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Rereading Isaiah 40–55 as the Project Launcher for the Books of the  
Law and the Prophets:

Part 1: Analytical Reading of Isaiah 40–55 as the Parable of Abraham  
and Sarah and its Reenactment in Genesis 32<sup>1</sup>

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**1. Introductory Remarks on the Proposed Reading and Method**

Both traditional exegesis, including the modern fundamentalist, as well as critical study of the texts of the books of the Law and the Prophets share a common working premise/groundwork, approaching these texts as compositions disjunct in space and time and motivation. The traditionalist will see common ground in an extrapolated focal point designated as divine authorship. The critical scholar will, more often than not, decipher disjunct sources, traditions, texts and intentions. That the texts are transmitted as a corpus, most often held to be canonical by those transmitting the texts, is explained in terms of a sociological unifying factor. This factor is differently construed, depending on the ideology or sociopolitical premise of the scholar, but remains in practically all cases extraneous to the texts precisely as a unifying factor.

This study has benefited substantially from the previous work on the subject matter, but in the course of my own investigative study I have found that the basically assumed groundwork of the studies in this field must be challenged.<sup>2</sup> My study of the various texts of the books of the Law and the Prophets has brought to the fore a pattern of organization of the material pointing more and more to redactional work recognizable as the redactional design and motivation behind chs. 40-55 of the book of Isaiah. These are commonly designated in critical literature as Deutero-Isaiah or Second Isaiah. The current study will argue that Isa 40-55 was written as a project launcher for what we have as the books of the Law and the Prophets. Consequently it will not be designated Second-Isaiah, but will be referred to as Isa

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1 The subtitle makes reference to the fact that this paper constitutes the first part of a wider study. As indicated in the introductory remarks, it is the first part/chapter of a monograph to be published by the author on the subject of the main title. An edited version of this paper was originally published in: Roddy, Nicolae, ed., *Festschrift in Honor of Professor Paul Nadim Tarazi: Volume 1: Studies in the Old Testament*. Bible in the Christian Orthodox Tradition: Volume 3. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2013. The editing introduced a considerable number of modifications to the original text which did not correctly represent the intention or argument of the author. The author did not see the edited form of the text before it was published. The text published here is the original text submitted by the author, with only minor corrections, mainly print copy corrections, introduced by the author.

2 This work builds upon the work of Paul Nadim Tarazi in this respect. Cf. section 4.1 below.

40-55. The first part of this study, presented here, is a rereading of Isa 40-55 based on the end point arrived at in my study of the relevant texts. The exegetical circle, commencing from this interim conclusion, will go on to display, illustrate and test this on several key and pivotal texts in the books under consideration. In this first part of the endeavor the thesis will be illustrated against the giving of a new name to Jacob in Gen 32.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Remarks on Method

The basic method followed by this study is the redaction critical approach. This assumes that regardless of what traditions, sources and previous writings there may have been at the disposal of the redactor, the redactional effort is the paramount factor in the shape that a specific text takes. In this it is heavily indebted to the redaction critical work of Willi Marxsen.<sup>4</sup> The method is also a function critical and literary critical method. Motifs and appellations are seen to function as types, becoming, like arguments, determinative of the functional flow of a text. Names thus become a function of literary artifice and play a primary role in the argument of the storyline or lesson. They predispose the articulation in a given direction, and function as focal points, as attractors propelling forward the argument/action. Types are constructed and become determinative for the lesson, while the roles, in this sense, become secondary and may be subject to inversion and reversal.

## 2. An Attempt at Deciphering the Redactional Framework of Isa 40-55

The general parsing of the text adopted here is basically a two part division.<sup>5</sup> The first part is the Jacob part, Isa 40:1-49:26, while the second part is the Abraham part, Isa 50:1-55:13. Two different role models will be presented, the second being the solution offered to the problem posed by the first. The four servant songs function quasi as a Greek dramatic choir indicating how one should move out of the one role model and into the other—in other words, they indicate the lesson to be followed.

