural* to Jewish Pharisees but *sub-cultural* to the contemporary Greek-Roman culture. He concludes that the Gospel was received favourably by the Mediterranean society.

When applying these modes to the time of Jeremiah, it becomes clear that Jeremiah's ministry of destruction and building up can be understood as the call of *counterculture* from Yahweh to establish His kingdom in the land of Israel.

The Canaanite culture was that of fecundity, productivity, success and pleasure. This seemed attractive to the people of Israel. There was a serious problem, however, in that the Canaanite culture was also very lecherous (Lev. 18:24-30) and idolatrous (1 Ki 16:29-33). Yahweh did not want the people of Israel to be assimilated into the Canaanite culture. The people of Israel had to be separate from a culture such as this. They had to plant and spread Yahwistic culture instead.

The people of Israel, however, succumbed to the temptations and became idolaters, and Israel was destroyed as a result of it (2 Ki 17:7-18). However, the people of Judah did not learn a lesson from

this experience, but deteriorated rapidly. Jeremiah was called at this stage. He was given the ministry of tearing down and building up. It was a call to destroy all the idolatrous elements and to build the counterculture of Yahwism. But the people of Judah failed to do so.

4.7 Conclusion

The rise of the *writing prophets* was a by-product of special social, religious, economic, cultural and political situations from the 8th century BC onwards in the history of Israel and Judah. In other words, the *writing prophets* emerged during times when the people of Judah experienced crises. The writing prophets differed from their contemporaries in terms of politics, economics, social and cultural understanding as well as religion, and Jeremiah was a typical prophet in this regard.

As mentioned earlier, the prophet Jeremiah experienced a severe struggle with some members of his audience. Some members of his audience were supporters of Jeremiah. His supporters included priests, court officials, scribes, prophets and the people of Judah. Those who had migrated from northern Israel to southern Israel after the fall of Samaria in 722 BC, also seemed to be proponents of Jeremiah's message of doom.

Jeremiah must have caused much controversy at the time, as he had some strong antagonists. These antagonists were composed of various circles of the Judean society of the time: prophets, priests, court officials, scribes, the people of the land, some people from Jeremiah's hometown and even his relatives. Some of them even tried to kill him.

The difference between Jeremiah and his opponents was not a mere theological difference that separated the prophet from his contemporaries *per se*. The struggle developed from the differences

related to Jeremiah's social and political outlook, as well as from the differences between his concept of religion and that of his audience. The political difference will be discussed in next chapter, dealing with the ideological texture. The prophetic struggle was actually a product of the intricate social, economic and political environment of the time.

This prophetic struggle is not difficult for us to understand, because social, political and religious concerns of the people at that time show similarities to and are applicable to modern civilisation. In fact, human nature is always and everywhere the same. Today's culture can be epitomised as "Do whatever you like" or "Get what you want, whatever the cost". This attitude can be observed everywhere in the world today.

In other words, this is not a new attitude; we can also detect the trend to "do whatever you like" among the people in the Judean society in the time of Jeremiah. The people of Judah tried to get what they wanted: prosperity, blessing and security. In order to get what they wanted, they believed that they had to pay the price of abandoning Yahweh, the Spring of the Living Water (Jer. 2:13). However, as a result of their attitude, what they got, was exactly the opposite, namely total destruction. The people of Judah in the time of Jeremiah, in fact, did not realise that the Lord is sufficient for all the needs of his people and that there is self-incurred danger in worshiping other powers (Dearman 2002:41).

People's folly in seeking answers from other powers has recurred throughout human history. As observed above, contemporary Koreans also reveal such an attitude. They are seeking to have their longings met and are in danger of losing their sense of social justice and morality. That is why Jeremiah's strong message against the idolatry needs to be heard by the contemporary Korean people.

In this regard, Scott's conviction that the spiritual and moral messages of the prophets are still relevant because they have a universal and timeless quality, is noteworthy:

> The epigram which describes them as "forthtellers rather than foretellers" makes a useful if not a completely accurate distinction. They did make predictions, but these often were only incidental to their message. Their relevance today is therefore not that they foresaw the course of events in the modern world. They do not speak of our age but to it, because our age also is critical and the issues at stake are spiritual and moral. If we can see beyond the local and temporal setting of their Word as spoken to men of that ancient world, we shall find that it is spoken to us too (Scott 1968:14-15).

Jeremiah's warning against his contemporaries' idolatrous practices for material blessing and security should be heard throughout the generations, because people's hunger for happiness and material blessing is intrinsically part of human nature. Jeremiah's message is relevant to any generation, unless people abandon their covetousness. Because covetousness is an innate problem of all people, the prophetic message has eternal relevancy and significance. Contemporary Korean people, too, should listen to Jeremiah, because they are also succumbing to materialism at any cost. If Jeremiah lived in Korea today, he would definitely criticise the Korean people's coveting of material blessing at all costs.

On the other hand, the Korean shamanistic understanding of the prophetic call can make a large contribution to the proper interpretation of it. We feel that western scholars have a tendency to rationalise the prophetic phenomena and to deny the existence of ecstatic elements in them to a

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large degree. Some of them attempt to understand Israelite prophecy without referring to ecstasy. Jepsen (1934), Robinson(1953), Heschel (1962), Eppstein (1969:287-304), Rabbe (1976:126) and Parker (1978:271-85) are proponents of this view.

There is, however, another view, namely that all prophets, including those in Israel, shared the same ecstatic and visionary experiences (Hölscher 1914). Nevertheless, no one among the proponents of the latter view has provided a satisfactory explanation of the relationship between the seemingly "irrational" ecstatic nature of prophecy and the coherent, theologically-sophisticated, sometimes highly structured oracles of the Israelite writing prophets, as R. Wilson (1980:5-8) points out.

Among the scholars who acknowledge the indications of ecstasy among the writing prophets there is a tendency to distinguish between the ecstatic experience and the proclamation of the word of Yahweh (Kaufmann 1938:511-30; Haran 1977:385-97). In other words, most western scholars consider the revelatory visionary experience of the prophets as "irrational", "ecstatic", "out of mind", "hallucinative" and "in rave", etc, while they regard the prophetic oracle of the word of Yahweh as "rational", "logic", "sober" and "enlightened" (Haran 1977:385-97). Even if western scholars admit the existence of ecstatic elements in the writing prophets, they consider it as marginal or as used calumniously and mockingly (Parker 1978:271-85). To sum up, western scholars reveal a general tendency to regard *visionary* as synonymous with *unintelligent* or *ecstatic* and as *having no relation to prophecy*.

We believe that the western tendency of rationalisation of all the prophetic phenomena is too narrow to understand them rightly. The prophetic phenomenon contains transcendental elements. The divine contact with God is in the realm of mystery, namely beyond human conception. Human (pure) reason cannot understand *Ding an Sich*. This statement does not suggest agnosticism. It

means that human reason has its limits when it comes to understanding God and spiritual phenomena that occur in communication with Him. Inexpressible things can occur during the time of divine communion with God. We should be humble enough to admit the limitations of our reason.

At the same time, we feel that the assumption that the words of Yahweh proclaimed by prophets are rational *per se* and that comparison of the ecstatic visionary experience should be reconsidered. It is unreasonable to imagine that the prophets delivered the words of Yahweh just logically, without emotion, anointing, inspiration and pathos. The prophetic messages were indeed rational, logical and systematic. However, it cannot be denied that they were also emotive, passionate and awe-inspiring. For example, there are clear indications in Jer. 4:19, 23:9, etc. that some prophets delivered oracles while in a state of ecstasy as R. Wilson (1980:7-8) points out. Both elements (i.e. rational and ecstatic, or logical and emotive) should be treasured equally. It seems biased to think that spiritual experience is inferior to rational message. The western scholars' dichotomous consideration that visionary things are unintelligible and that the words of prophets only are intelligible should be revised, because the visionary also contains intelligible things, and the prophetic word contains emotive passion too.

In addition, right understanding of the spiritual experience of the prophet is indispensable in understanding the message and ministry of the prophet. Because of its importance, the prophets allowed space to describe their prophetic calls in their books. According to Jer. 1, Jeremiah had visionary and auditory experiences. Jeremiah heard Yahweh's proclamation that he was chosen, set apart and appointed as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5) and he saw two visions (Jer. 1:11-14). Both must have been ecstatic experiences.

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It seems, however, that Jeremiah was in a sober state during this ecstatic encounter with Yahweh. He first refused God's offer indirectly by reasoning that he was too young to carry out such a big task. Later, Jeremiah was asked what he was looking at. He responded correctly when he said that he was looking at an almond tree (Jer. 1:11). God's commendation seems to indicate that Jeremiah had full consciousness at the time. It is, therefore, extreme to think that all the ecstatic phenomena were revealed in a state of altered consciousness. Jeremiah was indeed not only ecstatic (Jer. 1: 6), but also very logical (Jer. 1:6) and had full use of his intellect (Jer. 1:11) at the time of the divine call.

The western way of thinking that the visionary is ecstatic, implying a lack of saneness, needs to be counterbalanced. The Western tendency to criticise the view that admits ecstatic elements, is in need of correction. In this regard, we think that the Korean shamanistic understanding can help western scholars to realise that revelatory and ecstatic elements are part of the contact with the divine.

It is time to develop a balanced view on the spiritual experience, which has been ignored for a long time by western scholars. The result of ignorance has been a dry and impracticable proposition regarding the prophetic literature, which in fact, reveals dynamic interaction between God, the prophets and their audiences. It is, therefore necessary to return to the right track to see the rich, complex prophetic texts as they are. They indeed contain ecstatic visionary elements as well as logical arguments.

If the western way of thinking has an inherent problem with reconciling reason and emotion, word and spiritual experience, and logical argument and visionary revelation, it is in urgent need of replacing this way of thinking with the alternative mindset which is appreciative of the spiritual

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dynamics. This is why we present the example of the Koreans who are appreciative of the spiritual experience which the shamans might have.

For the prophet Jeremiah, the prophetic call was a real turning point. It is quite certain that he might have not taken on such a difficult task without that visionary experience. The ecstatic experience at the time of the call eventually overcame his reluctance, so that he could carry out the mission. At the same time, it is very likely that the visionary experience became a sustaining power whenever he faced hardship.

In his complaint, Jeremiah says that Yahweh overpowered him and prevailed (Jer. 20:7). Whenever he tried to stop quoting Yahweh and stopped proclaiming messages of violence and destruction because of the insults and reproaches of his audience, he seemed to have been persuaded to continue his task (Jer. 20:8-9). The reason why he could continue, came from his conviction that his persecutors would stumble and not be able to prevail because Yahweh, like a mighty warrior, was with him (Jer. 20:11). This conviction, in fact, was a reminder of the promise in the time of the call (Jer. 1:8, 19). It is, therefore, quite possible that Jeremiah regained his confidence by remembering the promise that Yahweh would be with him (Jer. 1:19) whenever he was tempted to abandon the prophetic task.

To summarise, Jeremiah's revelatory ecstasy at the time of the call was the impetus and motivation to carry out Yahweh's mission. It is undoubtedly a defective way of thinking to disregard the reality and the importance of the revelatory ecstatic experience of the prophets in prophetic texts.

Chapter 5 Ideological texture

5.1 Introduction

In the last days of Judah society was too complex to be analysed according to a narrow concept of religion. The social, economic and political problems and phenomena should not all be interpreted under the rubric of the theological struggle between Yahwism and Baalism or between reformists and anti-reformists at that stage.

The struggle between Jeremiah and his contemporaries was not a result of the theological difference *per se*. There was a huge gap between Jeremiah and his audience in terms of politics, too. The importance of the political perspectives of Jeremiah and his contemporaries should not be ruled out in our attempts to understand the struggle between Jeremiah and his audience.

If we disregard the political element in the prophetic struggle with his contemporaries, we will make the mistake of identifying an obvious political problem with a religious one. It is quite certain that all the Yahwists did not all have the same political agenda.

There was a strong possibility of different political views among the people who had common belief systems, such as Yahwism and Baalism. Among Baalists, some possibly were pro-Babylonians while others were anti-Babylonians (or pro-Egyptians). It is quite possible that some Yahwists were pro-Babylonians, others pro-Egyptians and the rest autonomists.

According to Long (1982:31), the autonomists comprised a group that opposed those who advocated co-existence with Babylon or Egypt, at that particular time (Long 1982: 31). For the

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autonomists, diplomatic tactics were not important; Yahwistic faith, however was important for the security of the nation. It is very likely that there were many people among the Yahwists of that time who had such a radical faith. It seems that their basis of faith originated from Zion theology[25], which had been derived from Yahweh's presence in Zion and his unconditional guarantee of protection for the city of God (i.e., Jerusalem).

In fact, there was a great division among the princes, priests, prophets, political leaders and the people of the land of Judah, as a result of the differences in outlook with regard to diplomatic matters at that time. We can detect such a division among Jeremiah's contemporaries throughout the book of Jeremiah. It is quite necessary, therefore, that the political aspect should be investigated thoroughly. A study of Jeremiah will be incomplete without investigating this aspect.

5.2 Definition

The definition of the term ideology is too divergent for a brief explanation. Reflecting on the history of the term *ideology* shows that the term has been used very divergently since it was coined by the philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy at the time of the French Revolution as a short name for what he called his *science of ideas*. In fact, it was since used in a laudatory way (by De Tracy), abusively (by Napoleon) and pejoratively (by Marx).

Destutt de Tracy and his fellow ideologues devised a system of national education that they believed would transform France into a rational and scientific society. Their teaching combined a fervent belief in individual liberty with an elaborate programme of state planning, and it became the

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[25] VanGemeren (1990:56) says that popular expectations held on to the promises of God's presence, the inviolability of Jerusalem, and the perpetuity of God's promises to David, that is, the theology of Zion. According to Levenson (1992:1098-1102) the theology of Zion contains three elements: enthronement after victory, the election of Zion and David and visions of peace. See also Strong (1997:1314-21) and Levenson (1985:89-114).

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official doctrine of the French Republic for a short time, under the Directory (1795-99) [Cranston 1974:828].

Napoleon Bonaparte at first supported Destutt de Tracy and his friends, but he soon turned against them, and he even imputed France's military defeats to their influence. Since then the term *ideology* has always had connotations of invective and accusation (Carroll 1990:309).

According to Karl Marx, *ideology* is a set of beliefs with which people deceive themselves; it is a theory that expresses what people are led to think, as opposed to that which is true, and it is false consciousness and distortion (Cranston 1974:829; Carroll 1993:81). Marx regarded an ideology as a distorting system of beliefs. This perspective is well expressed in *The German Ideology* (1963:14) as follows:

> *In all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in*
>
> *a camera obscura . . . (it consists of) . . . the phantoms formed in the*
>
> *human brain, sublimates of their material life-precession.*

Ideology in this sense is identified with illusion, fantasy and false consciousness (Cronin 1987:14-15). Marx was convinced that there was a distinction between science and truth on the one hand, and ideology on the other. Those who consider *ideology* as a term describing false beliefs or distortion, are therefore all influenced by Marx' thought, whether they are Marxists or non-Marxists (Carroll 1995:25-28).

For example, Karl Mannheim spoke in the same vein as Marx when he said that ideologies are the product of the social structure. According to Mannheim, all idea systems have a class basis and a

class bias. Mannheim, however, envisaged the possibility of a classless group of intellectuals. He had a vision of a small elite of superior minds rising above the myths of ordinary society. He reserved the term *ideology* for idea systems that are more or less conservative, and the term *utopia* for idea systems of a more revolutionary or millenarian nature (Cranston 1974:830; Mannheim 1936).

Mannheim even regarded the term *ideology* as pejorative when it was used in terms of the prophetic literature in Old Testament when he argued that the age-old cognition of "false consciousness" was of religious origin and appeared as a problem whenever the genuineness of a prophet's inspiration or vision was questioned, either by his people or by himself (Mannheim 1936:62).

Some biblical scholars also use *ideology* in the more pejorative sense of "false consciousness". For example, Brueggemann (1988b:11) understands *ideology* as *vested interest which is passed off as truth, partial truth which counterfeits as whole truth, theological claim functioning as a mode of social control*.

As a term for a system of ideas providing a framework for perceiving social reality and generating practical concerns, *ideology*, however, is not necessarily a pejorative term – it could describe the ideas forming any world-view which moves people to action or it could even be confined to a set of ideas peculiar to one person (Carroll 1990:309).

For a clear definition of the term *ideology* David Clines (1995:9-11) enumerates several good examples of its denotation and connotation[26], and then defines it as a relatively coherent set of ideas amounting to a world-view, or outlook on life or a set of such ideas special to a particular social class or group.

Within this ideological texture, we would like to narrow down the definition of the term *ideology* even further than Clines and confine the term ideology to its relationship with politics. Carroll took such a position. He quotes Seliger's remark as follows:

> What defines the inclusive use of 'ideology' in the context of social and political theory and science is that it covers sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given order (Carroll 1996:18).

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[26] According to Clines (1995:9-11), among the **denotations** of the term *ideology* are: 1). a more or less connected group of ideas; 2). a relatively coherent set of ideas amounting to a world-view, or outlook on life; 3) a set of such ideas specific to a particular social class or group; 4) the set of ideas held by the dominant group in a society.

According to him, among the *connotations* of the term *ideology* are: 1). ideas that are shared with others; 2). ideas serving the interests of a particular group, especially a dominant group; 3). ideas that are wrongly passed off as natural, obvious or commonsensical; 4). ideas that are assumed rather than argued for; 5). ideas that are often unexpressed and unrecognised by those who hold them; 6). ideas oriented toward action, ideas controlling or influencing actions; 7). a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence; 8). false ideas; 9). ideas, different from our own, that other people have; 10). rationalistic or metaphysical ideas, as distinct from practical politics; 11). a romantic view of the world, idolising the ideal and scorning the actual; 12). a totalitarian attitude; 13). a pseudo-scientific attitude to history and social realities. Clines's definition is a result of combininig denotations 2) and 3) which were introduced above.

We accept Seliger's definition of *ideology* as our preferred choice, because in this definition, ideology is linked to politics, as ideology is action-oriented and requires politics as its mode of implementation, as Carroll commented (Carroll 1996:18). We do not agree with Clines who uses both terms interchangeably (more correctly, he uses the term *ideology* in a more general sense and then regards *theology* as one of its subsets (Clines 1995: 13). The theological aspect will be dealt with in the section on sacred texture.

To summarise, the term *ideology* is defined as *sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organised social action, and specifically political action.*

5.3 Ideological studies of the Old Testament

The interpretation of the Bible as an ideological system is a quite recent development in biblical studies. Gottwald (1979, 1985 and 1993) is regarded as a pioneer in the development of ideological criticism as a biblical method of interpretation (Yee 1999:535).

According to Carroll, Meir Sternberg (1985) is also a very important figure in developing ideological studies to the Old Testament. In his book *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, Sternberg treats the Hebrew Bible as ideologically singular, that is, the world view projected and the rhetoric used to project it, belong together; representation cannot be dissociated from evaluation (Sternberg 1985:37). Here the biblical (or to be precise, the biblical writers) world of ideas (i.e. their ideology) is detectable from the modes of narrative presentation, though ambiguity and complexity can render the biblical text difficult to read (Carroll 1990:310). Close readings by the readers will make the teasing quality of the narrative readable and enable the readers to detect the ideological voices and

grasp the meaning of the text in relation to ideological stances (Sternberg 1985:190-229; Brueggemann 1997:111).

It is true that the writers of the Hebrew Bible themselves had an ideological motivation when they wrote biblical texts (Garbini 1988:2-3, 14, 174). The notion of the ideological construction of the Hebrew Bible was first proposed by Morton Smith (1971) and was later explored by Giovanni Garbini (1988).

Even though Smith's work had an important influence on Gottwald, these two scholars' works have not been received well by the guild of biblical scholars (Carroll 1990:310). Carroll's comment indicates that the ideological studies of the Hebrew Bible are still in an inchoate stage.

We long for speedy maturation of ideological criticism in the soil of Old Testament studies, because we strongly believe that its interdisciplinary utilisation of historical, social-scientific, and literary methods makes ideological criticism a more inclusive method, offering exciting possibilities for biblical studies, as Yee has suggested (Yee 1999:537).

In this regard, the publication of *Semeia* 59, under the title of *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, was a milestone for ideological studies of biblical literature. In this area, Jobling and Pippen deliberately provided many and diverse contributions dealing with ideological issues (Jobling and Pippen 1992:vii). It was actually an invitation for current biblical scholars to apply ideological criticism to their work. We believe that many will respond positively to it and contribute to develop ideological criticism in its fullest sense over the coming decades.