### 2.1 Terminological Matrices of Isa 40-55

Overlapping terminological matrices dominate Isa 40-55 and inform the flow of the text. They function as *dramatis personae*, or at least as accoutrement of ghost characters. It is incumbent to introduce these matrices before we embark on an analysis of the compositional structure.

The basic terminological matrix of Isa 40-55 seems to be dominated by the notions of barren land and power over the waters. The term Zion, as the epicenter of this matrix, spreads all across the work, and appears to be a construction conjured up by the writer for this text. It is extraordinary that we find it nowhere in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, considering that Ezekiel is an upper class priest stemming from Jerusalem and addressing basically Jerusalem, and through Jerusalem all the tribes. Nowhere is Zion used more repeatedly and centrally

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3 The previously announced study of the Joseph type and its transformation, which is a centerpiece of the argument, proved to be too long for the space limitation incumbent on the Festschrift. It remains for a future publication.

4 Willi Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (2nd ed.; Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959).

5 For a review of recent proposals which seem to come close to the one being proposed here but diverge as regards the description of the second part, cf. Peter Höffgen, *Jesaya: Der Stand der Theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2004), 101-105.

than in the book of Isaiah. Within the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-55 appear to have a very studied and deliberate use of the term, spread across all the work, Isa 52:8 being the last instance. What is the meaning of the term? The term *šyāh* means parched land. It is used in Isa 41:18. It is a one step literary construction to assimilate this term to *šidōn* (Sidon), making it *šyōn* (Zion). Jerusalem is for our author/redactor a barren and parched land. What speaks for the literary priority of our author is that the whole of the composition from 40:1 on is addressed from and to a parched wilderness. In the second part we have the barren Sarah coming to the fore in lieu of the parched land. Zion is a taunt and a call to attention to the words of the writer. The words of his Deity will water the parched Zion.<sup>6</sup> At the same time it stands in contrast to the fertile fields of Ephraim, attached to Joseph in the book of Genesis (Gen 41:52).<sup>7</sup>

A second linguistic matrix is adjoined to this basic one. It is that of victorious kingship. Yahweh is declared King of Israel (Isa 43:15). Consequently he is the Savior of Israel. Good tidings of victory are sent by him to Jerusalem, to Zion (cf. Isa 40:9; 41:27; 52:7 for the *pi'el* verbal form of *bšr*, to bring good tidings). The *hip'il* verbal form of the root *yš'* (to save) is used profusely (cf. Isa 43:3, 11, 12; 45:15, 20, 21; 46:7; 47:13, 15; 49:25, 26) and exclusively in what is taken here to be the first part of Isa 40-55 to describe the action of the Deity. The noun *yš'h* (salvation) is used at the end of the first part and in the second part to describe the result of the action of the deity (cf. Isa 49:6, 8; 51:6, 8; 52:7, 10). The “creator” deity with power over the waters is here described as also exercising the regal charge to provide victory/salvation, as happens in the psalms celebrating Yahweh as King. Indeed Isa 40-55 can be described as an extended kingly psalm.

A third linguistic matrix is adjoined to the two described above. It is that of kinship and its concomitant obligations. Yahweh is described as the *gō'el* (redeemer) of Israel across the whole of this work starting with Isa 41:14. Consequently he is also the one who comforts his people/family. The *pi'el* verbal form of *nḥm* (to comfort) is used to announce the work in 40:1 and used in 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 54:11 (this last in the passive *pu'al*). Both noun forms and verbal forms derived from the root *rḥm* (from which come the nouns womb, Isa 46:3, and compassion, Isa 54:7, and the verb to have compassion/mercy, Isa 49:10, 13, 15; 54:8, 10; 55:7) are also used to describe the action of the deity.

We can conclude from this brief description of the linguistic matrices of this work that they describe an all-purpose deity: God over the waters, warrior king and family clansman!

One very important and characteristic verb of Isa 40-55 was left out. It can be construed as pertaining to all three matrices described. It is the verbal root *br'* (usually translated as “to create”). It is basically used in Isa 40-55 (40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7 twice, 8, 12, 18 twice; 48:7; 54:16 twice) and the creation narrative in Genesis (Gen 1:1, 21, 27 thrice; 2:3, 4; 5:1, 2 twice; 6:7). Otherwise, its use is sporadic. Its characteristic use in these two compositions (together with the word *tōhō* “chaos, vanity” in Gen 1:2; Isa 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 45:18, 19; 49:4) is one of the reasons often taken to infer an influence of Isa 40-55 on the creation narrative in Genesis.<sup>8</sup> The meaning of the root in both Hebrew and Arabic appears diverse, but can be summed up as the taking something out of an obstructing shell/covering, free someone/something from dirt, sickness, guilt. As such it has a relation to the function of cleansing waters, to that of redemption, and to that of victorious/judicial acquittal. What issues out of the verb has the connotation of clean, out of the box, pristine,

6 This is why the last instance of its use is in 52:8, just before the fourth servant song brings to the fore the resolution to the problem from the redactor’s point of view.

7 This will be expanded upon in the chapter on the Joseph story in the forthcoming book.

8 Cf. Paul Nadim Tarazi, *Genesis* (The Chrysostom Bible; St Paul, Minn.: OCABS Press, 2009), 27-33.

healthy, innocent, without any wart or shortcoming, free, filial. The closely related root *brr* (employed in Isa 49:2; 52:11, otherwise sporadically) shares practically the same domain of meaning. Among the related words from this domain, in this case from *brr*, is the Aramaic word for son, *br* (this is employed in Arabic also to denote an upright person, *bār*, and uprightness, *bir*). That the redactor of Isa 40-55 intentionally chose the root *br* and made it characteristic of the weave of his composition is underscored by its amazing scarcity and casual use elsewhere in scripture except for the creation narrative. The range of possible meanings corresponds, as we will see, to the function of the new action of God described in Isa 50-55 in terms of the “parable” of Abraham and Sarah and prepared for by the extensive use of this verb in Isa 40-49.

It is the contention of the basic thesis underlying this work that Isa 40-55 is the project launcher for the books of the Law and the Prophets, for Scripture. The use of *br* in Isa 40-55 corresponds more aptly to the expected topic for this root than the stylized use in Gen 1:1. The creation narrative would seem to be dependent on Isa 40-55, announcing the new work of God, the five books of the Law, as in continuation of the initial action of God in creating the habitat of man.<sup>9</sup> This is how *br* is employed in Isa 40-55, where it describes the modality of action of the deity hitherto in 40-49, on the basis of which the new action to be undertaken is announced in 50-55. Indeed in Isa 45:7-23 and 48:6-15 we have a programmatic announcement of such a projected endeavor. The address/words and intention of the deity will be brought forth out of the hiddenness of the deity, and will proclaim/are the new action of this deity. The root *br* plays a pivotal role in both these passages. In analogy to the action of the deity who brings all things out into functional “ex-istence” and man/woman out of the womb, and in continuance thereof, the address/words of this deity, the “new” action, will be made clearly known, declared, “out-spoken” (cf. also 42:14).

## 2.2 Elements of the Redactional Scheme of Isa 40-55

The structuring of the work using these matrices seems to take the shape of problem description followed by delineation of the solution. The first part, the Jacob part, presents the problem track. The second part, the Abraham part, presents the solution. The foibles of Jacob are juxtaposed to the response of the deity. It is interesting that Jacob/Israel is used alternately with Jerusalem/Zion. The address is to Jerusalem/Zion, the perspective is Jacob/Israel (48:1). This runs parallel to what we have in the Pentateuch in general. Moreover, we seem to have in Isa 40-55 a work that runs in parallel to the book of Genesis, with two exceptions: The sequence Abraham to Jacob in the book of Genesis appears to be inverted to Jacob-Abraham, and the prospect of exodus in the Pentateuch is from Egypt, whereas in Isa 40-55 it is from Babylon. One major element though appears to be missing, the Joseph cycle/story. The question that poses itself is the following: do we have in Isa 40-55 a paraphrased reworking of the book of Genesis, or do we have a blueprint, technically speaking, of a project