5.4 Method of ideological analysis of the biblical text

In its broadest sense, ideological criticism examines ideology at work in three variables of biblical interpretation: the author, the text, and the reader. It, namely, investigates (1) the production of the text by a particular author in a specific, ideologically-charged historical context, (2) the reproduction of ideology in the text itself, and (3) the consumption of the text by readers in different social locations who are themselves motivated and constrained by distinct ideologies. In other words, ideological critics have a twofold task in their investigation: an extrinsic and an intrinsic analysis (Yee 1999:535).

In an *intrinsic analysis*, the ideological critic takes up literary critical methods to examine how the text assimilates or encodes socioeconomic conditions to reproduce a particular ideology in its rhetoric (Yee 1999:536).

We do not agree with the view that the texts do not have ideologies, but meanings (Clines 1995: fn. 17; Fowl 1995:15-34). Clines further says that writers might also not have ideologies (Clines 1995:fn. 17). It does not sound reasonable to say this, because it would be impossible to extract the ideology from the texts if they did not contain ideology or if the writers did not adhere to an ideology. Biblical texts are ideological scripts (Fiorenza 1988:5). Biblical texts are, of course, theological scripts as well. The interpreters of biblical scripts, therefore, should also investigate the ideological elements of such texts, as Fiorenza (1988:15; 1989:12) suggests.

The texts, however, are the secondary subject of ideological analysis, being simply the object of people's writing and reading (Robbins 1996a:95). The issue is the social, cultural, and individual location and perspective of writers and readers. Ideological analysis of any text, then, is simply an

agreement among various people that they will have dialogue and will disagree with one another, with a text as a guest in the conversation (Robbins 1996a:95).

According to Robbins (1996a:95), ideology not only resides in biblical texts, but also in the authoritative traditions and intellectual discourse. For Robbins, investigations of the ideological texture of biblical texts configure the interplay between some mode of authority and the creation of needs enacted by the discourse in the text, and some mode of authority and the creation of needs in modern or post-modern intellectual discourse.

On the one hand, the discourse in texts evokes literary, historical, social, cultural, rhetorical, ideological, aesthetic and theological modes of inquiry, discussion and interpretation. On the other hand, modern and post-modern intellectual discourse advances disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, eclectic, empirical, theoretical, constructive and deconstructive modes of analysis and interpretation.

To summarise the suggestion by Robbins, ideological interpretation features the interplay between the selection of a particular ideology to enact intellectual dimensions evoked by the biblical text and the selection of particular intellectual modes of discourse to enact the ideological dimensions of the interpretation (Robbins 1996b:213-15).

Robbins described this process as "reciprocal interaction" between the ideological texture of the particular mode of interpretation and the intellectual texture – be it anthropological, historical, literary, sociological, aesthetic or theological – of the ideological interpretation (Robbins 1996b:214-15).

In addition, Robbins referred to one last extrinsic domain of analysis: the author (or implied author). Here the focus of investigation is the investigation of the author's own ideology, comparing it with the ideologies of the time and noting the author's agreement with or challenge to the dominant ideology (Dever 1990:123; Berlinerblau 1993:3-26; Yee 1999:535-36). The focus of analysis is the analysis of the spectrum of social and cultural data the (implied) author of the text builds into the language of the text (Robbins 1991a:305-32; 1996a:111).

Carroll (1995:28) offered a similar suggestion. He considers that the texts contain traces of ideology. He then elaborates his consideration as follows:

> *That is, they have the ideological traces of the writers who live in an ideologically-constructed world (e.g. the worlds of humans and of gods where communication is set up between the two worlds by means of slaughtered animals or a world where human beings communicate by means of the Internet) and they are read by readers who have their own ideological traces from the world(s) in which they live.*

Carroll calls his method of investigation *Ideologiekritik*, and says that the task of *Ideologiekritik*, as applied to the Bible, is to scrutinise both sets of ideological traces and to analyse critically all the ideological factors at play in any and every reading of the Bible (Carroll 1995:25-43).

We regard Carroll's proposition to call for interaction between the texts, writers and readers as very pertinent one to the study of the ideological texts, and as resembling Robbins's suggestion. We will be applying Robbins's helpful suggestion for scrutinising the ideological aspects in the book of

Jeremiah, especially in the context of the divine call, in the section on the *ideological texture of Jeremiah 1.*

5.5   Ideological trends in pre-exilic Judah

The prophetic activity entered a new phase from the 8th century BC onwards to the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 BC. Before the 8th century BC, the prophets confined themselves to attacking individual abuses and proclaiming disaster to individuals, above all to the king; they comprehensively challenged the state of society as a whole thereafter (Albertz 1994:159).

The change began with the so-called classical prophets (Silver 1983:123). The magnitude of this prophetic revolution is well observed by Kaufmann:

> *The idea that God dooms a whole society for moral corruption is not altogether absent [in the earlier literature], but ... whenever God's judgment falls upon the nations specific gross sins are the cause: murder, sexual immorality, oppression of strangers, inhuman cruelty ... Violation of everyday social morality – perversion of justice, bribe-taking, exploitation of the poor, and the like – are never mentioned. These are regarded as "venial sins", subject to the regular process of God's judgment and his individual providence. Classical prophecy radically alters this view; it threatens national doom and exile for everyday sins (1960:355-56).*

This new, radical phase of prophetic activity is connected with a critical historical development, with a long-term social crisis which, from the 8th century BC onwards, imperceptibly led to the collapse of Judean society, and with a contemporary political crisis which was sparked off by the westward expansion of the neo-Assyrian kingdom (Albertz 1994:159).

The books of the Kings (i.e. 1 and 2 Kings) and the Chronicles (i.e. 1 and 2 Chronicles) in the Old Testament provide the religious, social and political circumstances in pre-exilic Judah, along with the prophetic books, including the book of Jeremiah.

During this period, there were some important turning points. The first was related to the upsurge and decline of Assyria. The influence of Assyria on Judah was enormous. As mentioned elsewhere, Judah's religious syncretism and pluralism was deeply affected by Assyrian religious practices.

Such religious syncretism and internal religious pluralism not only continued in the 7th century BC, but even intensified; towards the end of the century Jeremiah could accuse the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom of turning trustingly in their private distress to wood and stone, i.e. to alien (images of) gods, and only appealing to Yahweh for salvation in national catastrophes (Jer. 2:2, 28a; Albertz 1994:187-88).

Judah was heavily influenced by Assyrian power politically, too. Assyrian political power decisively influenced Judah's political system. Northern Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 BC. Since the capitulation of Israel, the politics of Judah was directed at the survival of the nation. Judah became a vassal to Assyrian kings for most of the time while Assyria was strong.

There was a time, however, when Judah rebelled against Assyria. After the death of Sargon II, in 705 BC, Hezekiah rebelled against Sennacherib, who once was his vassal lord. Sennacherib sent his punitive forces to Jerusalem. However, Hezekiah and the people of Judah were miraculously delivered from the Assyrian armies (Isa. 37:36-38; 2 Ki. 19:35-37). This incident eventually became legendary for the people of Judah. Many of them came to believe in God's presence in the temple and the invincibility of Jerusalem (Zion theology[27]).

The last days of Judah can be regarded as a period of political controversy. The kings of Judah had to decide on which of the super powers they could lean. The existence of Zion theology made it more difficult for the political leaders in Judah to exercise their political options. In other words, the political leaders had to not only contend each other but also persuade apolitical radicals who considered that *faith in Yahweh* would be sufficient for the survival of the nation.

Another turning point relates to king Josiah. At the time when Josiah became king of Judah, the Assyrians successively lost control of their vassals and provinces in Palestine. At that time, Egypt and the neo-Babylonian empire were fighting each other in order to occupy the vacuum. Josiah did not want to lose this chance for a new political beginning. Joshiah asserted some Judean independence and sought to recover some of the lost territories of the old kingdom of David in the North (Birch *et al.* 1999:321). Josiah also executed a reform according to the book of the Law, which was found while repairing the temple. His reformation work was ended before long because of his death at Megiddo in 609 BC (2 Ki. 23:28-30). His sudden death was an omen of Judah's dark future.

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[27] For Zion theology, see fn. 25.

Another important turning point was the rise of the neo-Babylonian empire, which was deeply related to the vicissitudes of Assyria and the rule of Josiah. Because these last turning points are profoundly related to Jeremiah's ministry, we will deal with them in detail in the next section.

5.6 Ideological texture of Jeremiah 1

5.6.1 Background (Jer. 1:1-3)

The superscription of the book of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1-3) introduces the political background (Jer. 1:2-3) with a very brief introduction concerning the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1). It gives background to the ideological texture of Jeremiah 1. Through it, we obtain information about when Jeremiah began to have a personal experience of the word of the Lord and who the kings of Judah were while Jeremiah was receiving of the word of the Lord.

Three important kings of the last days of Judah are mentioned: Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Josiah was very pious king. His political stance was pro-Babylon. Jehoiakim was an evil king in terms of Yahwistic religion (2 Ki. 23:37). His political leaning was anti-Babylon (more exactly pro-Egypt). Zedekiah was a very ambiguous figure who could not be easily figured out. He was an evil king before the Lord (2 Ki. 24:19). He had a relatively good relationship with Jeremiah, however, and had at least once asked Je`remiah's advice on political tactics (Jer. 37:17), and had once sent his delegates to Jeremiah in order to ask for his intercession (Jer. 21:1-2). He was, however, a very weak king and succumbed to pressure (cf. Jer. 38:5) from his subjects and could not but rebel against Babylon in the long run. The cost was the collapse of the kingdom of Judah.

During this time of political controversy, the political strategies prevalent in Judean society were pro-Babylon, pro-Egyptian, and autonomistic[28]. King Josiah followed a pro-Babylon policy. According to 2 Ki. 21:24, the people of the land made Josiah king of Judah after killing the servants who had assassinated his predecessor, Amon. According to Albertz (1994:201), the people of the land could be regarded as a middle class among the land-owning farmers of Judah who became politically active.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king (2 Ki. 22:1). In the eighth year of his reign, when he was a youth of only sixteen years old, he began to seek the God of his father David (2 Ch. 34:3), and in the twelfth year of his reign he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images (2 Ch. 34:3). Then, in the eighteenth year of his reign, the temple was repaired, the scroll found, and he carried out his famous reform (2 Ki. 22:3-23:23 and 2 Ch. 34:8-35:19).

Along with the reform, he made step-by-step moves involving the gradual assertion of independence from Assyria (Wilcoxen 1977:156). His political maneuver of "anti-Assyria" and "pro-Babylon" did not seem to be controversial during his reign, because his religious reforms and his personal devotion to Yahweh were looked on favourably by the people. His ambitious reformation was suddenly brought to an end by his untimely death (2 Ki. 23:28-30).

The death of Josiah marks a deep division in the political and religious history of Israel (Albertz 1994:232). The people of the land took Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, and anointed him and made him king in the place of his father (2 Ki. 23:30). His rule, however, did not last long. He reigned for just

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[28] Long (1981:45-47). Craigie defines Long's third party as pro-independence party. According to Craigie (1991:xlvii), Zedekiah's reign (597-587) was a time of turbulent political intrigue in Judah, with pro-Egyptian, pro-Babylonian, and pro-independence parties jockeying for position.

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three months (2 Ki. 23:31), because Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath so that he might not reign in Jerusalem made Eliakim, son of Josiah, king in the place of his father Josiah, and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim (2 Ki. 23:33-34). Jehoahaz was younger than Jehoiakim, and Jehoiakim seemed to take revenge when Jehoiakim taxed the land and exacted silver and gold from the people of the land who chose Jehoahaz as their king instead of him (2 Ki. 23:35).

Wilcoxen (1977:151-66) has proposed that Jehoahaz was the political choice of the people of the land. According to Wilcoxen, the people of the land were those who supported Josiah's reform and policy. He also thinks that Jehoahaz belonged to a group who supported Josiah's reform. Josiah had two wives: Jehoiakim was the son of Zebidah, daughter of Pedaiah (2 Ki. 23:36), and Jehoahaz and Zedekiah were the sons of Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah (2 Ki. 23:31; 24:18). Wilcoxen thinks that Josiah's reform was simultaneous with the time when Hamutal bore Jehoahaz, and he insists that Josiah's reform was related to his second marriage with Hamutal. He concludes that Jehoahaz and the people of Judah were pro-reform, and Jehoiakim and the princes of Judah were anti-reform.

Wilcoxen's assumption does not seem convincing, because Hamutal's two sons, Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, were evil before Yahweh (2 Ki. 23:32; 24:19). It does not seem as if Jehoahaz carried out his father's unfinished work of reformation according to the Law of the Lord. We posit that the reform effort was finished when Josiah died. It is certain, however, that the political controversy between "pro-Babylon" and "pro-Egypt" still existed at that time.

In addition, there was the group who believed that a pure faith in Yahweh would guarantee the nation's security and welfare. For this group, the way to salvation was not to be found through political tactics, but in the restoration of Yahwistic faith. The group can be described as *autonomists*

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in that they refused to use any diplomatic tactics. According to Albertz (1994:233-34), the majority of the priests in Jerusalem and some prophets belonged to this group. Such priests and prophets seemed to encourage the people of Judah by stressing that the presence of Yahweh on Zion (Zion Theology) was a reassuring guarantee of salvation (Jer. 7:4).

Jeremiah, however, did not belong to this group. It is true that Jeremiah emphasised a purified Yahwistic faith. He did not, however, ignore the necessity of using wise political tactics. Moreover, Jeremiah castigated the priests and prophets for their lies (Jer. 7:4). He further announced that Yahweh would make the temple in Jerusalem like Shiloh and the city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth (Jer. 26:6). Jeremiah's temple sermon was delivered early in the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah (Jer. 26:1). It indicates that a false sense of security was very prevalent among the people of Judah and even among many religious leaders of that time.

In this regard, we think that Zion theology became political (i.e. ideological) rather than theological in the time of Jeremiah. We do not deny that Zion theology has theological elements. We signify that the sense of "false consciousness" of security, however, has an ideological element. In other words, an ideological nature had crept into Zion theology and became predominant at the time of Jeremiah. The people of Judah had a false sense of security in assuming that the existence of the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem at that time ensured the impregnability of Jerusalem. They seemed to be convinced that Yahweh's promise of His presence in the temple was unconditional; God would be with them no matter what.

It seemed that there was no alternative way of thinking. Zion theology thus became ideology, if such a situation prevailed at the time.

Because of this, *ideology* can be defined as *a closed mindset*. It refuses to listen to an alternative way of thinking. In fact, the Judean people did not listen to Jeremiah's alternative message. Instead, they were very furious with Jeremiah as a result of their closed minds.

As we mentioned already, the core of Jeremiah's ministry was *to tear down* and *to rebuild* (Jer. 1:10). Six infinitive verbs (*to uproot, to tear down, to destroy, to overthrow, to build* and *to plant*) occur without objects. It raises a question for the audience: "To tear down what?" The possible answer could be: *to tear down false consciousness of security.*

Jeremiah's famous "temple sermon" seemed to have been an effort to tear down false belief among the people of Judah. It was also to indict the religious leaders who were misleading the Judean people into a false sense of security. The priests and prophets were delivering the message that the Jerusalem temple was the temple of the Lord. In Jer. 7:4, the phrase *This is the temple of the Lord* appears three times. Such repetition seems to indicate that the exaggerated attempts by the priests and the prophets in order to convince the people of Judah. Jeremiah's indictment was that such a pronouncement was false (i.e. a lie). The religious leaders were doing it for a political (i.e. ideological) reason.

According to a broad definition by John Thompson (1990:7) *ideology* can be seen as *the meaning in the service of power*. Thompson further elaborates his definition as follows:

> *Hence the study of ideology requires us to investigate the ways in*
> *which meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of*
> *various kinds, from everyday linguistic utterances to complex images*
> *and texts; it requires us to investigate the social contexts within which*

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symbolic forms are employed and deployed; and it calls upon us to

ask whether, and if so how, the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms

serves, in specific contexts, to establish and sustain relations of

domination. The distinctiveness of the study of ideology lies in the

latter question: it calls upon us to ask whether the meaning

constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms serves, or does not serve,

to maintain systematically asymmetrical relations of power. It calls

upon us to study symbolic forms in a certain light: in the light of the

structured social relations which their employment or deployment

may serve, in specific circumstances, to create, nourish, support and

reproduce (Thompson 1990:7).

Thompson's concept of ideology as quoted above, is very noteworthy in understanding Jeremiah's ministry. Thompson's concept evokes in us a political (i.e. ideological) question: *Cui bono*? Jeremiah seemed to be keenly aware of the motivation of religious leaders at that time. From Jeremiah's perspective, these religious leaders were doing their job not for Yahweh, nor for the Judean people, but for their own benefits. It is no wonder that Jeremiah so severely indicted his contemporary religious leaders.

The political controversy grew more intense when Zedekiah ruled Judah. According to Long (1981:45-47), a group of princes, who at least wanted to offer strong resistance to the Babylonians, might have upheld a general tradition of protecting national autonomy at all costs. There seemed to be severe controversies among the "pro-Babylon", "pro-Egyptian" and "autonomous" groups about Judah's political future at the time.

The dispute between Jeremiah and Hananiah occurred at that time (Jer. 28). Hananiah counselled that the exile (the first deportation) would be short, that the Babylonian power would be short-lived, and that all the exiles would return within two years (Jer. 28:2-4). Jeremiah delivered a different prophecy, namely that serving Babylon would be inevitable (Jer. 28:14). The two prophets, therefore, supported opposing political options in the kingdom. Long says that the matter seemed not to be just that two prophets opposed one another on a specific theological issue, but that they were part of a larger struggle between the "autonomistic" group and the "co-existence" ("pro-Babylon" or "pro-Egypt") group (Long 1981:45-47).

The ambivalent attitude of Zedekiah seems to indicate that the political controversy in the very court of the king was overwhelming at the time. Dutcher-Walls says that Zedekiah's ambiguity stemmed from his personality or resulted from the political game played by his subjects (Dutcher-Walls 1991:77-94). However, it is more likely that both elements were combined. Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon after all, and he and the people of Judah eventually came to experience the dire result. The ministry of Jeremiah was continued until the demise of the kingdom of Judah (Jer. 1:3).

5.6.2 The prophetic call (Jer. 1:4-19)

As mentioned elsewhere, Jeremiah's prophetic ministry of judgment and salvation was given at the time of the divine call (Jer. 1:10). For this enormous task as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5-9), Yahweh had prepared this divine contact with Jeremiah from before his birth (Jer. 1:5). At the moment of divine revelation, Yahweh lets Jeremiah know Judah's political future (Jer. 1:13-16). Yahweh also lets Jeremiah see two visions: the branch of the almond tree (Jer. 1:11) and a boiling pot, tilting away from the north (Jer. 1:13). These two visions were followed by interpretations of their meanings.

The second vision is related to the political context at the time of Jeremiah's ministry. The disaster from the north would soon fall upon the land of Judah. The nation that would strike the fatal blow upon the people of Judah, was not identified at that moment. This reticence seemed to have the rhetorical purpose of capturing the attention of the audience.

Jeremiah came to perceive the impending doom of the people of the land through the revelation. His authority came from this experience of divine revelation. In fact, the prophet's function and authority comes from the revelatory experience and his acceptance (or rejection) by the people (Overholt 1977:129-50).

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry was deeply involved with the political issues at that time. He boldly counselled the people of the land to surrender to Babylon, a nation from the north. He often ardently criticised and opposed the Judean kings' anti-Babylon policy. Kings in the Ancient Near East were regarded as earthly representatives of the divine. Kingship in Judah was sacral kingship, too. It is not easy to understand the political activity of a prophet who audaciously counselled and opposed God's anointed.

For an explanation of prophetic involvement in (secular) political matters, scholars have recorded diverse opinions. Paul de Lagrade (1903:224) portrayed the Israelite prophets as ardent patriots. Hugo Winckler (1903:171ff.) regarded the Israelite prophets as political agents who ran the errands of foreign powers: Isaiah got his instructions from Nineveh, and Jeremiah acted on orders from Babylon. Both views are too extreme to gain support among the majority of biblical scholars.