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9 The functional connection between the use in Gen 1:1ff and in Isa 40-55 seems best reflected/given expression to in Isa 4:5, a pivotal verse in the introductory section of the book of Isaiah as a whole. The first five chapters of the book of Isaiah, which are probably the last part of the book of Isaiah to be redacted, are a summary of the whole book, and consequently introduce also Isa 40-55. The action of God as regards the reconstituted and cleansed remnant, Isa 4:2-6, is described as a creation event corresponding to the giving of the law on Sinai, and as a coming to the assembly where the reading of the law takes place: “Then the Lord will create (*br*) over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its places of assembly (*miqrā’ehā*, assembly to hear a reading) a cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night. Indeed over all the glory there will be a canopy.” (Isa 4:5 NRSV).

encompassing, at the very least, the book of Genesis?<sup>10</sup> To further explore this question an expansion on the compositional elements and the redactional scheme of Isa 40-55 is incumbent.

### 2.2.1 Part One: Isaiah 40:1-49:26

The first part is Isa 40:1-49:26. The appellation Jacob is used profusely and exclusively in this part. The problem is summed up in 40:27-31. God is willing and capable of bringing succor to Jacob. Jacob does not believe it.

The first major subsection, 40:1-41:29, introduces the problem. God declares that he is the creator God in a terminology that is practically identical with that of the creation account in the book of Genesis. He declares good tidings to Jacob. Jacob is not convinced. The last section of this subsection, 41:25-29, points in the direction of the following first song of the servant. God seeks to find someone up to the task, but no one is in sight! A cryptic announcement of God's new action is given in 41:25, which together with 42:14-16 brackets the first song of the servant.

The first song of the servant, 42:1-9, together with the commentary on it, 42:10-25, introduces the following central section (43:1-48:22) of the first part. The song introduces the problem from God's side. If Jacob bemoans lack of succor, God bemoans lack of Justice. The servant cannot speak; he is still in the womb as we will learn further on. God speaks about the servant in the third person. This will be paralleled by the last song in the second part. There the servant is no more, again only God can speak. The second song (which comes at the end of the first part) and the third song (which comes at the beginning of the second part) have the servant speak in the first person: he is, at that point of the discourse/drama, onstage.

The first song (42:1-9) is in God's imaginary time. When the required servant is present, then he will administer justice. He will not blabber like an infant, nor break the broken in violence. The first part of the commentary on the song, vv. 10-17, is central to the flow. God announces that he will embark on a new venture. He has decided to release what he had kept held back like a pregnant woman for so long (v. 14). He is finally going to blurt out his guts. The second part of the commentary, vv. 18-25, is a bitterly acerbic contrasting of the wished for servant with Jacob. This lays the ground for the following indictment of Jacob.

The central subsection of part one, 43:1-48:22, contains the teaching incumbent upon the prospective servant. The first part in this subsection, 43:1-44:23, declares God's intention to bring salvation to the just. In ch. 43 there is a reiteration of God's will and capability to bring about salvation (vv. 1-7). There is no other God but He. His past actions, to which the people are witness, are brought forward in proof (vv. 8-13). God's new salvific action is about to unfold (43:14-20). There is one big snag though, Jacob stands contra expectation. He has "enslaved" God to the servicing of his iniquity. God had decided in consequence to blot out Jacob (43:22-28). Chapter 44 introduces the notion of conditional covenant. The promise of salvation applies to the upright (vv. 1-5). We have in v. 2 a new qualification requisite of Jacob for the promise to be applicable. He is called *yšrn* (Jeshurun). This epithet is used only here and in Deut 32:15; 33:5, 26, in a passage very similar to the one here. In Deuteronomy it brackets the condemnation of Jacob in the song of Moses and the pronouncement of the blessings of Moses, making the blessings hinge on Yahweh reigning as king in the midst of an upright Jacob. The epithet Jeshurun, from the root *yšr* (to be upright), can be parsed as a