Morris Silver (1983:126, 162-63) saw the Israelite prophets as intellectuals and social reformers. For Silver, the classical prophets were intellectual idealists who sought to commit rulers to

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programmes of social amelioration and regeneration, but whose efforts resulted in unanticipated disastrous outcomes. Max Weber, E. Troeltsch and Bertil Albrektson took a similar view that the prophets' politics had an *utopian* character (Troeltsch 1916:1ff; Weber 1921:1ff; Albrektson 1972:45-56).

We suggest that the Judean prophets were not utopians, but realists who were keenly aware of social, political and religious situations which they understood correctly. The reason why the prophets had correct understanding, politically as well as religiously, came from their experience of Yahweh's revelation at the time of the divine communication. This opinion was raised by Karl Elliger a long time ago in 1935 (Elliger 1935:3ff.). We think that his opinion is reasonable.

Jeremiah's experience of the revelation seems to endorse Elliger's assumption. As a result of the revelation, Jeremiah revealed a more accurate political reading than any other political leaders at that time (Jer. 1:13-16). Jeremiah played a very unique role as a prophet. He emphasised the Yahwistic faith while at the same time advising a "pro-Babylon" stance as an inevitable choice for his nation. He can, therefore, be described as "Yahwistic pro-Babylon".

5.6.3 Ideological study of Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah 1 provides rich soil for ideological investigation. Robbins (1996a:113-15; 1996b:195) suggests five steps for exploring the text for a broader understanding of the ideological nature of the text itself.

The first step is *to define the system of differentiations*. Yahweh set apart Jeremiah and appointed him a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5). The root of הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיךָ ('I set you apart') has the meaning of

separation, or *distinction*. A קָדֹשׁ ('holy', or 'holy thing') is a thing separated from a *secular* (or *worldly*) thing.[29] Jeremiah became a distinctive person because of the divine consecration.

The second step is *to articulate the types of objectives*. The aim of the recording the divine call was to give the audience proof of the authenticity of Jeremiah's prophetic calling, God's deep involvement in human affairs and the urgency of God's impending judgement.

The third step is *to identify the means for bringing these relationships into being*. The dominant means of exchange between Yahweh and Jeremiah was that of question and answer[30]. The means of exchange between Jeremiah and his audience was Jeremiah's testimony to them[31].

The fourth step is *to identify the forms of institutionalisation of power*. God set apart and appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5). As a token of the institutionalisation of the prophetic work, God reached out his hand, touched Jeremiah's mouth and put his words in his mouth (Jer. 1:9).

The last step is *to analyse the degree of rationalisation of the power relations*. Jeremiah uses the metaphor of the iron wall (Jer. 1:18). This hyperbolic use of the metaphor was deliberately chosen to convince the audience that they could not overcome Jeremiah and that it was better, therefore, to listen to him.

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[29] In this regard, the people of Israel too had been holy to Yahweh (Jer. 2:3). They in fact deteriorated from sacred to worldly.

[30] It was typical in the case of Jeremiah in that Yahweh first raised questions and the prophet responded to those questions in the prophetic call (Jer. 1:11-14). In most cases at the time of the divine call, Yahweh responded to the questions that were raised. The examples are Moses (Ex. 3:13-14) and Gideon (Jdg. 6:13-18. Here the first question was raised by Gideon) and Isaiah (Isa. 6:11-12. In this case, Yahweh's indirect question to Isaiah was made in advance in 6:8).

[31] He testifies repeatedly in Jer. 1:4, 11 and 13 that the word of Yahweh came upon him.

After the preliminary (intrinsic) analysis of the ideological text, Robbins suggests investigation of the social location of the implied author. The model correlates the rhetorical strategies of the implied author/reader, narrator/narratee and character/audience with the social arenas of previous events, natural environment and resources, population structure, technology, socialization and personality, culture, foreign affairs, belief systems and ideologies and political-military-legal system (Robbins 1991a:305-32; 1996a:111-12). All arenas that Robbins suggests do not fit the study of Jeremiah 1. For example, the arenas of natural environment and resources, population structure, political-military-legal system and technology are excluded in this study because they do not seem to have any relevance with the context of Jeremiah 1.

The following are our application of Robbins's suggestion in investigating the correlation between Jeremiah and his audience in the social arenas of previous events, culture, foreign affairs, belief systems and ideologies in the context of Jeremiah 1.

There was a considerable struggle between Jeremiah and his audience in terms of politics. The people of Judah remembered a miraculous deliverance from the hand of the Assyrian king at the time of Hezekiah. The memory of the earlier event in the time of Hezekiah gave some people the idea that Yahweh would deliver them miraculously from the hand of the Babylonian king too.

On the other hand, the prophet Jeremiah tried to remind his audience of the wilderness experience of their fathers in the immediate context of the prophetic call (Jer. 2:1-4:4). These passages indict the nation for its sin and infidelity. Recalling the previous event in the wilderness, Jeremiah assured that Yahweh's righteous judgment upon the unfaithful Judean people was inevitable. The Judean people refused to listen to Jeremiah who judged Judah's past critically.

Three types of ideology with regard to political matters were prevalent at the time of Jeremiah as mentioned elsewhere: "pro-Babylon", "pro-Egypt" and "autonomistic". Each had its supporters. According to Robbins's identification (1996a:101), each group was likely a faction. Dutcher-Walls and Burke Long hold a similar view to Robbins (Dutcher-Walls 1991:77-94; Long 1981:31-53).

A *faction* is a coalition of persons (followers) recruited personally according to structurally diverse principles, by or on behalf of, a person in conflict with another person or persons, with whom he or she was formerly united, over honour and/or control over resources (Robbins 1996a:101). Rivalry is basic to the existence of a faction, for a faction supports a person engaged in competition for honour or resources (Robbins 1996a:101). The conflict here was of a political nature and the conflict seemed to continue among these factions (i.e. "pro-Babylon", "pro-Egypt" and "autonomistic" parties) until the demise of the Judean kingdom.

In the maelstrom of the political dispute, Jeremiah proclaimed that there was no other way besides surrendering to Babylon. He, however, was not "pro-Babylon" *per se*, as mentioned before. It was his political option merely. When Nebuzaradan offered a free choice to Jeremiah, Jeremiah did not choose to go to Babylon (Jer. 40). His main concern was the restoration of Yahwistic faith among the people of Judah. As Jeremiah predicted, the Babylonians destroyed the land of Judah. The people must have realised that Jeremiah was right after they had witnessed the capitulation of Judah and Jerusalem in 587 BC. It was too late, however, to reverse her fortune.

In addition to the political differences, there were quite possibly some differences between Jeremiah and his contemporaries regarding other matters. For example, Jeremiah probably delivered the message that the people of Judah would experience Yahweh's chastisement because of their idol worship (Jer. 16). Later, Jeremiah would find out that the people's opinion on this matter differed

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from his own (Jer. 44:17-18). The people of the land believed that they were perishing because they had stopped worshiping idols. Their opinion of idol worship was diametrically opposed to Jeremiah's opinion. In other words, Jeremiah considered that the reason of the catastrophic disaster of the nation was due to his contemporaries' apostate idolatry whereas his contemporaries considered the reason was due to their not worshiping idols.

The issue of idolatry that is evident as an issue between Jeremiah and the people of the land, will be discussed in the section on sacred texture, because it is part of the theological issue. It is true that there are similarities between theological elements and ideological elements. It is quite certain, however, that there are distinguishing elements between them. As indicated in the term *theology*, a relation in terms of the divine being and spiritual things is implied. Many theological issues that are related to the text and context of Jer. 1, will be discussed in the section on sacred texture.

5.7 Conclusion

Patricia Dutcher-Walls's poignant argument is that there were political disputes among the elite in the late pre-exilic Judah. She thinks that mere acknowledgement of the Deuteronomistic tradition is not enough to understand the book of Jeremiah. Due consideration of the ideological, i.e. politically different, opinions among the elite, even in the king's palace, is very necessary to the study (Dutcher-Walls 1991:77-94).

According to Dutcher-Walls, the Deuteronomistic history has been widely understood as a "unified and self-contained whole" (Noth 1981:6, Dutcher-Walls 1991:78). Dutcher-Walls focuses her study on 2 Ki. 22-23, and Jer. 26, 29, 36-38. She took the view that 2 Ki. 22-23 is historically-based Deuteronomistic compositions. She introduces scholars' identification of Deuteronomists as "rural

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Levites" (von Rad 1966:25), "roforming priests" (Clements 1965:301), "a prophetic circle" (Nicholson 1967:69) and "a scribal school" (Weinfeld 1972a:161) and says that each of these proposals holds that Deuteronomistic history was the product of a single professional interest group.

Dutcher-Walls, then, considers that such assumptions do not make sense sociologically. She argues that the distinct lack of agreement among scholars on the location of the Deuteronomists indicates the limitations of a methodology that examines biblical texts without sociological understanding. She proposes, therefore, that a model of the social stratification and political culture of monarchic Israel will allow a better understanding of where in that social structure the Deuteronomists might have been located. She considers that the membership of the Deuteronomistic group was diverse.

In other words, the Deuteronomists were a mixed coalition of prophets, priests, political elites, scribes, gentry and the people of the land, instead one exclusive specific group, according to Dutcher-Walls. She strongly insists, then, that choosing only one group is to overlook the social reality of political structures and factional struggles in agrarian societies in antiquity. And she further suggests that this mixed group represented the supporters of Josiah's reformation and probably favoured "pro-Babylon" tactics.

Dutcher-Walls continues by saying that this group was unsuccessful in promoting its political programme, since Jehoiakim and Zedekiah did not listen to them. She posits that both kings were swayed into rebellion against Babylon by the nationalistic faction and thus brought Babylon's destructive wrath down on Judah. She also believes that the membership of each faction cut across the various social groupings and roles that made up the highest class of society of the day. According to Dutcher-Walls, both these factions had diverse membership, and had different political agendas. She provokingly argues that the political struggle between them should not be

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understood as that of one faction of priests versus prophets, or gentry versus the king's officials but the political struggle between a political party that were comprised of people of all social standings and another political party that were composed of people of all social standings too.

To summarise the assumption by Dutcher-Walls, it can be said that her work is heavily influenced by Weinfeld's idea of a "Deuteronomic school". Weinfeld (1972a:7) describes the course of the formation and historical development of the Deuteronomic school in the following manner:

1. the book of Deuteronomy, composed in the latter half of the seventh century BC;

2. the deuteronomic edition of Joshua-Kings, which received its fixed form in the first half of the sixth century;

3. the deuteronomic prose sermons in Jeremiah, which were apparently composed during the second half of the sixth century (Weinfeld 1972a:7).

Dutcher-Walls, however, differs from Weinfeld[32] in that she suggests that the Deuteronomistic group was a mixed group not coming from a particular circle such as priestly circle, a prophetic circle, etc.

We do not agree with Dutcher-Walls in all respects, because we feel that this "pro-Babylon" faction is not necessarily identical with the Deuteronomists. We do not know whether the Deuteronomist

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[32] Lemche (1988:171) is also opposed to Weinfeld's view that the Deuteronomists could not have been priests of ancient Israelite origins (i.e. Levites) but pupils of the scribal schools. Weinfeld suggests that the Deuteronomists are to be seen among the administrative strata in Jerusalem. However, Lemche insists that Weinfeld's view seems unconvincing by assuming that there was no contradiction between the priesthood and the administrative strata; in all likelihood, both groups combined their efforts on behalf of the programme of cult centralization. From there, Lemche finds a reason for the failure of Josianic reformation: the reformation was confined to the elite groups.

group had in fact existed alongside the priests, prophets, scribes and the political leaders in the pre-exilic period. Dutcher-Walls's argument, however, is really noteworthty in that it promoted an understanding of the social and political situation at the time. As Long (1981:32-33) incisively points out, the social, non-theological dimensions of the prophets' conflicts should not be overlooked as most theology-centred scholarly discussion is focued on them.

To summarise, we have studied Jeremiah's ministry from the ideological (i.e. political in its narrow sense) perspective. The focus of his ministry of tearing down was twofold. His ministry of *tearing down* (Jer. 1:10) was aimed at the leaders of the land, first of all. The religious leaders were preaching a deceptive notion of Yahweh's presence in the Jerusalem temple (Zion theology). By doing it, the priests and the prophets were maintaining their privileged status in the pre-exilic society in Judah. In other words, the religious leaders were carrying out their religious duties with a political motivation not a religious one. The political leaders were also beneficiaries of the claim of Yahweh's protection upon Zion, where their political headquarters were located. In fact, Zion was the citadel of power at the time.

According to Marx, an ideology involves masking the interests of a class or a group (Glover 1987: 43). One of Jeremiah's works of tearing down was likely to unmask the concealed political motivation from his contemporary religious leaders.

At the same time and secondly, Jeremiah's ministry of tearing down was seen as being against the people of Judah who were deceived and had come to have a false consciousness of security. By revelation, Jeremiah came to perceive that such a sense of security was wrong. He, therefore, tried to tear down the false sense of security that was prevalent in Judean society in that period. The

problem, however, was not a political problem *per se*. There were many theological problems, too, and these will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Sacred texture

6.1 Introduction

Thus far, we have studied the biblical text, especially with regard to the prophetic call in Jeremiah 1, according to the socio-rhetorical approach which Robbins suggested. It will not, however, suffice to finish the study unless we extract theological meaning from the biblical text.

In fact, the biblical storyteller, as well as the biblical poet, attributes the great events that happened in Israel, to God (Longman 1987:69). They intended to interpret that history in the light of the reality of God and His interaction with the world (Longman 1987:69). It is necessary, therefore, to consider the Bible from a theological angle for a better understanding of the text.

Robbins (1996a:120) begins his section of sacred texture by mentioning that the readers of the biblical text (he actually mentions the New Testament) are interested in finding insights into the nature of the relation between human life and the divine. He further mentions that these readers are interested in locating the ways the text speaks about God or talks about realms of religious life. According to Robbins, theological reading of the biblical texts by the biblical readers has a long history.

Robbins seems to point out the sacred nature of the biblical text. At the same time, he seems to emphasise the fact that theological reading of sacred text is natural and usual. For Robbins, sacred texture is to seek the divine in a biblical text. For him, sacred texture is nothing but a theological texture. We accept his definition of sacred texture and are going to apply his programmatic suggestions to explore the sacred (i.e. theological) nature of the sacred (i.e. theological) text.

Robbins (1996a: 4) suggests many possible areas to be consulted with this texture in mind. According to him, sacred texture exists in communication about God or gods, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community and ethics. He examines these eight categories in order to search for theological aspects of a text. Analysis of sacred texture is a way of systematically probing dynamics across a spectrum of relationships between the human and the divine.

Robbins's eight categories can be divided into three parts: the divine, the human, and the interaction between the divine and the human. God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels and demons belong to the realm of the divine. On the other hand, human commitment, religious community and ethics correspond to the realm of the human. In the mean time, divine history and human redemption are results of interaction between the divine and the human. In other words, the divine history is a record of what God did for humans and how mankind responded to Him, and human redemption occurs when people accept what God did for them. Robbins's suggested categories will be individually discussed later.

We think that Robbins's sacred texture is the weakest texture from the textures that he suggests for the following reasons. Firstly, he does not give any detailed explanation of how the sacred text is related to other textures when he says that sacred texture is deeply interrelated with the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, and ideological texture of a text (Robbins 1996a:130). In other words, Robbins just assumes that sacred texture is related to other textures, without providing examples for his assumption. Moreover, we consider that his intention to find a theological meaning by interacting with other texts can cause confusion and can make it difficult to identify a text, instead. Secondly, although he suggests eight lists as we have mentioned, he does not consider how the theology of the text of those characters has functioned in the believing community (S. Lee

2002:11). Lastly, since he suggests and interprets the eight categories in the context of the first century Mediterranean society and culture, and that of the first century New Testament Christian community, it becomes an issue whether it is appropriate to apply his categories to Old Testament prophetic study.

From his eight categories *Spirit Being* will be excluded here, because it has no nexus to the context of the prophetic call in Jer. 1. For the listing of *Holy Person*, Robbins thinks that the holy person *par excellence* is Jesus, the Christ. Even though Robbins admits that priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes have a status that associates them with holy things or holy ways, he does not discuss those characters in this section. We will discuss the topic separately, in the section dealing with *religious community*. In other words, we are going to include individuals when discussing the religious community of that time. The rest of the lists that Robbins suggests will be discussed one by one.

6.2 Sacred texture in Jeremiah 1

In the prophetic call, Yahweh informed Jeremiah that disaster would be poured out on all who lived in the land (Jer 1:14). Jeremiah immediately began to deliver this shocking message of doom to the people of Judah. The message of impending calamity must have caused considerable controversy at the time.

Many questions and arguments seem to have arisen in the community. Possible questions were: *Is Jeremiah insane, or not?*, *How can it happen to the faithful?*, *Is Yahweh righteous if He allows this disaster?*, *What did we do wrong to receive such a punishment?*, *Did Yahweh really abandon us?*, *Is there any qualified nation to chastise the covenant nation?*, etc.

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It seems quite certain that there was much conceptual misunderstanding of the theological concepts at the time. Most likely there was confusion with regard to ideas about the deity, people themselves and the Gentiles. The focus of our investigation will be the theological confusion that Jeremiah's contemporaries most likely had.

6.2.1 Religious community

Robbins's (1996a:120) first suggested category in searching for religious aspects of a text was *deity*. Generally speaking, it seems right to start with the divine being in *Sacred Texture*. However, we feel it reasonable to discuss the religious community first before discussing the divine being. As the superscription (Jer. 1:1-3) makes mention of, the people of Jerusalem went into exile in 586 BC, during the time of Jeremiah's ministry. It was not an ordinary happening. It meant the total demise of the Judean kingdom. It was Yahweh's ultimate step to punish His people for breaking their covenantal relationship with Him. Without such a pre-understanding, the people of Judah might easily blame Yahweh for what happened to them. By dealing with the religious community at that time first, we can avoid an unnecessary wrong impression about what Yahweh did, and also understand Yahweh's providence more clearly. That is why we are dealing with the religious community first. The people of the land in the time of Jeremiah were the root cause of the ultimate disaster.

6.2.1.1 The people of the land are whores

Jer 1:16 clearly indicates that the reason of the impending disaster was the idolatrous practice of the apostate people of the land[33]. Idolatry was very prevalent at the time, as we have already seen elsewhere.

6.2.1.1.1 Idolatry

An idol is a physical representation of a deity, generally used as an object of worship, though idols and images were used in a variety of ways throughout the ancient Near East (Curtis 1992:376-81).

The Israelite views on images and idol worship are clearly stated in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:3-6). This prohibition of images and idol worship is repeated throughout the Old Testament. The prophets' strong condemnation and contempt are clearly indicative of the fact that idolatry was a constant problem in Judean society.

Tigay (1986), however, does not think that the problem of idolatry continued throughout Israel's history. Instead, he argues that the worship of other gods and goddesses was, in fact, rather rare and that Israel was essentially monolatrous throughout. He further believes that it is unlikely that many Israelites worshipped gods other than Yahweh after the United Monarchy, and perhaps even earlier (Tigay 1986:37-41). He concludes that it is unimaginable that there existed a significant degree of polytheistic practice in Israel (Tigay 1986:36).

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[33] The phrase עם הארץ ('the people of the land') appears in Jer. 1:18. It is a general term denoting the common Judahite population, not a class designation (Nicholson 1965:65, McKane 1986:23, Lundbom 1999:245, *pace* von Rad 1953:60-66, Bright 1965). In other words, it means everyone. The term כל-יֹשבי הארץ ('all the inhabitants of the land') in Jer. 1:14 also has a similar catch-all function.

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Tigay's assumption seems to be too extreme and unconvincing. Rather, it seems very likely that the worship of other deities was quite frequent throughout the Judean history, if we follow the evidence of the Old Testament, as Day (2000:226) has suggested.

The problem of idolatry, in fact, was a serious problem in the time of Jeremiah, as we have pointed out elsewhere. In this regard, Day's thesis (2000: 226-33) that the Israelites' idolatrous practice became less frequent after Josiah's reformation, and that Israel's monotheism was fully established in the post-exilic era, seems to be problematic too. According to Day, Josiah's reformation in 621 BC was a significant factor in the decline of the Canaanite deities and the enforcement of monolatry. It is true that Josiah abolished the high places, removed Baal, Asherah and human sacrifice associated with the god Molech, the sun and other astral deities, as depicted in 2 Ki. 23.

However, we think that Josiah's reform did not change the Judean people's propensity for idolatry. Idol worship remained a big problem after the death of Josiah. Jeremiah identified people's apostasy as an act of forsaking the Living Water (Jer 2:13). This forsaking of the Living Water is a metaphor for people's folly. Yahweh alone is the source of life and blessing. Because they abandoned this Source, the Judean people could not but experience death eventually.

In other words, Jeremiah's theological point was that Yahweh alone could give life and blessing. From Jeremiah's point of view, the people's tendency to forsake Yahweh and to worship idols was very foolish and fatal. In spite of Jeremiah's vigorous warning, idolatrous practices remained in Judah until the fall of Jerusalem under the Babylonians. The catastrophic demise of the Judean kingdom was due to Yahweh's chastisement of Judah's idolatry (Jer 1:16).

6.2.1.1.2 Harlotry

The cause of Yahweh's chastising through warfare between the people of Judah and foes from the north was the idol worship practised by the Judean people (Jer. 1:14-16). Idolatry was a serious crime before Yahweh. Its seriousness can be seen in Jeremiah 2 – 3, where the theme of idolatry is elaborated. There, Judah's idolatry is depicted in the terms of a marital relationship between Yahweh and the people of Judah.

The marriage metaphor seems to have been intentionally chosen by the prophet because it is this metaphor that expresses, more than any other, the mutual relationship between God and His people, and because there is no other metaphor so revealing of the broken relationship between God and human-beings (Stienstra 1993:15).

Stienstra assumes that the marriage metaphor reflects a kind of universal metaphor which comprises certain basic universal metaphorical concepts that all people will easily recognise. This author further posits that such universal metaphors in the Old Testament can be understood by modern readers, if properly explained, because it expresses something that is inherent in human nature (Stienstra 1993:40).

Stienstra sees the relationship between Yahweh and His people, which is structured by means of the marriage metaphor, basically as a broken relationship (Stienstra 1993:70). It is pertinent to say that marriage becomes a theological lens for understanding God and Israel. Yahweh is portrayed as the husband who takes Israel (or Jerusalem and Samaria) as His wife (Perdue 1997:230).

Hosea appears to have been the first to depict Yahweh as husband and Israel as bride, and to describe Israel's infidelity as "adultery" and so to develop the marriage analogy fully. It is generally admitted that Hosea's use of the marriage analogy is the source of its reappearance in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and perhaps also in Proverbs (Hugenberger 1994:295).

The focus of our study will be the Jeremianic passages which deal with Judah's treacherous behaviour in terms of a marriage relationship. According to Ortlund (1996), there are three important passages in the book of Jeremiah regarding the matter of the spiritual harlotry of the people of Judah: Jer. 2, 3 and 13:20-27. Our study will be confined to Jer. 2 and 3 which provide the immediate context of the prophetic call (Jer. 1).

Jeremiah seemed to intensify the seriousness of the people's unfaithful behaviour by describing it as "whoredom". In the book of Hosea, the wife (the people of Israel) was an adulteress, but in the book of Jeremiah, she was a prostitute, a whore, a slut (Weems 1995:55). The idea that Yahweh is the husband of the people of Judah is clearly declared in Jer. 3:14 (cf. Jer. 31:32). Their idolatry was, therefore, an act of whoredom with regard to their spiritual husband, Yahweh.

The first encounter with the marriage metaphor in the book of Jeremiah appears in Jer. 2. This chapter begins in the form of a regretful recollection by Yahweh of the happiness He once enjoyed with His bride:

> *And it was the word of Yahweh to me, saying, Go and proclaim in the*
>
> *ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says Yahweh, I remember the*
>
> *devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me*
>
> *through the desert, through a land not sown (Jer. 2:2).*

In this passage, the prophet recalls, for the people of God of his generation, their original purity and privilege. However, the implication of the passage is that those happy days are gone (Stienstra 1993:162). The present people of God have squandered it for the sake of worthless alternatives (Jer. 2:1-19, Ortlund 1996:83). The act of idolatry is recognized as an act of adultery and prostitution, as Jer. 3:6 and 9:1 (MT) make it clear (Ryken 1998:539; Hugengerger 1994:290).

In Jer. 2:20 the prophet exposes the long-standing and widely practiced extent of their apostasy:

Indeed, long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off your bonds;

now you say "I will not serve" indeed on every high hill and under

every leafy tree you lay down like a whore!

Here, Israel is compared with a stubborn, restless animal breaking out of its yoke and harness to run free. The yoke and bonds are the moral requirements entailed in the covenant which seem to Israel more like chains and slavery than like meaningful and wise disciplines, worthy of her glad compliance (Ortlund 1996:83-84).

Israel defiantly calls out, "*I will not serve*". The covenant people have become confused about liberation and servitude (Lundbom 1999:277). Renouncing allegiance to Yahweh and throwing off all restraint, Israel ventures forth into the libertine excesses of a degraded whore (Ortlund 1996:83-84). The phrase "*Under every leafy tree*" occurs also in Jer. 3:6, 13 and 17:2, albeit with variations. Fertility rites involving sexual activities on the part of the worshippers, were carried out on the hills, and it seemed to be particularly popular in the days of Jeremiah.

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Ortlund considers the unusual expression , אֵת צֹעֶה זֹנָה ('you bow down as a prostitute'), as a play on words. He suggests that the verb, which denotes the act of bending over, was intentionally chosen, instead of the word חוה ('to bow down deeply'), which is normally used for reverent prostration. The point is that Israel bows down, or bends over in worship at pagan shrines, and at the same time engages in harlotry (Ortlund 1996:85). Carroll (1986:130) points out that the word *bow down*, as used here, is an obscene word. He comments that the reader's imagination will serve better than a translation.

In Jer. 2:23-25 the people of Judah are compared to a young camel and a wild ass. For them, a word of warning is given:

> *Keep your feet from going bare, and your throat from thirst* (Jer.
> 2:25a).

It sounds like an encouragement not to engage upon a perilous undertaking, as Stienstra assumes (Stienstra 1993:164). But the reply is:

> *No, It is hopeless! For I love strangers and after them I will go* (Jer
> 2:25b).

With Yahweh's comment in Jer. 2:22, that the sin of the people of Judah was indelible, the reply serves well to indicate that the spiritual and moral condition at the time was really hopeless.

In Jer 3:1-5, Yahweh poses a rhetorical question so that the people of Judah may realise that there would be no chance of restoring the marital relationship with Yahweh. Then Yahweh urges the

people of Judah to repent of their whorish behaviour. It is noteworthy to pay attention to the time when this oracle was given: it was the time of king Josiah (Jer 3:6).

The people of Judah seemed to pretend to repent when Josiah carried out the reformation according to the book of the law that had been found. In the midst of the reformation, however, their adulterous behaviour seemed to continue. Their whorish behaviour did not change even though they witnessed how their sister Israel was destroyed by Yahweh because of her adultery (i.e. spiritual harlotry).

In this regard, the sins of the people of Judah were worse than those of the people of northern Israel. Adultery is described as *a mortal sin* (Dt. 22:22-27). However, the Judean people regarded adultery as a casual matter, according to Jer 3:9. Not only did Judah follow Israel's example in spite of the warning screamed out by the exiles, she also thought little of doing so. She trivialised her moral character. As a result, the last virgin territory preserving spiritual integrity in this world was finally polluted with the defiling worship of sticks and stones (Ortlund 1996:95).

The time frame is very important for understanding of Jeremiah's ministry. Jeremiah's prophetic work seems to have begun immediately after he had received the revelation in the time of Josiah (Jer 1:2). This gives us a clue as to when Jeremiah began to deliver the message of judgement. According to Jer. 3:6, it is very likely that Jeremiah already perceived that the harlotrous practice of the people of Judah was prevalent even in the time of Josiah. While Josiah was alive, Jeremiah very likely came to know that Josiah's reformation could not change people's adulterous behaviour. It does not seem, therefore, that Jeremiah delivered the message of hope during the reign of Josiah and changed his message into that of judgement after the death of Josiah.

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It is our conclusion, therefore, that Jeremiah's initial message was that of judgement, not that of salvation. In other words, Jeremiah very likely delivered the message of judgement to the people of Judah, from the beginning of his ministry. He had to begin the ministry of tearing down all the false hopes of the nation because the people of Judah were not changing at all, in spite of Josiah's ambitious reform. The message of hope would only be given to the people of Judah after all false notions of security had been fully torn down.

The idea of Yahweh as the husband of the people of Judah is clearly declared in Jer 3:14 (cf. Jer 31:32). Their idolatry was an act of whoredom in the face of their spiritual husband, Yahweh. As the result of their adulterous behaviour, the people of Judah had to be shamed and disgraced (Jer. 3:25). The people of Judah experienced what they deserved, indeed.

In this regard, the message concerning Yahweh's chastisement upon Judah's idol worship in Jer. 1:16 is elaborated in Jer. 2-3. The prophet constructed his rhetoric not only to draw a direct parallel between Judah's sin (shameless, loose behaviour) and her punishment (exposure and shaming), but also to insist that her punishment was reasonable and inescapable (Weems 1995:56). At the same time, the marriage metaphor used here has become an important rhetorical tool for defending God's reputation and for dealing with Israel's repeated questions about theodicy, suffering and the inscrutable ways of God (Weems 1995:65). The issue of theodicy will be discussed later.

6.2.1.2 The people of the land are covenantal failures

One of the main reasons why Yahweh became Judah's enemy, is that she broke her covenantal relationship with Him. Discussion of the covenant is relevant here because the covenantal

relationship gave rise to the false concepts of the people, which needed to be torn down and then to be built up again (Jer. 1:10; cf. Jer. 31:31-34).

6.2.1.2.1 Definition of covenant

Two realms of research have contributed to the clarification of the term ברית ('covenant'), namely etymological studies and comparative studies on the treaties and law codes of the Ancient Near East.

As a result of the etymological analysis[34], McConville (1997:747-55) has introduced various suggestions among scholars. According to him, Köhler (1956:3-24) suggested that the term *covenant* is related to *eating*, derived from *brh* I ('eat') because of the significance of the communion meal in some covenant ceremonies.

Other scholars have proposed a meaning from the root *brh* II, based on an Akkadian parallel. McConville (1997:747-55) pointed out that there have been three main attempts to explain the term with reference to Akkadian texts.

The first relates the term to the nominative *biritu*, meaning *clasp* or *fetter*, and thus referring to covenant essentially as a bond. Weinfeld (TDOT 2:253-79) is the main proponent of this idea.

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[34] Since Barr's criticism on the etymological study (1961), it is widely held that the etymological study has its limits. Barr criticized Kittel's overemphasis (TDNT, 1932-1977) upon words to the detriment of context and belief that the historical development of a term determines its current meaning (lexical fallacy). He also criticized a belief that a basic root meaning is to be found in all subsets (root fallacy). According to Osborne (1991:65-71), etymology is a cover term that encompasses both aspects. We think that McConville well knows the limited value of the etymological study. McConville also suggests comparative study on the Ancient Near East treaties in understanding the concept of *covenant*.

A second proposal was made by Noth (1967:108-17) who understands a covenant as an arrangement between two parties from the usage of the preposition *birit*, *between*, in the Akkadian Mari text.

The third option was proposed by Kutsch (1971:339-52). Finding a connection with the Akkadian *barû*, *see*, he maintained that it implies *select for a task, obligation*.

Convenient summaries, analyses and appraisals of these etymological arguments are also to be found in Weinfeld (1972; 1973:781-808), Barr (1977:23-33), and Nicholson (1986:94-103). According to Davidson (1989:324), none of the etymologies suggested carry total conviction, nor do they account satisfactorily for the linguistic peculiarities of ברית ('covenant') in the Old Testament, or for the wide range of usages of the word in the Old Testament. To summarise, each of these proposals has its merits and flaws at the same time.

Along with etymological studies, the treaties and law codes, especially the Hittite vassal treaties from the Ancient Near East, provide another kind of background for the discussion of the biblical covenant.

Drawing upon Hittite treaty documents, Mendenhall (1955) proposed the thesis that law, with its associated sanctions, and covenant were essentially religious in origin in Israel and that the closest analogy to the Decalogue and the Sinai covenant tradition was to be found in such Hittite suzerainty treaty texts[35] dating from *circa* 1400 to 1100 BC (Davidson 1989: 325).

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[35] McCarthy (1978 [1963]) examines Mendenhall's dependence upon the Hittite treaty model for the Sinai covenant tradition. He emphasises the extremely complex literary and traditio-historical problems involved in any analysis of Ex. 19-24 and argues that the Hittite treaty model was neither necessary nor illuminating for the understanding of the tradition. He thinks that the closest parallels to the treaty form are to be found in the book of Deuteronomy. According

McConville (1997:747) says that the analogy of the treaties helps to make the general points that Yahweh is Israel's suzerain and that the covenantal relationship demands a certain commitment from the people for its preservation. He further says that the covenant idea has a bilateral character in texts where they are conveyed in the form of a treaty, which agrees with Kutsch's view of covenant as an *obligation*. He then concludes that the point is relevant to the choice of the Hittite vassal treaty form as the closest model for the Old Testament covenantal texts, since it is the first suggestion that *covenant* in the Old Testament is regarded essentially as a relationship (McConville 1997:748).

It seems that McConville, along with Mendenhall (Mendenhall and Herion 1992:1179-1202) and Nicholson (1986), who understands *covenant* as the term describing the relationship between God and Israel, or as a certain theological theme or vision of God's relationship to Israel, emphasises the idea of "relationship", whereas Kutsch sees the idea of "obligation" as a core of the concept. To summarise, *covenant*, definition, is a bilateral relationship which demands mutual commitment (or obligation) between two parties.

6.2.1.2.2 Covenants in the Old Testament

Records of important events in Old Testament history are scattered throughout the Old Testament. Each of these events involved the establishment of a covenant. The ratification of covenants

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to McCarthy, this is the product of the theological reflection of circles who were politically aware of the language of international treaties, particularly

Assyrian treaty documents, and which flourished under the Hebrew monarchy. The strong links between Deuteronomy and the treaty form were further developed *inter alia* by Weinfeld (1977; 1973:781ff.). From this, Davidson (1989:334) concludes that Deuteronimic theology is covenant theology, and covenant theology set within a Mosaic Sinai mould.

Although some oppose Mendenhall's dependence upon the Hittite treaty model for the Sinai covenant tradition, they also do not deny that aspects of the Sinai tradition were old and that they contained the covenant concept.

occurred in the time of Noah, Abraham, Moses (Sinai) and David. The account of the creation (Dumbrell 1984)[36] and the New Covenant can be included along with them here.

As shown in the definition above, the diverse biblical covenants have common features: they all require bilateral commitment: Yahweh's promissory blessings upon His people and obligatory commitment from His people. There is no consensus among the scholars on the issue of whether Yahweh's promises are conditional or not.

McComiskey (1985:15-93) thinks that the Abrahamic covenant is promissory as well as unconditional. For him, the Abrahamic covenant, along with the Davidic covenant, is promissory, while the rest of the covenants in the Old Testament are administrative. He posits that the Abrahamic covenant is eternal, no matter how the people of Israel respond to it.

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[36] Regarding covenants between God and his people, McConville traces the usage of the covenant in the Old Testament back to the Noahic covenant (McConville 1997:747-55). The Noahic covenant, however, seemed to be a reestablishment of the covenant with creation, as Dumbrell insists (Dumbrell 1984:20-33). Dumbrell observes that the verb הקים ('set up', 'erect' 'establish') is used in Gen 6:18 and 9:9. The Hebrew word usually related to the covenant is כרת ('cut'). He then argues that the verb is likely to denote *maintain*, or *confirm* what has already existed (Dumbrell 1984:25-26). He also observes that the command to Noah and his descendants (Ge. 9:1-2) is a reaffirmation of Ge. 1:28. From this observation, he concludes that the covenant with Noah is a renewal of the covenant with creation in Ge. 1-3 (Dumbrell 1984:33-39).

We think Dumbrell's argument, that any theology concerning the covenant must begin with Ge. 1:1, is worthy of note. For him, the account of creation is not the mere grounds of the covenant, the basis upon which a covenant with man can proceed (Dumbrell 1984:41). As he rightly argues, the world and man are part of one total divine construct and we cannot entertain the salvation of man in isolation from the world which he has affected (Dumbrell 1984:41). For this author, the refusal to submit in Eden meant a disordered universe and thus the restoration of all things will return God, man and the world in harmony again (Dumbrell 1984:41). According to him, all which progressively occurs in covenant theology in the Old Testament will be deducible from this basic relationship, and we shall have occasion to note the chain of connection which, having moved from creation to Noah, leads us from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Sinai, to David, to the Jeremianic new covenant (Dumbrell 1984:41). To summarise, Dumbrell emphasises the importance of the account of the creation and the nature of progression of the Old Testament covenants.

It would, however, have been better if Dumbrell had discussed the relationship between the account of the creation along with the wisdom literature while emphasising the importance of the creation account in the covenant theology. According to Zimmerli (1963:146-58), wisdom theology is nothing but creation theology. Zimmerli thinks that the command to be fruitful and to have dominion (Ge. 1:28) is the divine authorisation for the wisdom enterprise of going out to master the world. Westermann (1978:58-117), too, considers that the blessing of humanity in Ge. 1:28 is correlated with wisdom: *When Adam and Eve are commanded during creation to cultivate and maintain the garden, wisdom as a coming to terms with life is implied in this commission* (Cf. Murphy 1992:920-31).

In other words, McComiskey surmises that the Abrahamic covenant is unconditional because the Abrahamic covenant will exist for all the time, even though the people responded negatively. He seems to separate the covenant itself from the blessings that were promised in it. He also believes that the people need to obey, or they will not receive its benefits, but argues that the Abrahamic covenant exists forever, regardless of the people's response. He concludes that the Abrahamic covenant is unconditional in that regard. This is his interpretation of *unconditional* (McComiskey 1985:64-66). We do not agree with his understanding of the term *unconditional* because all the other covenants in the Old Testament could also be regarded as unconditional, if we accept his suggestion.

It is our understanding that the Abrahamic covenant has conditional elements as well as promissory elements. The Abrahamic covenant expects positive response from the people. For example: Yahweh anticipates Abraham leaving his hometown in order that he might be a blessing (Ge. 12:1-3). In other words, Abraham's obedience to Yahweh's command to go, was a pre-condition for receiving God's promise of blessing. Later, when God reestablished His covenant with Abraham, He also demanded from Abraham to walk before Him and to be blameless (Ge. 17:1). The promise of the offspring, including kingly descendents, and the land was given in that context (Ge. 17:2-8). It has to be admitted that the Abrahamic covenant is predominantly promissory, and the Mosaic covenant is mainly obligatory. However, the Mosaic covenant[37] definitely has elements of gracious promise, as the Abrahamic covenant has those of obligation.

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[37] When it comes to the Mosaic covenant (i.e. the Sinai covenant), Wellhausen (1885 [1883]) denies the antiquity of it. Nicholson (1986) furthers Wellhausen's idea by saying that the covenant concept emerged in the eighth/seventh centuries BC as a major break in Israelite religion from "natural bond" to a theological "moral commitment" and the key to the distinctiveness of Israel's faith over against the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern cultures.
Kitchen (1989:118-35) criticises Nicholson for espousing Wellhausen's view that Israel had some kind of "natural bond" religion until the eighth/seventh century BC is an illusion, that had arisen through Wellhausen's ignorance of what ancient religion was really like. According to Kitchen, no one had such a solely joyful, non-guilty "natural bond" religion in the Ancient Near East at any time.
Kitchen also criticises Nicholson's view that the covenant concept emerged in the eighth/seventh centuries BC. He provides a lot of extra-biblical evidence. According to Kitchen, that external evidence consists of West-Semitic *brt*

Before enacting the Sinai covenant, Yahweh reminded the people of Israel of His redemptive action for Israel (Ex. 19:4). The people of Israel must have remembered what Yahweh graciously did for them before receiving the Decalogue and enacting the Sinai covenant. The Sinai covenant thus presupposed Yahweh's gracious deliverance of the people of Israel and called for their voluntary obedience with grateful hearts.

Yahweh graciously forgave Israel's sin of idolatry (the Golden Calf, Ex. 32) and granted reenactment of the Sinai covenant (Ex. 34). There Yahweh's graciousness was again emphasised (Ex. 34:6-7). Without Yahweh's grace and forgiveness, the enactment of the Sinai covenant was impossible. The people of Israel had to keep Yahweh's commandments with thanksgiving.