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<sup>10</sup> It is precisely in a comparison with the apparently missing Joseph cycle that it will be possible to start giving an answer to this question. This will be discussed in the to be published sequel study as part two of this work.

conditional clause “when they/should they deign to function uprightly.” This will be mirrored again in an address to Jacob as the redeemed servant, conditional on remembering the teaching (vv. 21-23). As in the passage in Deuteronomy, this conditional covenant is interspersed in our text with affirmations that God alone is God (vv. 6-8, 24-28) and a tirade against idolatry (vv. 9-20). The chiasmic arrangement of this chapter underlines this reading. Central to the chapter is the tirade against idolatry. This makes the send-off in verse 28 introducing Cyrus as God's shepherd all the more astounding. In fact this anticipates chapter 45, introduced by a direct address to Cyrus (in 44:28 the address was indirect, in the third person).

Chapter 45 can unequivocally be called the manifesto of universal monotheism. The teaching here is addressed not only to Jacob but to Cyrus! We had heretofore heard that the proclamation was first declared to Jacob (41:27). Now it is addressed in the person of Cyrus to all nations (vv. 1-13). This had already been announced in the program description in 40:5.

Cyrus will cede to the requests of Yahweh on behalf of Jacob without requesting any recompense, any silver (v. 13). This passage (45:1-13), together with the send-off from the previous section 44:28, is perhaps the most decidedly antithetically minded declaration against the priests and the levites of Jerusalem and Judea. It is usual to see the more extreme hostility in Isa 56-66. P. D. Hanson<sup>11</sup> sees in Isa 56-66 a development towards a sharpening of the acrimony directed against the priests and the levites due to the injustices in a failed new Jerusalem. Yes, but this development should be posited antecedent to Isa 40-55. The greatest acrimony is to be found in the source text of the school! It is the postulate of this paper that we have here in Isa 40-55 the master writing at the hub of the anticlerical group vituperating against the failed Jerusalem. The ultimate put-down is the total silent treatment accorded to the clerical group. It is the ultimate application of the “blessing/curse” of Jacob accorded to Simeon and Levi in Gen 49:5-7, “May I never come into their council: may I not be joined to their company” (v. 6a NRSV). Our redactor will not even address a reprimand. Their council is not the addressee, neither positively nor negatively; it is not their prerogative. No one, he says, may even think to question the potter (Isa 45:9-10. Compare 41:25).

But what has he said to provoke the implied protest? In 44:28 he describes Cyrus as God's shepherd, in conjunction with the divine injunction to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. This is a kingly designation, as it comes in tandem with the mention of the palace/temple. But God has been declared as the only king and holy place in Israel (43:15) as well as shepherd of Zion/Jerusalem (40:11). Thus he gives the orders, not Cyrus. After all, one can hire a shepherd for one's flock! But already this statement is introduced abruptly against the backdrop of the declaration of God's omnipotence (44:24-27).

What goes beyond this abrupt cold shower is the statement at the head of the new passage addressing Cyrus as God's anointed. While anointment applies to the king in the first instance, by derivation it applies also to the clergy who have to service the king's palace/temple. It is a title that admits of being derivative, and yet is not given to anyone else in this work. It is meticulously withheld from the servant, who in Isa 53 becomes a sin offering. Selfsame will be described as concomitant with God's salvation starting in Isa 49 in anticipation of his work in the second part (chs. 50-55). The designation of Cyrus as anointed of God breaks the very purpose of anointment. Anointment consecrates the appointee, such that he/she will be able to protect the sacral precinct from being defiled from outside. The very logic is destroyed here. The anointed is already the defiled outside. The perspective is inverted. Our writer, after all, is, like Joseph in Genesis, himself in the defiled domain, yet

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11 Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

announcing the cleansing words of God to the defiled Jerusalem/Jacob. The servant in Isa 53 will be in the same situation. He will be the desecrated sin offering bringing healing to Israel (53:5). The domain of the clergy, together with clerical prerogative, is totally annihilated in this passage.