It seems reasonable to suggest that all the biblical covenants had elements of obligation for both the receiver (the vassal or the people) and the giver (the Suzerain or Yahweh) as well as of promise for the giver (the Suzerain or Yahweh). In this regard, the covenant idea in the Old Testament is basically a bilateral agreement between the two parties.

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occurring as a loanword in Egypt in the thirteenth/twelfth centuries BC, in Ugaritic in the thirteenth century BC, and in peripheral Akkadian in Central Syria *circa* 1400 BC.

According to Kitchen, the term *brt* is used in its political sense of (vassal) treaty, possibly also as agreement/covenant, *circa* 1170 BC in Egypt. The term *brt* is also used in its socio-economic sense: (*hire*) *contract*, *circa* 1300/1290 BC in Egypt. Kitchen continues that the religious usage of the term *brt* also occurs in Ugarit (fourteenth/thirteenth century) treaties.

Kitchen says that this group of first-hand data exhibits the robust and well-established use of ברית ('covenant') in all spheres (religion/theology, social contexts, political realm) already, during the period *circa* 1400-1170 BC, the end of this period overlapping with the presence of Israel itself in Canaan from before 1207 BC onwards.

Kitchen then argues that this inescapable situation constitutes clear disproof that ברית ('covenant') had to wait until the eighth/seventh centuries BC to be used thus in West Semitic, Hebrew included. He then continues his argument that on this point, the Wellhausen-Nicholson position cannot now be sustained. He concludes that the full use of the term and concept runs from the later second millennium BC onwards. We think that Kitchen's conclusion from a considerable amount of extra-biblical evidence, is worthy of note.

6.2.1.2.3 The New Covenant

Robinson (2001:181-204), along with Jones (1992:400) and Holladay (1986:9), thinks that the New Covenant in Jer. 31:31-34 most likely reflects Jeremiah's authentic words, contrary to Nicholson (1973:71-75), Thiel (1973) and Carroll (1981), who regard it as a Deuteronomistic passage. Carroll (1986:613-14) even sees it as a post-Deuteronomic idea.

Robinson's suggestion is reasonable because the concept of the New Covenant matches Jeremiah's concept of Israel's religious traditions. As Dumbrell (1984:171) observes, the entirety of Israel's religious traditions, including traditions regarding the temple and land, is subject to careful evaluation. In his famous temple sermon in Jer. 7, Jeremiah condemned the whole cultic system of institutionalised worship. Jeremiah seemed to devote himself to eradicating all social, political, theological and all other possible misunderstandings and confusions which were prevalent at the time.

Jeremiah's task of eradication was an attempt to carry out the mission of uprooting, tearing down, destroying and overthrowing (Jer. 1:10). The concept of a covenant was also in need of realignment. It is likely that the New Covenant entailed Jeremiah's vision of building and planting after abolishing false concepts about the covenant (Jer. 1:10). Towards the end of Jer. 31 there is a promise that the city would never again be uprooted or overthrown (Jer. 31:40). Surely it is a reflection of Jer. 1:10. In this regard, Dumbrell's remark (1984:172) that we should not ignore the more fundamental reasons suggested by the prophetic call of Jeremiah in Jer. 1, in dealing with the New Covenant, is noteworthy. To abolish misconceptions about the covenant, was a prerequisite step for establishing the New Covenant.

And it is likely that the covenant that is referred to in Jer. 31:31-34 is the Mosaic (i.e. Sinai) covenant. It is clearly denoted in vs. 32:

> *It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares Yahweh.*

In contrast, the newness of the New Covenant is emphasised as follows:

> *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares Yahweh. I will put my Torah in their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, "Know Yahweh", because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares Yahweh. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more* (Jer 31:33-34).

The misconceptions of the people concerning the Sinai covenant was that they thought that they could keep Yahweh's Torah and get His blessing as a result. In the context of the Sinai covenant, the people of Israel had confidently promised, "We will do everything Yahweh has said (Ex. 19:8)". They had not realised their inability to keep all Yahweh's moral, civic and ritual laws.

In the time of Jeremiah, the people of Judah still did not realise their inability to do this. They did not notice that their sin was indelible (Jer. 17:1), their taint of guilt was unwashable (Jer. 2:22) and the depravity of their hearts was intractable (Jer. 17:9). Such misconceptions had to be thoroughly

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eradicated. The people of Judah could not keep the Sinai covenant. They became covenantal failures. The exile in 586 BC was the result of their failure.

Jeremiah's task of annihilation, mentioned in Jeremiah 1:10, was to eradicate such misconceptions about the Sinai covenant. As Mendenhall (1992:1192-93) insists, the ultimate curse for the breach of the covenant was the destruction and scattering of the body politic with which the covenant initially was made in the ancient concept of the covenant.

This destruction happened in 586 BC. Mendenhall regards the exile as the termination of the Sinai covenant (Stienstra [1993] says it in terms of the marriage metaphor when she says that the exile in 586 BC reflected Yahweh's divorce from His adulterous (i.e. apostate) wife). Mendenhall continues that the enactment of a new covenant with the people was necessary if there was to be any continuity in the relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel.

For this new relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel, Yahweh's initiative was required, because the people of Israel were unable to initiate it. Bozak (1991:123) comments:

> *Throughout Jer 31:31-34, the focus is on the activity of Yahweh. He*
> *establishes a New Covenant which touches the people's inferiority*
> *and reestablishes the relationship. Yahweh's forgiveness has made it*
> *all possible. The emphasis is placed on Yahweh's deeds, deeds of*
> *might and power for the first covenant and deeds of mercy for the new*
> *one.*

The divine intervention is needed for this to happen (Robinson 2001:197). By emphasising Yahweh's intervention, Robinson concludes that the New Covenant is unilateral, and thereby implies that the previous covenant was bilateral.

However, the New Covenant is not unilateral. The old Sinai covenant was not discontinued, either. There is a bilateral element and a continuity of the Sinai covenant in the New Covenant. Jer. 31:33 indicates that Yahweh will put His Torah in people's hearts. It clearly implies the Sinai covenant. Yahweh's intervention was needed to remove the obstacle that prevented the people from keeping the Sinai covenant.

In the New Covenant, the obstacle will be removed, because Yahweh will give new hearts so that the people will be able to keep Yahweh's Torah. People who have transformed hearts, will know Yahweh, and their sins will be forgiven once and for all. Therefore, the newness in the New Covenant comprises the divine initiative, people's transformation of heart, and universalising of the knowledge of Yahweh. By His divine initiative, the people of Judah will be able to obey the commandments in the Sinai covenant which they were unable to obey. Therefore, the New Covenant is basically bilateral, because it implies people's positive relationship with the Torah.

Robinson's concluding remark, that it is likely that Jeremiah thought of the destruction of Jerusalem and regarded the exile of its population as inevitable, yet believed that this would not be the end of the story, for the nation would surely be reborn, is noteworthy (Robinson 2001:203). In the context of the New Covenant, Jeremiah concludes, as an echo, what he had started to do as a prophet, namely tearing down and building up (Jer. 1:10) by saying that Jerusalem would never again be uprooted or overthrown (Jer. 31:40), as we have already pointed out.

In the old system of the Sinai covenant, the people of Israel could not keep Yahweh's Torah, in spite of their confidence. As covenant failures, the people in the northern Israel had to suffer the exile, in 721 BC, and the people in the southern Judah would likely suffer a similar experience in the future unless they keep Yahweh's Torah. However, the people of Judah still did not perceive their inability, their total depravity of heart and that their nation was heading to total demise. In fact, the southern kingdom of Judah suffered exile in 586 BC.

However, it was not the end of the story. Yahweh was to restore His covenantal relationship with His people by transforming their hearts so that they could keep Yahweh's Torah. The New Covenant is a bridge connecting a new era with a previous one. At the same time, it is also Jeremiah's turning point from the ministry of tearing down to the hopeful ministry of building up for the future.

6.2.1.3 Holy Person

Robbins (1996a:121) says that Jesus Christ is the holy person *par excellence*, as we have mentioned elsewhere. It is true that priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes are regarded as holy persons in the New Testament. They are, however, presented as inferior to Jesus in the New Testament (Robbins 1996a: 121). Moreover, they acted as antagonists to Jesus when Jesus was arrested and tried before Pilate, the governor at that time.

In the Old Testament, the God of Israel is depicted as "Holy One" (Lev. 11:44; Isa. 1:4, 6:3). In the time of the Old Testament, the God of Israel distinguished Israel from other nations. She became a holy nation and Yahweh's treasured possession (Ex. 19:5-6). Thus, the concept of *holiness* is profoundly related to that of *setting apart*. The Hebrew word קָדֹשׁ ('holy'), in fact, has the sense of

distinctiveness and difference. Israel would be a nation as other nations, but they were to be holy –
different from the rest of the nations (Lev. 18:3, Wright 1997:591).

Wright (1997:591-92) insightfully says that Yahweh's demands for holiness came to influence
every dimension of Israelite national life as follows:

> *The outworking of this characteristic affected every dimension of
> Israelite national life, whether religious, social, economic, political,
> or personal. This is most clearly seen in Lev. 19, a chapter full of
> practical laws for daily life, all under the heading, "Be holy because I,
> the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:2). Holiness affected more
> than the ritual area of life. It dictated generosity with agricultural
> produce (vs. 9-10; cf. Dt. 24:19), fair treatment and payment of
> employees (vs. 13; cf. Dt. 24:14), practical compassion for the
> disabled and respect for the elderly (vs. 14, 32; cf. Dt. 27:18), the
> integrity of the judicial process (vs. 15; cf. Dt. 16:18-20), safety
> precautions (vs. 16b; cf. Dt. 22:8), ecological sensitivity (vs. 23ff.; cf.
> Dt. 20:19-20), equality before the law for ethnic minorities (vs. 33-
> 34; cf. Dt. 24:17), and honesty in trade and business (vs. 35-36; cf. Dt.
> 25:13ff.).*

It seems to be absolutely right to think that holiness affected more than the ritual area of life. It
affected all areas of the Israelite society. When the Israelites abandoned living in a holy way, all
kinds of troubles took place in every area of society as a result of their choice. In the time of

Jeremiah, the problems and distortions were everywhere in the Judean society. It was a natural result of forsaking holiness in their lives.

Yahweh's demand for holiness could also be applied to the individual person, and even to materials. A Nazirite was a holy person because he was a person who was set apart for God from birth (cf. Jdg 13:5). Priests were holy because they were set apart in order to do the work related to the temple service. The temple was a holy place because it was set apart for sacrifice and worship.

In the midst of degenerate people, Yahweh called Jeremiah and informed him that he was set apart by Him (Jer. 1:5). The verb used here is noteworthy. The basic meaning of the root of הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיךָ ('I set you apart') is also קָדַשׁ ('holy') too. The verb implies that Jeremiah became a distinctive prophet (Jer. 1:5) with regard to the false prophets at that time, as well as a distinctively consecrated person, compared to his backsliding contemporaries, at the time of the divine call.

6.2.2 Human commitment

Robbins (1996a:126) thinks that human commitment is the other side of what God does for humans. He says that the special form of human commitment in the New Testament is usually called *discipleship*. After comparing what the women did and what the disciples did at the time of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection, Robbins concludes that Jesus' declaration that those who wish to come after Him, should deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him (Mark 8:34) undergirds the seriousness of the commitment with the statement by Jesus that, when the Son of Man comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels, He will be ashamed of those who were ashamed of him and his words (Robbins 1996a:126-27).

In the context of the prophetic call in Jer.1, the prophet Jeremiah and the people of Judah at that time will be discussed separately.

6.2.2.1 Yahweh's appointment of Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5)

In Jer. 1:5 Yahweh reveals that He appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations. The revelation anticipates Jeremiah's commitment to the job. In other words, Yahweh's appointment is deeply related to Jeremiah's commitment. Indeed, Jeremiah was called[38] to be a prophet to the nations to deliver Yahweh's word[39] to the people of Judah. Jeremiah definitely seemed to perceive the possibility of opposition and persecution from the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the

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[38] As to the meaning of נביא ('prophet'), some emphasised its passive meaning while others emphasised the positive meaning. Long ago, Albright (1940:231-32 [1957:303]; 1968:181-89; 208-09) said that the Hebrew נביא signifies the one who was called by God for a special purpose, or who believed that he had received such a call. By taking the Akkadian nabû, meaning *to call* and considering נביא as *qatil* form indicating a passive sense, he surmised this so. In fact, he substantiated Guillaume (1938:112-13) who suggested the passive interpretation through comparison with the Akkadian nabû.

On the other hand, the active interpretation of the word נביא had been raised by König (1922:258-60). Meek (1936:150-52), Eichrodt (1961:312), Engnell (1969: 125) and Sanders (1972:57) are proponents of the active interpretation. For them, it signifies *forth-teller*, *proclaimer* or *spokesman*. It seems that the passive interpretation is getting more attention among scholars. Both views, however, have their merits. Both seem to complement each other in helping to understand the Hebrew נביא more comprehensively. The Old Testament prophets were those who were called by Yahweh to deliver Yahweh's word to the people of Israel.

Assuming that the Hebrew נביא originated from the Syrian nabû, which signifies the one who invokes the gods, Fleming (1993:217-24) recently suggested that the Israelite prophet נביא was the one who invoked the name of Yahweh for power and guidance. Lundbom (1999: 232) combines the views of Albright and Fleming, and concludes that Jeremiah was the one who was called by God and empowered by God to speak the divine word to Judah and the nations of the world.

It is clear that the prophet's commitment to his prophetic job is a result of his positive response to the divine calling.

[39] In this regard, the prophet is a vessel of the divine word (Miller 2001:581). As Yahweh's messenger, Jeremiah's task was in fact to deliver His word to Judah primarily, but also to foreign nations of the world. His commitment was to deliver His word, no matter how hard it was.

From this, Lundbom (1999:144) concludes that Jeremiah's dual role as spokesman for Yahweh and as spokesman for the people makes him a mediator, and an active mediator he was, to judge from the many oracles and prayers surviving in his book.

Rhodes (1977:107-28) thinks that one of the important tasks of נביא ('prophet') was "intercessory prayer". He presented the biblical evidence of his consideration in the cases of Amos (Am. 7:1-3, 4-6), Isaiah (Isa. 6:11; 37:1-7; 2 Ki. 19:1-7), Habakkuk, Ezekiel (Eze. 9:8; 11:13; 13:5) and Jeremiah (Jer. 15:1; 14:13-16; 4:9-10; 8:18-9:1; 10:19-24; 18:18-23; 28:6; 27:16-22; 37:1-17; 42:1-6; 42:7-43:13). He even found out the intercessor's role in the pre-classical prophets such as Abraham (Ge. 20:1-18; 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 18:17-33), Moses (Ex. 3:1-4:17; Dt. 18:22; Nu. 12:6-7; 14:11-23; Ex. 32-34; 33:12-17; Hos. 12:14), Samuel (1 Sa. 3:1-4:1; 3:20; 9:9; 7:5-11; 12:18, 23; 15:11, 35), Elijah (1 Ki. 17:17-24; 18:36-42, 22, 32; 2 Ki. 4:32-33) and Elisha (2 Ki. 6:17, 18, 20-23).

Much earlier than Rhodes, Henning Graf Reventlow (1963) had already observed Jeremiah's intercessory role as prophet. Yahweh, however, forbade Jeremiah to intercede on the people's behalf at various times (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11-12; 15:1). The prohibition implies that the doom was unavoidable at the time.

people of the land, when he heard Yahweh's warning, "Do not be terrified by them" (Jer. 1:17). Because he was deeply committed to Yahweh's command, Jeremiah carried out his work as prophet to the nations in spite of expecting severe antagonism and persecution from the various circles of the Judean society.

6.2.2.2 Jeremiah's contemporaries were Yahweh's enemies

In contrast to Jeremiah, the people of Judah did not make any commitment to Yahweh. Yahweh promised that the people of Israel would be His treasured possession and Israel would be a kingdom of priests if they obeyed Him and kept Yahweh's covenant in the context of the Sinai covenant (Ex. 19:5-6). If they did not obey Yahweh, they would not be Yahweh's treasured possession any more.

Before pledging such a conditional promise, Yahweh began with an historical reminder of God's own redemptive action for Israel (Ex. 19:4). God then gave to Israel an identity and a mission, which was the basis for the ethical demands of the law (Wright 1997:585-94). The beginning of the passage (i.e. Ex. 19:4) implies the motivation to obey Yahweh's demands, with the spirit of gratitude for what God has done for Israel. Yahweh's commitment to bless Israel indeed led him to initiate a special relationship with Israel, which in turn required her ethical response (Wright 1997:585-94). The relationship was a covenant relationship which called for mutual commitment. The people of Judah, however, seemed to have forsaken the covenantal relationship with Yahweh much earlier.

In Jer. 1 Yahweh never speaks of the people of the land as עמי ('my people') which denotes an intimate covenantal relationship between Yahweh and them. Instead, Yahweh reveals His intention to chastise them by means of all the peoples of the northern kingdoms (Jer. 1:13-16). It implies that

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the people of Judah were not Yahweh's beloved, treasured possession any more. More likely they were Yahweh's enemies. Yahweh was preparing war against the Judean people, his newly declared enemies, by means of the foes from the north. The latter seem to have become Yahweh's friends at the time, if we accept the political proverb *a political rival's enemy is a friend.*

In the context of the prophetic call in Jer. 1, the concept that Yahweh is the Divine Warrior who fights for Israel, was radically changed: Yahweh was going to war against His people who broke His covenant. Yahweh was no longer on their side. In contrast, Yahweh was on Jeremiah's side, of course. Yahweh promised Jeremiah that He would be with him and he would be protected from his enemies (i.e. the people of Judah).

Thus the divine retribution is working in two ways in Jer. 1. On the one hand, the reward for Jeremiah's commitment to Yahweh's calling was protection and deliverance (Jer. 1:18-19). On the other hand, the penalty for the covenant failures was total destruction. It would be realised through the punitive warfare between Judah and foes from the north.

6.2.3 Deity

The Old Testament reveals the God of Israel through a variety of names: Yahweh (Ex. 6:3), אלהים ('God'), אל שׁדי ('God Almighty', Ge. 48:3), יהוה צבאות ('the Lord of Hosts', Mal 3:19 [MT]), the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 1:4), etc. Each name denotes a particular attribute. In Jer. 1 two of Yahweh's attributes are noticeable: Yahweh as Divine Warrior and as Divine Judge.

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6.2.3.1 Yahweh is the Divine Warrior

The prophetic call is concluded in verse 19 with Yahweh's promise that He would be with Jeremiah: *They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares Yahweh.*

Yahweh reveals Himself as the One who would rescue Jeremiah from the warfare between Jeremiah and the people of the land. Here, Yahweh is depicted as the Divine Warrior who would deliver a lonely Jeremiah from the hands of the people of Judah.

The idea that Jeremiah would have a hostile relationship with his contemporaries and that Yahweh would deliver him from the hands of his contemporaries, are repeated in Jer. 11:19, 15:20 and 20:11. In Jer. 20:11, Yahweh is clearly depicted as a *Warrior*:

> *But Yahweh is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will*
>
> *stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;*
>
> *their dishonour will never be forgotten.*

The notion that Yahweh is the Divine Warrior seemed to be very familiar to the Israelites. The theme of the Divine Warrior can be traced throughout the Old Testament passages. The Old Testament depicts God as the Divine Warrior who is fighting for the faithful of Israel. The most significant passage that denotes this idea is Ex. 15:1-3 (Longman 1995:47).

Longman thinks that von Rad (1991; 1958[German]) is a watershed figure in the study of the motif of a holy war (Longman 1995:21). At the centre of the holy war stands Yahweh, the Divine Warrior

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(Jos. 5:13-15, Longman 1997:546). At the heart of the holy war theology is God's presence during the battle (Longman 1996:21).

Von Rad (1958) called Israel's wars *holy wars*, because of their references to a consistent and distinctive institution and cultic matrix in Israel. His theory, however, is criticised by many scholars. One of the main reasons for their criticism is von Rad's disregard of ancient Near Eastern influences on Israelite warfare (Retief 1985:117, Smit 1994:45). Von Rad overlooked the fact that the ancient Near Eastern people had the same cultic practices as Israel and also believed that their gods intervened on their behalf. The wars of Israel should, therefore, not be referred to as *holy wars*. Israel's wars should rather be referred to as *Yahweh wars* (Weippert 1972:485, Jones 1975:658,).

According to Manfred Weippert (1972:490-92), there is no basis in ancient texts for maintaining a distinction between holy and profane wars. M. Weippert argued that none of the ritual and ideological components of von Rad's theory on holy war were in any way unique to Israel; to the contrary, they were part of the practice and ideology of war common in the ancient Near East and probably in all of antiquity (Ollenburger 1991:24). Stolz (1972:196-205) is believed to have been the first who proposed the concept of *Yahweh war* as a counterpoint to von Rad's *Holy war* (Ollenburger 1991:25).

Throughout Old Testament passages we can see many examples of Yahweh fighting for the people of Israel. It, however, should be noted that Yahweh did not always fight on Israel's behalf, as witnessed by the story of Achan's sin, in Jos. 7 (Christensen 1975:186).

The threat of war as punishment for Israel's sins in particular forms a major theme in Deuteronomy (Smit 1994:47). Lind (1980) calls it a "theology of defeat". As the reason for defeat, Longman

(1995:47) poignantly points out: *Behind God's actions as warrior stands the covenant.* When the people of Israel broke the covenant, God became an enemy to the unfaithful Israel. The reason for the demise of the northern kingdom is reflected in 2 Ki. 17:1-18: they were destroyed because of their sins. Among their sins, idolatry was the most heinous one (Longman, 1995:52).

In this regard, Israel's apostasy was a fatal choice of the nation Israel. God would not fight on behalf of an apostate Israel. It became the main reason for the demise of Judah, too. Longman's concluding remark (1995:52) is noteworthy in this matter:

> *The reflex of the Exodus is the Exile. If the Exodus shows God's power on behalf of Israel, the Exile displays God's power against Israel. The Exodus is an expression of God's grace; the Exile displays his judgement. In the Exodus event we witness God as Israel's warrior; in the Exile, he is Israel's enemy.*

The prophets, like Israel's historians, considered Yahweh to be the king of the universe who executed the divine will through the practice of divine warfare (Hiebert 1992:878). The prophets turned religious thought about war inside out by audaciously declaring that, in the wars at hand, Yahweh fought not for, but against Israel (Smit 1994:47).

Jeremiah was a typical prophet who made an effort to help people of Judah to realise that Yahweh would bring disaster upon Judah in order to chastise their apostasy (i.e. their treacherous covenant failure). In Jeremiah, Yahweh employs foreign armies as unwitting partners in his chastisement of disobedient Judah (Christensen 1975:186). In other words, Jeremiah regarded the violation of the covenant as the cause of war (Vaillancourt 1976).

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In the vision of the boiling pot (Jer. 1:13), one of the visions associated with Jeremiah's call, Yahweh declares that He is calling the kings of the north against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah (Jer. 1:13-16). This vision was a portrayal of Judah's chastisement in the imagery of warfare, with Yahweh in charge of the armies of Judah's enemies, and a warning of the impending execution of divine judgement against Judah (Christensen 1975:187-88). As Yahweh employed Assyria to chastise Israel, Yahweh would bring the foes from the north to chastise apostate Judah.

The demise of northern Israel was an alarming sign to the people of Judah. It, however, did not move them to realise the gravity of the situation. Inevitably, the people of Judah had to experience the horrible defeat by the Babylonian armies. The divine Warrior was directing the people of Judah, who became His enemies by violating the covenant, towards utter destruction.

6.2.3.2 Yahweh is the Divine Judge

The image of Yahweh as the Divine Judge who executes judgement in justice, is closely related to the image of the Divine Warrior and Sovereign King. God is the King who reigns in majesty and who deserves all tribute. This King is the Judge who gives laws, speaks justice, pronounces sentence and executes justice. The King is the Warrior who takes up weapons to free His people.

King, Judge and Warrior are one (Peels 1995:277) as indicated by Patrick Miller (1965:44; 1982:103) who mentions oneness as well as distinctiveness: *The roles of Yahweh as king, judge, and warrior can be distinguished and may be accented at particular points but are not always separated.*

As the Divine Judge, Yahweh pronounces the impending judgement upon Judah in Jer. 1:16, as follows:

> *I will pronounce my judgements on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made.*

The reason for the impending doom upon Judah was her apostasy and the reason for the catastrophic disaster was her idol worship. The horrific warfare would take place because Yahweh would execute divine justice upon Judah. Jer. 1:16 is the clear statement of Yahweh's divine retribution, His divine vengeance for the unfaithful dealings of His people. The five chapters that follow (i.e. Jer. 2:1-6:30) are there for the rhetorical purpose of justifying Yahweh's theodicy (i.e. justice of God, cf. Carroll 1984:33), divine retribution.

In general, Jer. 2:1-6:30 is believed to consist of a collection of poems which contains two thematic cycles of critique against Israel (Smit 1994:65). The first cycle (Jer. 2:5-4:2) focuses on the apostasy of the nation and the threat of punishment by foreign invasion (Carroll 1986:115). Here, the metaphor of a marriage plays an important role to indict the apostate Israel. The second cycle (Jer. 4:5-6:26) centralises around the motif of the disaster from the north and the depiction of a crumbling Jerusalem in the face of an approaching and implacable enemy (Smit 1994:65).

Thus Jer. 2-6 elaborates the theme that the divine intervention by summoning foes from the north was necessary in order to chastise Israel's apostasy, which was adumbrated in Jer. 1:13-16.

Peels (1995) describes Yahweh's punitive retribution as the vengeance of God. Traditionally divine intervention indicates deliverance to the threatened covenant partner and punishment for the enemy by covenant failure. Mendenhall (1973:69-104) presents these two aspects of God's vengeance as "defensive vindication" and "punitive vindication". In these terms, Yahweh would operate punitive vindication upon the Israelites, the covenant failures. Therefore, the divine vengeance (or divine retribution) is the enactment of the justice of Yahweh, who is the Divine Judge.

Peels' thesis that the vengeance of God can only be correctly understood when this theme is placed in the context of God's actions as King, Judge and Warrior, is worthy of attention. This thesis can be applied to the context of the prophetic call. In Jer. 1 Yahweh is implied to be the *Sovereign King* who is faithful to his covenant, He is depicted as the *Divine Warrior* who is going to summon the foes from the north for the warfare against the covenant failures, and as the *Divine Judge* who will chastise the unfaithful.

6.2.4 Divine history

Robbins (1996a:123) says that many sacred texts presuppose that divine powers direct historical processes and events toward certain results. He further says that this is the realm of eschatology, apocalyptic, or salvation history in the New Testament. Among them, only salvation history seems to be relevant in investigating Jer. 1 and its context.

From the perspective of salvation history, God's plan for humans works itself out through a complicated but ever-ongoing process that moves slowly toward God's goals (Robbins 1996a:123-24).

God's plan for the people of Judah was revealed in Jer. 1:10. God would redeem His chosen people by way of tearing down and building up. His divine plan of redemption included dire judgement for the covenant failures. His redemption plan was complicated and hard to understand, because it included punishment. The final goal of the plan, however, was salvation (cf. Jer. 29:11). Yahweh's ultimate redemptive plan would be carried out gradually by way of uprooting and planting.

6.2.4.1 Theodicy

Jeremiah lived during a very tumultuous time for Judah. The nation was gradually heading for total destruction. Jeremiah saw that such a dark future was waiting for the nation. He proclaimed the impending judgement of God upon Israel. He pronounced that Yahweh would summon foes from the north to bring disaster upon her.

Such oracles might evoke questions from his contemporaries: *How could it happen to the people of God?*, *Where is God's justice if . . . ?*, *Is it imaginable for the covenant people to lose to the Gentiles?*, *Is it possible for Jerusalem, the city of God be destroyed?*, etc. These questions belong to theodicy.

The term *theodicy*, which was established by Leibnitz[40] in 1710, can be defined as *justification of the divine providence by the attempt to reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness and sovereignty of God*. The word is derived from the Greek, *theos* ('God') and *dike* ('justice', 'right'). The notion of theodicy accordingly combines the issues of God and justice (Brueggemann 1983:4).

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[40] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) wrote a book titled *Theodicee*, which was published in 1710. In this work, he set down his ideas on divine justice (Belaval 1974:250-51).

The theological problem is whether or not one can maintain simultaneously that God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and that evil is real, without contradiction (Louw 2000:25). Crenshaw (1992:444-47) says that life's harsh enigmas render belief in a benevolent deity difficult. Brueggemann (1985:3-25) posits that theodicy is conventionally in Old Testament studies related to the crisis of 587 BC. Yahweh's justice must have been a theological hot potato in Judean society at the time of Jeremiah.

6.2.4.2 Divine retribution

Theodicy is the biblical concept of retribution – reward and punishment (Hoffman 1992:117). In other words, the term *retribution*, derived from the Latin verb *retribuere* ('give again', 'give as due'), describes God's bestowal of rewards and punishments for the good and evil acts of human beings in its theological sense (Vannoy 1997:1140-49).

Koch (1983[ET]:55-87; 1955[German]) claims that there is no doctrine of retribution in the Old Testament. His thesis is that there is no concept of retribution in the Hebrew Bible, and human actions have built-in consequences or an action-consequence construct. According to him, there is no concept in the Hebrew Bible that suggests that Yahweh actively administers punishment or blessing (Koch 1983:62). In other words, he posits that people's actions have predetermined results (Koch 1983:74). His deistic view of God has not received widespread acceptance (Vannoy 1997:1141).

In this regard, Miller's view (1982) seems to be more convincing than that of Koch. Miller chooses the term *correspondence* instead of *consequence* in explaining the relationship between sin and judgment in the Bible as follows:

One cannot fully express the relationship between sin and judgment as one of the fate-effecting deed [sic] under the guidance of God. While a number of passages do not clarify the issue one way or another, there are several which emphasize the idea of correspondence but not consequence and suggest that while there is always a causal effect in the relationship between someone or some people's actions and the judgement they receive, that relationship is not necessarily internal but is perceived as resting in the divine decision and not happening apart from that decision or decree (Miller 1982:134).

Miller thinks that the biblical description of the relationship between sin and judgement is too diverse to confine the relationship in terms of automatically built-in consequence.

Brueggemann (1985:25) also seems to emphasise the diversity of Yahweh's justice when he says that Yahweh is discerned in Israel, sometimes as the impetus of the social process, sometimes as the norm, and sometimes as the agent for the transformation of the process.

It is admitted that Proverbs in the Old Testament seems to emphasise the aspect of *consequence*. However, other parts of the Old Testament have a different perspective on the relationship, e.g. Job and the Ecclesiastes.

In the book of Jeremiah, we can notice Yahweh's deep involvement in carrying out His justice upon the earth. In Jer. 1:16 Yahweh's decision to chastise His people can be identified. A merciful God has delayed execution of the divine judgement for a long time, but He now makes up his mind to

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punish his people. At the time of Manasseh He did not destroy His people in spite of their apostate behaviour. However, this time would be different, because He had made up His mind to judge. Yahweh's divine correspondence (i.e. His divine intervention) resulted in the eventual catastrophic demise of the nation in 586 BC.

Yahweh's divine retribution works in two ways, as already mentioned elsewhere: punishment and reward. The apostate people of Judah would experience dire chastisement (Jer. 1:16), whereas Jeremiah would be protected and delivered by Yahweh, who would be with him (Jer. 1:19).

In this regard, the exile in 586 BC is Yahweh's just punitive execution of justice for His people's apostasy. In Jer. 2:19, which echoes Jer. 1:16, the verb יסר ('discipline', 'chastise') is chosen. It denotes the idea of chastisement.

The divine retribution is an answer to that which has happened in the past, is happening now and that which will happen in the future. And a few of those who obey Yahweh, like Jeremiah, will taste God's reward of protection and deliverance in the midst of divine judgement. God's justice is already vindicated here by His divine retribution before the disaster befalls the people of Judah!

6.2.5 Human redemption

Robbins (1996a:125) understands *redemption* as God transforming human lives and taking them into a higher level of existence, as a reward for what people do. He states that human redemption occurs through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Robbins does not know, however, what kind of redemption occurs. For him, the issue in the account of Jesus' death and resurrection is Jesus' saving of Himself rather than His saving of others (Robbins 1996a:125). He insists that it is not obvious that Jesus' resurrection is meant for all people. Paul seems to give a clear answer on this issue in 1 Co. 15. when he says that Jesus became the firstfruits of the dead (1 Co. 15:20). It means that those who are dead, will be resurrected and will have eternal life in the heavens.

We do not want to argue with the New Testament scholar on the New Testament issue. Nevertheless, we mention him because it seems relevant to our study of Jeremianic text. Our theological concern is with the possibility of the relationship between the cross and resurrection in the redemptive history.

We strongly believe that Yahweh's redemptive plan is presented in Jer. 1:10. This verse is the core of Jeremiah's ministry. It can be summarised as *judgement and salvation* or *uprooting and planting*. If we borrow the New Testament concept, it can be *cross and resurrection* or *suffering and diadem*.

This is the pattern of God's redemption. As suffering is the prerequisite for the future crown, doom must be present first before salvation can be obtained. This is the profound way of God's redemption.

The *pattern of judgment and salvation* can be traced in prophetic books, such as the books of Amos (Am. 9:11-15), Isaiah (Isa. 1-39 [judgement] and 40-66 [salvation]), and Ezekiel (Eze. 36:36). This pattern of judgement and salvation can also be seen as the structure of Genesis, where it comprises the theme of judgment (Ge. 1-11) and that of salvation (Ge. 12-50). The Old and New Testaments also denote such a combination: *judgement* (this does not mean that the Old Testament does not

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have a salvific element; rather, it means that the Old Testament is predominantly judgemental) and *salvation* (the New Testament is predominantly redemptive, even though it also contains judgemental elements, *inter alia* in terms of the eschatological perspective).

If our last assumption is valid, then it seems to be quite certain that Jer. 1:10 is in fact the essence and crystal of the biblical theology of redemption in the Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments).

6.2.6 Ethics

The discipline of Old Testament ethics has not received adequate attention in the past. It is, however, recently getting more scholarly attention, which could indicate that it is going to be a full-fledged discipline sooner or later.

It must, however, be admitted that finding a coherent set of ethical values in the Old Testament, is very difficult. In spite of the difficulty, there are some suggestions from among the scholars. Childs (1970:123-38; 1985:51-91, 204-21; 1993), Kaiser (1983; 1990:289-302; 1992:289-97) and Birch (1976; 1988:75-91; 1991) are prominent figures in this regard.

Along with them, sociological approaches to the Old Testament have also brought a new dimension to the ethical relevance of the Old Testament (Wright 1984:11-21; 1997:585-94).

R. Wilson (1994:55-63) feels that Wayne Meek's study (1986) of the moral world of the early Christians is important because it attempts to integrate the historical, sociological and conceptual dimensions of ethical inquiry in a comprehensive way (Wilson 1994:56-57). Wilson (1990:193-205), however, does not show whether Meek's perspective can successfully be applied to the study

of ancient Israel or not. Wilson can be understood as suggesting that Old Testament ethical studies are still in a burgeoning stage, as mentioned at the beginning of this section. We are certain that this promising discipline (i.e. Old Testament ethical study) will come into full bloom in the near future.

Robbins (1996a:129) suggests that the special ways of thinking and acting (i.e. ethical behaviour) are motivated by commitment to God, when addressed in the context of religious commitment. He connects the concept of ethics with that of commitment.

At the same time, Robbins (1996a:130) indicates the possibility of the accompaniment of danger when carrying out something according to an ethical commitment to the will of God. For Robbins, to conduct an ethical behaviour is to risk a danger. Robbins (1996a:129-30) presents two examples of it: Jesus Christ and Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus Christ did not seek to save his life but to seek God's will (Mk 14:36). The cost to seek the will of God was his life. Joseph of Arimathea is also an example of this principle. Joseph, a prominent member of the council (Mk 15:43) had the courage to request the body of Jesus and give it a proper burial (Mk15:43-46) even though it could cost his reputation or even his life.

In this regard, Jeremiah's obedience to the prophetic call seems an example of an ethical commitment to God. For Jeremiah, to obey God's call to be a prophet is to risk his contemporaries' severe hate and persecution. God informs Jeremiah that he will suffer heavy opposition and attack from the people of all social strata (Jer. 1:18-19). Jeremiah risked that danger when obeyed the divine call. The reward of his ethical commitment to God's will was the divine presence and protection (Jer. 1:19).

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In contrast, most of Jeremiah's contemporaries failed to conduct ethical behaviour. God's demanding for an ethical behaviour is not to be understood from a legalistic standpoint. Israel's ethical behaviour should have demonstrated an appreciative attitude for what God had done for her. In the immediate context of Jer.1, Jeremiah reminds his contemporaries of the Exodus incident (Jer. 2:1-3). The people of Israel should have remembered and appreciated what God had done when their forefathers were in the wilderness, and then conducted righteous behaviour accordingly. However, Jeremiah's contemporaries failed to do so. Instead, they chose to become apostate idol worshippers (Jer. 1:16). Their treacherous behaviour deserved God's corresponding chastisement, indeed (Jer. 1:16).

6.3 Conclusion

It seems as if the people of Judah, who lived at the time of Jeremiah, lived under a spiritual illusion. Their perceptions about Yahweh and about themselves were incorrect. They were complacent in their belief that Yahweh was on their side. It was true that they had had a glorious past while Yahweh was with them. Yahweh was, however, not on their side any more.

The people of Judah were taking advantage of Yahweh's divine promise to them as His treasured possession (Ex. 19:5). They seemed to believe that Yahweh, who could not lie, would keep this promise, by implication guaranteeing their security and protection, no matter what. The belief was delusive because Yahweh made it clear that Israel's privileged status would be maintained only if they obeyed Him and kept His covenant (Ex. 19:5).

To keep Yahweh's commandments and to live accordingly were fundamentally important for the people of Israel if they wanted to maintain the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. In Lev. 11:44,

Yahweh demanded ethical behaviour from them: "I am Yahweh your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy". If they were committed to Yahweh's commandments, they would keep Yahweh's words and live a holy life.

The holiness could not be confined to the ritual area of life only. It should have affected every dimension of Israelite national life, whether religious, social, cultural, political or personal. Yahweh indeed wanted a society in which justice rolled on like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream (cf. Am. 5:24; Mic. 6:8) when He called for holiness from the people of Israel. At the same time, He wanted to see each of the people of Israel dealing honestly and seeking the truth (Jer. 5:1). Yahweh indeed called for thorough commitment to Him and its equivalent, ethical life, individually as well as collectively.

The people of Judah chose apostasy instead of obeying Yahweh. Apostasy was a serious problem at that time, but they did not perceive that their apostate behaviour was tormenting Yahweh and that it would cost the existence of the nation. Their hearts were too corrupt to cure. In fact, they did not pay attention to their sinful condition. They were so credulous that they easily became prey to the false prophets' shallow theories of success. As a result, they were heading for total demise.

Jeremiah, who came to realise the seriousness of the depravity of Judean society through the revelation, wanted his contemporaries to realise the urgency of the situation. For him, everything was distorted and in disorder. Furthermore, this distortion was not merely theological.

In the social and cultural perspective, Jeremiah's contemporaries were practicing nation-wide "idol" worship; they were profoundly influenced by the idolatrous Canaanite culture. They abandoned Yahwism for cheaper gains, and became apostates.

From the ideological viewpoint, Jeremiah's contemporaries had blind faith in Yahweh's presence in the Jerusalem Temple and in Jerusalem's impregnability. They could hardly imagine that the profane Babylonians might invade and trample down the Holy City (i.e. Jerusalem) and the holy people. They could not perceive that their nation was heading for total demise because of their false conception.

Some of them were more realistic. They were groping for wise diplomacy in order to secure the survival of the nation. Some embraced a pro-Egypt policy while others favoured a pro-Babylon policy. The rpo-Egypt diplomacy was gaining more support from the people towards the time of the demise of the nation. Jeremiah made it clear that the diplomatic alliance with Egypt or any other nation (cf. Jer. 27:1-8) would be of no use in warding off the Babylonians. Generally speaking, Jeremiah's political viewpoint was rejected by his contemporaries. Zedekiah and his subjects clung to the pro-Egypt policy, against the warnings of Jeremiah. It was a fatal mistake for the nation indeed.

Social, cultural and ideological problems were entangled with the theological issue at that time. Each had its own distinctiveness. At the same time, they were interrelated with one another. For example, idolatry was not a social and cultural issue only, but also a theological issue. Idolatrous practice was impossible without abandoning the belief that Yahweh is the source of fecundity, blessing and security. It presupposed apostasy, making the latter thus the theological problem.