But this is not all. We are told that the mediation provided for the redemption of Jacob did not require any recompense/remuneration. More on this as regards the Joseph story will follow in the forthcoming chapter about Joseph. Suffice here to underline that this statement is not simply to undergird the sovereignty of God. We need only read the directive in the book of Numbers (cf. Num 18:24) and the echoes thereof in Deuteronomy against the levites amassing estates, an apart heritage, to see how pointedly pugnacious this statement is in this context. Their sustenance must be assured, we are told in Deuteronomy (Deut 12:12, 18-19; 14:27-29; 16:11-14; 26:11-13), but their services may not be such as to set up a private heritage.<sup>12</sup> Yahweh alone is their heritage.

If the preceding commentary on the first half of ch. 45 is not enough to make us start suspecting that we are at the hotbed of scriptural monotheism, then the second part of the chapter leaves us no choice but to take this suspicion very seriously. In vv. 14-17 the nations acknowledge God as the only god and as the hidden savior. This is in contrast to deities represented with images. God is hidden; he cannot be represented by images. We then have a most amazing statement about this hidden God, a god with no face. He speaks righteousness and uprightness in the open (vv. 18-19). We have here the most succinct description/announcement of scriptural monotheism: A god with no image, whose representation is solely in scriptures enunciating truth and equity. This passage points to a body of “words” that will reveal the hidden deity, effectively the announcement of scriptural monotheism. The chapter ends with a call to the nations to turn to this deity. The teaching of the conditional covenant applies to the nations as it applies to Jacob. This chapter is the chiasmic hub of the subsection dealing with the teaching incumbent on the prospective servant (43:1-48:22).

The last part of this subsection, 46:1-48:22, starts with an extended diatribe against idolatry in ch. 46. The next chapter (ch. 47) describes the judgment incumbent upon iniquity at the example of Babylon. Finally the address returns to Jacob in ch. 48. The “new action” (already heralded in 41:15, 25; 42:9-17; 43:18-19) about which Jacob had not been informed before (48:6) is about to be announced. Jacob is reminded of his treachery and iniquity (48:7-8). Yet the offer stands of salvation. Whoever of Jacob gives ear and acknowledges the past acts of God will be beneficiary of the new that is about to be divulged. The final verse (v. 22) curtly summarizes the lesson of the whole subsection 43:1-48:22, “‘there is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked.’” (NRSV).

The first part of the work is nearing its conclusion. It corresponds to the lesson of the book of the Former Prophets. We are about to be addressed concerning the latter and new action of God. Chapter 49 concludes the first part of the work, and prepares for the second part. The second song of the servant comments on the first part and answers to God's call in compliance with it (49:1-6). The servant is still hidden in God, but he can speak now in the first person, and he does so. Like God in the previous passages he addresses the nations. He has been taught by God. His tongue has become a sharp sword, indeed he has been set as a just/select/purged<sup>13</sup> arrow hidden in God's quiver (v. 2). Out of the barren womb of Zion,

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12 cf. Paul Nadim Tarazi, “Deuteronomy as a ‘Reprise’ of Gen 1-2: A Redaction Critical Reading” (Paper presented at ANZATS/ANZSTS Conference, Queens College, Parkville, Melbourne, Australia, July 6, 2004).