Moreover, Zion theology was also theological as well as ideological. If the false notion of security belonged to the ideology, the concept of the presence of Yahweh in the Jerusalem Temple more likely belonged to the realm of theology. The covenant concept was also a theological issue. It anticipated mutual commitment between the contractors.

Jeremiah's contemporaries fell short of Yahweh's expectations. They claimed that they belonged to Yahweh and that they were dedicated to Him. Their statement, however, remained at merely the level of lip service. Their worship and sacrifices were mere matters of form, not of the heart. Their most serious problem lay in the reality that they did not love Yahweh at all. In their hearts they had already abandoned the intimate relationship with Yahweh.

To summarise, it was certain that the Judean society was profoundly corrupt in every respect. Distortion and misconception were everywhere at that time. Doom, therefore, was unavoidable.

In this complicated and dark situation, Jeremiah must have noticed the necessity for a radical operation if they were to have any chance of survival. Otherwise, they would experience Yahweh's divine retribution.

In other words, Jeremiah must have felt the need for the removal of theological misconceptions as well as ideological, economical, social and cultural misconceptions, as we have shown. To summarise, it can be said that the theological perspective was the most important, because all other perspectives were profoundly related to it.

As the radical architect of a new order, Jeremiah concentrated on the task of uprooting, tearing down, plucking and overthrowing until all misconceptions were demolished. When demolished, Jeremiah would construct a new structure according to the blueprint of Yahweh's law.

However, it proved to be an impossible task because of the hardness of the people's hearts. Jeremiah's audience refused to cooperate with him in tearing down and plucking out. Their hardness eventually led to Yahweh's divine intervention.

In this regard, Olyan's observation (1998:63-72) seems noteworthy. He considers Jer. 1:10 to be an influential text. He further considers that it reappears in reformulated forms throughout the book (Jer. 45:4, 18:1-12; 42:10; 12:14-17; 31:28, 40b; 24:6). He then poignantly concludes that in virtually all of these reformulations, the original focus of Jer. 1:10 on the prophet as Yahweh's agent has been abandoned; Yahweh himself is clearly the subject who uproots and pulls down, who builds and plants. These reformulated texts indeed imply that it was not Jeremiah, but Yahweh who uprooted and built.

To punish His obstinate people, Yahweh himself summoned foes from the north (i.e. the Babylonians) to bring on a war with Judah (cf. 1:15). Yahweh's summoning of the Babylonians to bring on a war against Judah is another indication of His leading role in chastising His people. It conveys the idea that the war would not occur without the summoning. The war was indeed initiated by Yahweh, the Divine Warrior who was going to fight against Judah. As a result of the war, total demolition took place in Jerusalem and Judah in 586 BC. The exile was Yahweh's final, inevitable choice for the demolition which was necessary to make possible the process of rebuilding.

This is the mystery of Yahweh's redemptive plan. It contains punishment in the form of the destruction of the nation, but it is not the end of the story. Yahweh's salvific work starts when nobody anticipates it. There seems to be no apparent nexus between tearing down and building up. Such a sudden change is part of the mystery which is hard to understand rationally. It is indeed hard to find any logical relation between doom and salvation. It does not belong to the realm of reason, but to that of passion. In other words, Yahweh's love for His people surpasses human understanding. His divine love, i.e. His divine plan for the redemption of His people, was revealed in that way in Jer. 1:10.

We feel that such a theological perspective should be given much more weight in Old Testament study. It implies that the theological consideration is a *sine qua non* in studying the biblical text.

Patrick and Scult (1990: 18) claim the necessity of religious (i.e. theological) consideration when they evaluate Alter's work (1981) on the Bible's narrative art as follows:

> *While this approach also strongly intimates the rhetorical approach we have been tracing, it falls short of bringing the interpreter into a full-bodied encounter with the Biblical text, for the Bible is obviously not just a great work of literature, but also claims to embody a great spiritual vision. We therefore maintain that, as difficult as it might be to do so without losing scholarly objectivity, the interpreter must somehow engage the spiritual and theological truth claims of the Biblical text in order to understand it rightly. A rhetorical perspective must recognize the artful form – the rhetorical shape – of the biblical text as the essential vehicle through which its truth claims are communicated. If, for example, we say that certain portions of the Bible are to be generically identified and therefore rightly understood as artful narrative, then their narrative construction becomes the key to fathoming the spiritual or religious argument being made. This step, Alter's scholarly reserve seems to prevent him from taking.*

The Biblical text contains both history and theology[41]. Both should be given due consideration in search of the meaning of the biblical text. In this regard, we consider that Lundbom's rhetorical research is in need of a deeper penetration into the particularity and concreteness of the text. Without it, his rhetorical analysis remains in the realm of mere stylistic analysis[42].

As discussed elsewhere, Lundbom (1991:193-210; 1997:127-30; 1999:227-30) divides Jer. 1:4-19 into two sections: *the Call* (Jer. 1:4-12) and *the Commission* (1:13-19) to be a prophet. He divides each section into two parts: *articulation of the Call* (1:4-10), *Vision of the Call* (1:11-12) and *Vision of the Commission* (1:13-14), *Articulation of the Commission* (1:15-19). Combining two sections together, he notifies a chiastic structure there: A (*Articulation of the Call*) – B (*Vision of the Call*) – B' (*Vision of the Commission*) – A' (*Articulation of the Commission*).

His rhetorical structure is different from the structure presented in this study, as suggested elsewhere. It signifies that many other rhetorical suggestions are possible. Because of the possibility of diverse rhetorical structures for a certain text, it is necessary to study the rhetorical structure of the text more thoroughly. Discreet judgement is required in the process of investigation and decision.

From the rhetorical perspective, Lundbom's structure has some defects, as pointed out elsewhere. His regarding the word שנית ('second time') in vs. 13 as the clue to denote a new section separate from the previous one, is problematic. It is unnatural to separate vs. 15 from the previous verses, in spite of the presence of the word כי ('for') in verse 15. In contrast to Lundbom's view, we feel that

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[41] Osborne (1991: 153) says that the biblical narratives contain both history and theology. We apply and expand the concept to the whole biblical text.
[42] Patrick and Scult (1990:12) point this problem out well in their co-authored book. Their emphasis, however, is different to ours, because they consider that the meaning of the text is a result of interaction between the text and the audience. We will discuss this issue in the next chapter.

there is an indicative word to denote new beginning in verse 17: וְאַתָּה ('But you!'). It signifies inclusion with the last word לְהַצִּילֶךָ ('to rescue you'; vs. 19) in this section. For these reasons, an alternative structure was suggested elsewhere.

More importantly, Lundbom's rhetorical analysis does not accord with the historical, ideological and theological contexts that the text implies. He justifies his separation of the call from the commission by assuming that Jeremiah initially refused to accept the prophetic task on the pretext of his juvenility and accepted Yahweh's offer later when he had become of age.

His assumption, however, is not harmonious with the traditional concept that Yahweh is perfect in knowledge and understanding, making no mistakes. The time when Yahweh called Jeremiah, must have been the best time for him to be a prophet, because He is the Omniscient, Who would know when the time was right for Jeremiah.

In addition, Jeremiah took the prophetic job in the darkest hour. Jeremiah mainly delivered the message of rebuke, warning and judgement, calling his contemporaries to pure faith in Yahweh. His message of rebuke would have become powerless if he had ever refused to obey Yahweh's calling, no matter how reasonable his refusal might have been. The audience could have rebuked him by saying that he had no authority to call on them to obey Yahweh when he had disobeyed Yahweh, had he actually refused. Considering such a historical and theological context, Lundbom's rhetorical analysis seems to cause serious problems.

From there, we want to point out the interdependent nature of the rhetorical analysis of the biblical text and its historical context. Our pointing out signifies that the historical context and the rhetorical analysis have to be mutually cooperative. In other words, both historical context and rhetorical

structure have to complement each other in the process of interpretation. The interpretation should be abandoned if it does not match its historical or any other contexts, even though it is reasonably good as rhetorical structure *per se*.

No one can deny the reality that the rhetorical analysis of a certain text is not made mechanically or mathematically. Many possible structures can be drafted from the text. In fact, rhetorical analysis is a matter of choice, but not an easy task at all. Discreet judgement is required for evaluating each of many possible rhetorical structures. In evaluating them, consideration of the historical context is indispensable. Rhetorical analysis without the due consideration of the historical and theological context can be misleading.

The best rhetorical structure is the structure which fits nicely into the historical and theological context that the text alludes to as well as into the rhetorical perspective of the text.

In this regard, Robbins' socio-rhetorical approach is a very proper method to use when investigating the biblical text. According to Robbins, many New Testament interpreters have a different focus. Some of them focus on literary and rhetorical phenomena (rhetorical criticism) while others focus on historical, social, cultural, ideological and theological phenomena (social scientific criticism[43]) (Robbins 1996b:2-3).

Robbins feels a serious need for dialogue between them. It is from within this dialogue that Robbins attempts to make a contribution, since *one of the goals of a socio-rhetorical approach is to set specialised areas of analysis in conversation with one another* (Robbins 1996b:2-3; Botha 1998:54). Robbins's model is an attempt to utilise all available tools in interpreting the biblical texts.

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[43] This was discussed in Chapter 4.

The aim is to further Robbins's suggestion in this study by saying that both the social scientific perspective and the rhetorical perspective are to be mutually influential in the process of interpretation. It is not enough that there is mere dialogue between these perspectives. In other words, social scientific criticism and rhetorical criticism should go hand in hand with interpreting the biblical text. Both should work in a complementary way in the process of interpretation.

The rhetorical study without due consideration of the social scientific perspective remains at the mere level of structural analysis. On the other hand, the social scientific study without due consideration of the rhetorical perspective can lead to unconvincing conclusions. Both aspects are to be compulsory during interpretation. It can be assumed that the best reading of the text is the reading that is harmonious with the rhetorical structure and its historical, social, cultural, ideological and theological context. This matter will be clarified in the next chapter, as a conclusion of this study.

In the last section of this chapter, the focus will be on some theological pointers that this short text (i.e. Jer. 1:10) contains. First, it indicates that salvation is not cheap grace. Salvation requires fundamental change of behaviour (i.e. ethical demand) stemming from genuine commitment to Yahweh. If people obey, they will receive Yahweh's reward. If they disobey, they will experience the divine chastisement. In any case, people will reap what they sow.

Secondly, it conveys that Yahweh's redemptive plan is *judgement and salvation*. There is no alternative. In other words, Yahweh's plan that was revealed to Jeremiah was not *judgement or salvation* but *judgement and salvation*. The way of salvation, namely, is to be realised by way of God's judgement. Judgement has to come first before salvation arrives.

Lastly, it is possible to claim that the concept of *judgement and salvation* in Jer. 1:10 is the core of the entire biblical (i.e. Old and New Testament) theology of redemption. The Bible is the combination of the Old Testament (predominantly emphasising judgement) and the New Testament (predominantly emphasising God's salvation). To become the Bible for deploying God's redemptive plan, both Old and New Testaments were required.

And it is our understanding that Jeremiah's concept of *judgement and salvation* was finally realized through Jesus' ministry in the New Testament. Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days* (Jn. 2:19)". The concept of *destroying and rebuilding* of his body implies Jesus' cross (i.e. death) and resurrection. The destruction of his body had to be realised before rebuilding could take place. Jesus seemed to reflect Jer. 1:10 when He said this. The idea of *death and resurrection* might originate from Jer. 1:10. If this assumption is right, Jeremiah's concept of *tearing down and building* really is the essence of the biblical theology of redemption.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary

In this study an attempt was made to apply Robbins's interdisciplinary socio-rhetorical approach to the study of the prophetic call in Jeremiah 1. His comprehensive integrative approach[44] indeed was an adequate enough response to meet the demands of the times to utilise insights from both modern literary theory and social scientific theory that were suggested by various scholars. A few among many, the suggested methodologies for better understanding of ancient texts are *deconstruction, narrative criticism, semantics, semiotics, ideological criticism, historical critical criticism, reader's response criticism, structural analysis*, and *social scientific criticism.*

Admittedly, there has been a tendency or inclination among scholars to use one or two of the above aspects in interpretation. In other words, these helpful tools have rarely been used in a more comprehensive way by the scholars. Robbins's suggestion was an attempt to make up for such a lack. His practical suggestion should be welcomed and applied enthusiastically to biblical studies (i.e. both Old and New Testament studies).

While applying Robbins's suggestions to the study of Jeremiah 1, it was, however, realised that a few of his suggestions need realignment. As Botha (1998:51-63) points out, Robbins's model, which is a conglomeration of various methodologies, seems to incur the coexistence of methodologies that are apparently incompatible. For example, reader-response criticism excludes a historical reading of texts, but Robbins allows for both (reader-response criticism [synchronic

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[44] Louis Jonker (1998:2, fn. 4) prefers the term *multidimensional* rather than *integrative* because of his assumption that the term *multidimension* provides for the uniqueness of entities (such as exegetical–hermeneutical approaches) without denying plurality while *integration* normally involves merging two or more entities into one.

reading] and historical reading of the texts [diachronic reading]) in his methodology (Botha 1998:51-63). Botha poignantly raises a question: *"Can the mere lumping together of various, often very divergent approaches provide us with an integrated approach?"* Robbins does not give any reason why he lets apparently incompatible aspects co-exist in his model. He probably includes all possible methodologies to present his model as a working model in order to study the ancient texts comprehensively. At any rate, the explanation and clarification of his methodology seem to arise in this regard.

It seems inevitable that some conflict will occur when bringing together all available tools. For another example, structuralism opposes diachronic investigation (Osborne 1991:371) and post-modernistic notions such as intertextuality (Botha 1998:51-63). Such features, which seem to be mutually exclusive, are introduced together in Robbins's model.

All tools, in fact, are not available and not equally valuable for investigating a certain text. That is why careful evaluation is necessary. In spite of such problems, Robbins's model is very appropriate and promissory, as Botha also concludes. Nevertheless, it is necessary to adjust a small portion of his suggestion in order to make his model more useful.

The following summaries comprise suggestions for greater clarification and usefulness of Robbins's model:

1. Evaluate what is applicable and what is not applicable among Robbins's suggestions in the study of a particular text. For example, for this study of the prophetic call of the prophet Jeremiah, narrative criticism was excluded because the text contains poetry.

2. Pay attention to the rhetorical structure of the text (in other words, *rhetorical, literary investigation*). It is the primary step in interpretation. In this stage, textual criticism, source criticism, literary criticism, semantics, semiotics, structuralism, form criticism (*Gattungen*), narrative criticism (if the text is narrative) and intertextuality can be consulted along with rhetorical criticism.

3. Then, find out the intended meaning(s) of the text (in other words, *historical investigation*). Traditio-historical criticism and form criticism (*Sitz-im-Leben*) are to be used in this stage. Archaeology can be helpful in the process of historical investigation.

Here, it is necessary to emphasise again that rhetorical criticism and historical investigation should be cooperative and complementary when used for interpreting the biblical text. In other words, the rhetorical analysis should be matched to its historical, theological, social, cultural and economic context. The interdependent nature of this has already been noticed. Any interpretation where there is no cooperation, should be abandoned.

4. Apply it (or them) to your situation (in other words, reader-response criticism). The reader is to apply the intended meaning of the text to his/her own particular situation.

5. Use social scientific criticism to reread the text from many different angles to find more possible meanings in the text (social scientific investigation). This process is necessary for better understanding of the text because it (i.e. the text) contains not only theological but also political, ideological, racial, economic, social and cultural meanings. For example, the book of Jeremiah contains diverse theological, ideological (i.e. political), social and cultural meanings. It even mentions economic injustice and exploitation in Judean society. Jer. 21:12; 22:3; 23:13-15, for example, are primary socio-economic messages, not theological messages.

6. Apply the detected meanings to your current situation (i.e. reader response). In applying the intended meanings of the text to your own situation, social scientific criticism, reader response criticism, feminist criticism, black theology, etc. can be used. Thus social scientific criticism works both ways in noticing the intended social scientific meanings and in noticing the social scientific significance of the text. The significance is a result of the interaction between the meaning of the text and the reader's viewpoint.

In operating the above suggestions, there are some basic assumptions. The following underlines these assumptions:

1. Meaning is the result of the reader's interaction between the sender (or author) and the text. The text, the reader and the author should be involved in the process of interpretation[45]. The reader's role in interpretation is important, because the sender and the text are dead without the reader's involvement by reading it. The meaning occurs when the text and the author, which were enlivened by the reader through the act of reading, begin to communicate.

2. The reader does not create the meaning. In this regard, we do not agree with Gunn and Fewell (1993) who consider that meaning is always the reader's creation. In other words these authors assume that meaning is a product of the interaction (communication or dialogue) between reader

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[45] It is admitted that the process of discovering the meaning of the text has three foci: the author, the text and the reader. The author produces the text while the reader studies the text (Osborne 1991:366). Scholars have tried to answer to the question: "*Which of the three is the primary force in determining its meaning?*" Jonker (1998:1) traces three stages in the development of interpretation: from author to text, and from text to reader, while Ricoeur (1973:112-42) observes three phases: from genre-based approach to epistemology-based hermeneutics, from epistemology-based hermeneutics to the ontological approach.

According to Robbins (1996b:45), the basis of rhetorical theory is the presupposition that speaker, speech and audience are primary constituents of a situation of communication. For him, this threefold emphasis calls for significant attention to all three, in contrast to the kind of singular focus characteristic of one or another literary method. Generally speaking, it cannot be denied that all three foci should be given due consideration in reading the biblical text. However, we feel that the functions of these three foci are to be classified.

and text. They emphasised the ambiguity of the language which led to emphasis on the role of the reader in determining the meaning of the text.

By emphasising the role of the reader, Gunn and Fewell neglected the authorial intention of the text. It seems a serious defect, because the text was always written by the biblical writers to deliver a message. It will be silly to imagine that even a sentence had been written without any intended meaning that had to be delivered.

As a proponent of the reader-response theory, Trible (1978:200-2; 1984:1-7) insists that ancient cultural notions are encoded in the text, and that the Bible was the product of a misogynistic tendency. This author, therefore, suggests that the interpretation should be given through the dialogue, mainly in the form of interaction between ancient cultural notions in the text and readers who have their own ideology and culture.

Trible's argument seems to denote that feminist reading is different to the original intent of the text, because, as she supposes, the biblical texts were written under the misogynistic culture. One could question Trible's theory, and ask how feminist reading can be justified if the text originally had a misogynistic intention. The text can still be applied to our special situation, culture and time. But it is clear that we must not confuse the original meaning[46] and its possible significance.

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[46] Gadamer (1975 [German 1960]:353) also opposes the attempt to trace back to the intended meaning of the author. His thinking is well express as follows: "*It (i.e. Literature) presents us not only with a stock of memorials and signs. Literature, rather, has acquired its own simultaneity with every present. To understand it does not mean primarily to reason one's way back into the past, but to have a present involvement in what is said. It is not really about a relationship between persons, between the reader and the author (who is perhaps quite unknown), but about sharing in the communication that the text gives us. This meaning of what is said is, when we understand it, quite independent of whether we can gain from the tradition a picture of the author and of whether or not the historical interpretation of the tradition as a literary source is our concern*". Gadamer too seems to confuse meaning (what it said) and its significance (what it says to the current reader).

It is our consideration that the reader does not create the meaning, but he/she has a burden to trace the original intended meaning of the text through decoding the indicators and clues that the writer of the text had conveyed. The reader is to detect the intended meaning through careful reading.

The reader can then create the significance by applying principles that are located in his/her current situation[47]. In other words, significance occurs when the reader interacts between the meanings that were found in the text and the reader's own perspective. The significance of the text should not be confined to the realm of theology. The biblical text provides multiple significances. In other words, it provides ideological, economic, ethical, moral, social and cultural as well.

3. Intended meaning in biblical text is not confined to the theological meaning, either. It can be ideological, economic, sociological, cultural, economical, ethical or moral. The biblical texts, including the prophetic books, indeed contain diverse phases, dimensions and viewpoints of the life and faith of Israel. Because the biblical text contains manifold meanings, the reader must choose correctly by careful reading of the text, literally and contextually. For example, Jeremiah's advice to surrender to Babylon was the political message, while his urge for restoring faith in Yahweh was the theological message.

As we have mentioned elsewhere, Jeremiah sometimes points out the economical inequality in Judean society. This should be regarded as a message on economy, not on theology, even though both (i.e. economy and theology) could be related to each other. The text can be interpreted metaphorically or ideologically, literally or theologically. But the choice of interpretation must be in

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[47] Hirsh (1967:103-26) distinguishes the meaning (as original intended) for the author and his readers from significance for the modern reader. According to Hirsh, Hermeneutics has these two aspects: to seek meaning (what it said) and its significance (what it says to me now). According to Osborne (1991:6), the task of hermeneutics must begin with exegesis (to find out the intended meaning), but is not complete until one notes the contextualisation of that meaning for today.

accord with the original intention of the meaning. From there, we even want to emphasise that the three angles (i.e. historical criticism, socio-scientific criticism and rhetorical criticism) should work together in the interpretation of the biblical text.

4. Intended meaning is not necessarily singular, but can be multiple. This is a natural conclusion, because we do not deal with a simple sentence. In the study of the call of the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1, it was possible to detect Jeremiah's political, social-cultural, and theological notions.

5. The interpreters, therefore, should seek manifold meanings of the text (principles) and their equivalent multiple significances (applications) in the biblical texts.

7.2 Retrospect

In this study of the prophetic call of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1, an attempt was made to do the investigation according to the following steps:

In Chapter 1 (i.e. the introduction), a survey of Jeremianic study was presented. By showing the diverse readings of the book of Jeremiah among scholars from Duhm (1901) until recent times, the recent shift of scholarly attention to the book, from the diachronic to the synchronic[48], and the lack of rhetorical study of the book, except by Lundbom, it was attempted to point out the urgent need of

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[48] Not a few consider that the diachronic reading of the book of Jeremiah is impossible by assuming that it has many layers of editing (redaction criticism). Redaction criticism searches out how the prophetic literature was actually compiled and what aims and intentions have contributed to give it its final form (Clements 1996:12). Redaction criticism pays full attention to the final editorial shape of each of the biblical books (Clements 1989:16).

Similarly, canonical criticism starts with *the final text* of scripture and makes observations about how diverse, even contradictory traditions share a canonical context (Sheppard 1974: 3-17; 1982:861-66). In other words, canonical criticism accepts and interprets the biblical text in the form in which it now exists (Clements 1986:57). Both redaction criticism and canonical criticism read the biblical text synchronically.

a more comprehensive reading of the book of Jeremiah, which should include a rhetorical study of the text.

Then a question was raised about scholars' general tendency to separate the message of judgement from that of salvation and how it is assumed that both the message of judgement and that of salvation could not be delivered by the same person. As an alternative proposal, thematic presupposition was suggested, namely that Jer. 1 functions as a theological introduction to the whole book and that its references to judgement and salvation form a theological whole.

As a way of reaching this thematic presupposition, Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach was applied in the research. The structure of this dissertation was organised according to the order suggested by Robbins.

In *Inner texture* (i.e. Chapter 2), close attention was paid to the rhetorical structure of Jeremiah 1. It was seen to be a combination of prose (superscription; Jer. 1:1-3) and poetry (the prophetic call; Jer. 1:4-19). The rhetorical structure was followed intentionally for the rhetorical purpose.

In the structure of the prophetic call, a chiastic structure was found. It begins and ends with Yahweh's call and His encouraging word to a reluctant Jeremiah (A and A'; Jer. 1:4-6 and 1:17-19). Yahweh's encouragement is recorded in B (Jer. 1:7-9) and B' (Jer. 1:11-16). One instance gives an explanation of the call, while the other is that of the commission. The centre of the structure is the commission (Jer. 1:10). There Jeremiah is appointed over nations and kingdoms to deliver the message of judgement and salvation. The centre of the chiastic structure (i.e. Jer. 1:10) conveys its importance in the prophetic call. Jeremiah's task of *tearing down* and *building* is the core of

Jeremiah's mission and his theology. The six consecutive infinitives seem to denote the urgency of the (rhetorical) situation.

Abundant rhetorical resources and features such as parallelism, repetition, assonance, punning, imagery, argument were also discovered. All are intended to persuade the audience to perceive the seriousness of the situation by listening to the prophet, to be convicted and then to repent and return to Yahweh.

In Intertexture (Chapter 3), some important words and phrases were located that were recited, recontextualised, reconfigured, amplified, contrasted or thematically elaborated. Many examples were presented. The most important phrase is presented in Jer. 1:10. The phrase, which comprises the six consecutive verbs of *doom and salvation* (Jer. 1:10), repeatedly appears throughout the book in a slightly varied way. The examples are Jer. 12:14-17; 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28; 42:10; 45:4; 31:38-40. The repeated occurrence implies its importance, so that it can be regarded as the *Leitmotif* of the book of Jeremiah.

Moreover, it was noticed that the concept of *judgement and salvation* is repeated in Eze. 36:36 and Am. 9:11, 14-15 (i.e. outside the book of Jeremiah). From this, it was concluded that Jeremiah seemed to be the prophet from among the prophets who originated or clarified the concept of *salvation after judgement*.

In Social and cultural texture (Chapter 4), the concept of Korean shamanism in the Korean social and cultural context was introduced. This was done because such a comparative, cross-cultural study can contribute to understanding the social and cultural context of the prophetic phenomena in

the biblical text. The Korean context was compared with that of pre-exilic Judah, *inter alia* Jeremiah 1.

B. Wilson's seven types of religious responses were applied to the Jeremianic social and cultural context. Jeremiah was described as *conversionist* and *revolutionist*. On the other hand, Josiah and his followers were presented as *reformists*, and most of his contemporaries as *thaumaturgical*. From there, it was concluded that the conflict between Jeremiah and his contemporaries was the result of differences in their social perspectives, as well as that of theological perspective.

In investigating the cultural context in the time of Jeremiah, the five major modes of culture that Robbins has developed from Roberts' ideas were applied: *dominant culture*, *subculture*, *counterculture*, *contraculture* and *liminal culture*. It was suggested that the people of Judah in the time of Jeremiah were called to live the counter-cultural life, but failed to do so. They, in fact, succumbed to the idolatrous Canaanite culture. Jeremiah's hyperbolic indictment which showed that his contemporaries laid down a prostitute on every high hill and under every spreading tree (Jer. 2:20; cf. 3:6, 13; 17:2), seems to indicate the prevalence of idolatrous practices at the time. Idolatry, in fact, had penetrated into the holy temple of the Lord. As a result, Yahweh's punishment was inflicted upon the people of Judah through war (Jer. 1:16).

In this comparative study between Korean shamanism and the prophetic phenomena in the Old Testament, we came to realise that such a cross-cultural study could be mutually beneficial. In other words, Korean shamanism helps to understand the prophetic phenomenon in the Old Testament as the Old Testament prophetic phenomenon is helpful in understanding the idolatrous tendency of contemporary Korean people. Jeremiah's indicting message for the idolatrous Judean people is, in

fact, a relevant message to contemporary Korean people, because many Koreans are now worshiping money and happiness at any cost.

At the same time, Korean shamanism can contribute to a realisation of the mystery of the spiritual experience at the time of the divine contact, and the importance of the revelatory experience in carrying out the prophetic task afterwards. In this regard, it can be concluded that the visionary revelation in the prophetic call very likely became an impetus to endure hardship in carrying out the prophetic task.

In *Ideological texture* (Chapter 5), the ideological texture was identified with the political texture. During the time of Jeremiah's ministry, Judean society was divided mainly into two political parties: the *pro-Babylon* party and the *pro-Egypt* party. Each comprised priests, scribes, prophets, political leaders and ordinary people. In the midst of controversy between the *pro-Babylon* party and the *pro-Egypt* party, Jeremiah emphasised the importance of restoring pure faith in Yahweh. He, however, advised surrender to Babylon as the political option.

In *Sacred texture* (Chapter 6), an attempt was maid to detect the theological meaning of the text. Seven of Robbins's eight categories were applied in this texture. The category *Spirit being* was excluded, because it has no nexus to the text of Jeremiah 1. In this chapter, we proposed that the theme of *judgement and salvation* was Jeremiah's theological core concept for carrying out his prophetic work. The reason for the inevitable judgement upon the people of Judah was their apostate idolatrous practices and their failure to keep the covenant. The total destruction, therefore, was God's righteous punishment for them. Yahweh's righteousness was vindicated by the nation-wide practice of idolatry among Jeremiah's contemporaries (Jer. 1:16), by the indelibility of their sins, the sinfulness of their hearts, and their refusal to listen the prophet.

For the task of delivering the message of impending doom and salvation following afterwards, Yahweh set apart and appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5). The first verb (i.e. *set apart*) is related to the concept of holiness, while the second verb (*appoint*) is related to that of commitment. Jeremiah responded rightly to Yahweh. Yahweh's guidance and protection were guaranteed by the promise to the obedient Jeremiah (Jer. 1:8, 19).

In contrast, Jeremiah's contemporaries abandoned the covenantal relationship with Yahweh, their God. They lost their holiness because of it. They did not commit their lives to Yahweh, who was portrayed as their spiritual husband, but sought after worldly pleasure and material blessings. The real problem of their behaviour in seeking other things instead of seeking Yahweh alone, was in their hearts: they did not love Yahweh at all. Their behaviour was regarded by the prophet as that of spiritual whoredom.

To chastise the Judean people's adulterous behaviour, Yahweh was going to summon foes from the north (the Babylonian armies) (Jer. 1:14-15). In this regard the demise of the Judean kingdom was presumed to be tragedy. In the context of the prophetic call Yahweh was depicted as the Divine Warrior and Judge against the sinful Judean society.

The judgement, however, was not the end of story for the people of Judah. Salvation would follow after their disastrous exile. The plan for future restoration was a result of Yahweh's profound love for His people. Yahweh's unending love toward His people is the only clue to understanding Yahweh's sudden shift from chastisement to restoration.

Yahweh's divine plan of *judgement and salvation* was indeed Jeremiah's theological concept of human redemption. Jeremiah's inclusion of judgement in Yahweh's redemptive plan was a really profound theological idea.

Throughout the research, an attempt was maid to understand Jeremiah's *Leitmotif* of *judgement and salvation* from social and cultural, ideological and theological perspectives. What was perceived was that each texture has its own distinctive meaning, and each angle is, at the same time, profoundly related to other textures. In other words, Judean society during the time of Jeremiah's ministry was profoundly corrupt in all directions. Judgement was unavoidable.

What was remarkable in Jeremiah's theological concept was his inclusion of salvation in the context of judgement. The inclusion of salvific elements in judgement, and the inclusion of judgemental elements in human redemption, were two sides of the coin in the Jeremianic theological framework. It reveals amazingly insightful theological understanding on the part of the prophet.

It was also suggested that Jeremiah's idea of *judgement and salvation* can very likely be seen as the quintessential concept of the New Testament as well as of the Old Testament concerning human redemption. In other words, the concept of *judgement and salvation* is the consistent way of redemption by which God has operated throughout the Old and New Testament period.

Judgement should be regarded as a gateway to salvation. In the New Testament where salvation is emphasised, there is still an element of judgement. According to Heb. 12:5-13, God chastises His people out of His love toward them. The New Testament implies that salvational work was accomplished by Jesus' sacrificial death (Jn. 19:30). However, Heb. 12:5-13 makes it clear that

there is punishment even after the cross. Therefore, *chastisement and restoration* can be understood as the pattern according to which God is dealing with His children.

Jesus' urging to *repent and believe* implies the same pattern. Repentance is an act of acknowledgement of sinfulness. By believing in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ for individual sin, the New Testament believer experiences God's chastisement for his/her sin in Jesus' sacrificial death upon the cross. Salvation comes after experiencing the punishment of sin through the cross. Without the sacrificial death (i.e. God's judgement) there is no salvation at all. Heb. 9:22 clearly indicates this: "*In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*". Forgiveness signifies salvation (or restoration, as Jer. 31:34 culminates the idea of complete forgiveness in the context of future salvation). Punishment comes first before salvation occurs.

It was also pointed out that Jesus' remarks regarding the *tearing down* and *building* of his body in Jn. 2:19 was an echo of Jeremiah's passage dealing with *tearing down* and *building* in Jer. 1:10. Jesus's remarks implied His future death on the cross and His following resurrection. Jesus was most likely delivering the message that Jeremiah's vision of *tearing down and building* would be realised through his death and resurrection. Jeremiah seemed to perceive God's framework for human redemption as that of *judgement and salvation* long, long before it happened in its fullest sense on the cross. If this assumption is reasonable, Jeremiah was a profound theologian indeed.

To summarise, Robbins's socio-rhetorical approach helped us to understand Jeremiah's theological framework of *judgement and salvation*. Jeremiah pointed out to his audience the false concepts and distortions which were prevalent in Judean society. According to Jeremiah, his contemporaries were incurably corrupt in terms of ideology, economy, ethics, sociology, morality and theology. Making

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the best use of such prevalent problems, Jeremiah made a strong argument that Yahweh's punishment was inevitable, but that restoration would eventually occur because of Yahweh's unfailing love for His people.

The following are important conclusions of our socio-rhetorical investigation of Jeremiah 1:

Firstly, as an answer to the problem regarding the relationship between the judgement oracles and the salvation oracles, we conclude that in the final form, the salvation oracles and the judgement oracles form a coherent whole and that this coherence is suggested by Jeremiah 1 as introduction to the book.

In this regard, we cannot but point out the limitation of the source theory which has heavily influenced Jeremianic studies (regarding source theory, see Section 1.1). It is our view that it is not enough to merely identify different sources in the book. Source theory cannot give an answer to the problem about why each different source contains both elements of judgement and salvation. The source theory would have been a great help if the poetry section in the book contains only the judgement oracles whereas the prose or biographical sections contain the message of salvation. Because it is not the case, the source theory intrinsically has a limit to understand the relationship between judgement oracles and salvation oracles in the book.

Secondly, we think that we prove our hypothesis that Jeremiah 1, especially Jer. 1:10, functions as a theological introduction to the whole book of Jeremiah and its references to judgement and salvation form a theological whole, is reasonable.

In this regard, we feel that the scholarly effort to divide the book into two sections does not seem to be convincing. Brueggemann and Stulman (See Section 1.1) consider that a major break occurs between Chapters 25-26 of the book. In his two volume commentaries, Brueggemann gives a title of "To Pluck Up, To Tear Down" as a commentary of Jer. 1-25, and that of "To Build, to Plant" as a commentary of Jer. 26-52. Stulman also divides the book into chapters 1-25 and 26-52 by assuming that the former part emphasised the judgement whereas the latter emphasised the salvation. Both scholars consider that the turning point from judgement to salvation in the book was the demise of the Judean kingdom in 586 BC.

We consider that such a division is unconvincing, for the following reasons. First of all, Jer. 1-25 does not solely contain the judgement section. It contains the salvation element too. For example, Jer. 24 clearly has a message of hope for the exiles. Secondly, the more serious problem is in the title of Brueggemann's second book: "To Build, to Plant". The reality is that Jer. 26-52 contains many judgement elements even though it has elements of salvation. The titles of Brueggemann's commentaries, in fact, do not match the real content of the book. Lastly, Brueggemann and Stulman consider that the turning-point of the book occurred 586 BC. If their consideration was so, they should divide the book into chapters 1-39 and 40-52, because Chapter 39 gives a historical report of the fall of Jerusalem. While it is true that the catastrophic disaster in 586 BC was a turning point in the Jewish history, the turning point of the book occurs much earlier. The prophetic call in Jer. 1 is a turning point and inspiration of the book.

Brueggemann is right when he sees that the whole book can be covered in the two titles, "To Pluck Up, To Tear Down" and "To Build, To Plant", even though each title does not match the real content. Brueggemann seems to understand that the content of Jer. 1:10 covers the whole book. However, his division is problematic, as stated above.

Our position is that the content of Jer. 1:10 is not to be divided unnaturally because the book of Jeremiah contains both the messages of judgement and salvation without any apparent order. It seems to be more natural to regard the whole book in the rubric of Jer. 1:10, namely, judgement and salvation. The book of Jeremiah, therefore, should be interpreted holistically in the light of *Leitmotif* of Jer. 1:10.

From there, we want to suggest a very important thematic statement of this research that *the book of Jeremiah as a compositional whole with Jer. 1:10 as Leitmotif*. Indeed, Jer. 1:10 is the theological core of the whole book which spreads out to the edge of the book (i.e. Jer. 52).

Thirdly, these two conclusions regarding the problem and hypothesis have been proved from both a social scientific perspective and a rhetorical perspective (Robbins combines these two perspectives and calls it a "socio-rhetorical" approach). In other words, the chiastic structure in Jer. 1:4-19 highlights its centre (i.e. Jer. 1:10), the *Leitmotif* of the book (the rhetorical perspective). At the same time, the social scientific approach helps to identify diverse interest groups and the gravity of distortion and corruption of Judean society in all directions at that time. Namely, Jeremiah's contemporaries were incurably corrupt in terms of ideology, economy, ethics, sociology, morality and theology. Moreover, Jeremiah's contemporaries held different views from Jeremiah in the light of social, cultural, political and theological viewpoints. Jeremiah and his contemporaries must have caused considerable controversy because of their different viewpoints. Jeremiah made a strong argument, namely that Yahweh's punishment was inevitable, but that restoration would eventually occur because of Yahweh's unfailing love for His people. His thematic statement of salvation after judgement was a creature of that particular time, the most tumultuous period in Israelite history.

In this regard, Lundbom's rhetorical approach to the book does not seem to be sufficient in interpreting it. For a better understanding, due attention is to be paid to a dynamic social dimension of the time, along with a rhetorical study of the book.

To indicate the importance of social understanding in interpreting the text, we introduced Korean understanding of prophecy. Korean people listen to someone who claims to have experienced divine revelation. The Korean people consider that authority and divine power come when a person encounters the divine being. Therefore, people respect such a person when their testimony seems to be genuine.

In this regard, the persuasive power and authority of Jeremiah's message is not from his literary skill or fluent speech but stems from the reality of the divine encounter with Yahweh. In other words, we do not underestimate the importance of the literary skill that Jeremiah had; we want to emphasise the revelatory experience in the time of the prophetic calling as being more important in terms of the prophetic authority. Lundbom's work is disqualified in this regard.

Fourthly, we could identify diverse interest groups in the time of Jeremiah through socio-rhetorical criticism. To name a few from the social perspective: "conversionists", "revolutionists", "reformists" and "thaumaturgicals". The "pro-Babylon", "pro-Egypt" and "autonomistic" groups can be identified from the ideological angle. Intense sociological, cultural, political and theological controversy must have existed between Jeremiah and such diverse groups among his audience.

Lastly, we found the socio-rhetorical approach a very useful tool to explore such rich and complicated texts like the book of Jeremiah. Until now, Jeremianic studies have been inclined toward one or the other way. As far as we know, our investigation was the first attempt to utilize a

socio-rhetorical method in studying the book of Jeremiah. The aim of our research was to understand the Jeremianic text more comprehensively. It is our hope that such practical methodology will be used more widely by scholars so that we may have a better understanding of the book of Jeremiah. Socio-rhetorical method helps me to interpret Jeremiah 1 with a Korean context.

7.3 Prospect

Robbins's integrative socio-rhetorical approach was applied to the research of the prophetic call in Jeremiah 1. Robbins's model was so comprehensive that not all his suggestions could be utilised when applying them to the Jeremianic text[49].

However, it was possible to interpret the text more comprehensively and dynamically as a result of Robbins's various insightful suggestions. In fact, his practical suggestions made the research of the Jeremianic text extremely fruitful. From this experience, it is now possible to believe that his model can be a standard working model for investigating the biblical text exhaustively. It is our conviction that anyone who applies Robbins's interdisciplinary methodology to interpret any part of the biblical texts, will surely reap much fruit from such studies. As Robbins's multidimensional approach was very helpful and because it provided the necessary insight in studying the prophetic call in Jeremiah 1, we are confident that anyone who applies his multidimensional approach which gives manifold angles to the study of any part of the biblical texts, can benefit abundantly and will eventually be able to arrive at a better understanding of the text. Robbins' multidimensional approach is indeed a pertinent methodology for interpreting the biblical texts, because the Old Testament texts and their contexts, *inter alia*, are too diverse to be interpreted from only one angle.

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[49] Botha (1998: 59) points out this problem in his article.

This practical and useful model is still too rarely utilised in biblical studies, especially Old Testament studies. The model should be cherished, fostered and enthusiastically used by the readers of biblical texts. Hopefully this study on Jeremiah 1 will be a catalyst to trigger off readers' use of this exciting and promising model in their biblical studies. The result of its application will be a better understanding of the biblical text, which surely is the dream of every reader of the biblical text.

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