13 The word in Hebrew is *bārûr*, from *brr*. Compare this with the use in Isa 52:11 of the same root in the *nip'al*

God brought forth this servant. This interpretation of the literary figure of his having been called from the womb in v. 1b is justified not only by the imagery of the preceding section but specifically by the statements we will be hearing in the following section. Although Jacob will not be mentioned after this chapter, Zion will be invoked heavily in the subsection preceding the fourth song (cf. 49:14ff in conjunction with 51:3). The imagery from here on and up to the fourth song is that of converting the barrenness of Zion into a garden of Eden, a garden of God. The servant has become the war armory of God. We have a similar metaphor applied to Elijah in the book of the Former Prophets (2 Kgs 2:12). This servant has learned what was incumbent on Jacob to learn in the first section. He has hitherto been hidden in God. This references what we were told in 48:6b, 7. The servant is concomitant with the new to be announced for the first time. Up to now we have heard about the past. Cyrus belongs to the past action of this deity. As in apocalyptic literature, the lesson from the past was the launchpad for the announcement which is new. The mission of the servant is to bring God's solution to the problem God has with Jacob as expounded in part one. The closing verse reiterates what we saw in chs. 45-48. The mission is addressed equivalently to all the nations.

The passage 49:7-13 is an extended commentary on the second song of the servant. It is also a signature of the author/redactor of Isa 40-55. The servant is a despised and abhorred servant of rulers, and yet the recipient of adulation by selfsame. His day is one of salvation. This is the second time that we have the use of the noun salvation in this work after 49:6. It will be used in 51:6, 8, and 52:7, 10. Hitherto we have had the use of the verbal form (to save), including the *hip'il* participial form (savior), to describe the work of God in part one. We will still have a last use of the verbal and participial form in 49:25, 26 together with the last use of the name Jacob in 49:26. In part two Jacob is no longer at work, only the servant. His day of work is called a day of salvation. His day will bring God's salvific work to fruition in contrast to Jacob's bringing to naught God's past actions. He will be a covenant for the people. This is a regal term, however much it recalls the Abrahamic covenant in the book of Genesis. He will parcel out and apportion heritages. This is quintessentially a description of a suzerainty treaty/covenant. He will also release the imprisoned, feed the hungry and bring water to the thirsty. Most importantly he will bring comfort to the afflicted people, fulfilling the program announced at the outset in 40:1ff. At this point it is difficult not to see in vv. 7-13 a description of Joseph in the court of Pharaoh. Just as significantly, rather more significantly, the work described here is in fact a description of the implicit design and task guiding the work of the redactor/redactors of the Pentateuch and the books of the Former and Latter Prophets. This is a blueprint for the redaction of those books. These will be the new action and words that God has withheld in the past and is about to blurt out in the latter/current day of our author.

The last passage (49:14-26) echoes the objection of Jacob in 40:27. It stands in contrast to the response of the servant in 49:4 to the same situation. The servant trusts in God's succor, Jacob/Zion bewails the lack of succor. God quotes Jacob/Zion at the end of part one as he did at the beginning. The time of Jacob is over, the time of the servant, of the covenant, is about to begin/resume. Against the backdrop of Jacob's continuing objection, God asserts his intention to continue/resume his program with a new action. The objection in v. 21 becomes that of a barren woman incredulous about giving birth. The image was prepared for already in the response of God to the objection voiced by Zion in v. 14. God there is likened to a nursing mother (v. 15).

The use of Zion to represent Jacob's objection in 49:14 prepares for the transfer from

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as a description of the ritual purity requisite of those who bear the vessels of the Lord.



the image of a barren parched land, Zion, to that of a barren woman not expecting children. This prepares for the invocation of the parable of Abraham and Sarah (Isa 51:2) in part two of the book, the solution to the problem expounded in part one. The last verse closes by citing the credentials of the deity, “Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” (NRSV). The word *’ābîr* (Mighty One) is used only here as a divine epithet in the composition we are dealing with. In Isa 46:12 it is used only generically. It seems strange that the last word in this part is one that was neither introduced previously, nor will be explained in the following part. In the Pentateuch we find it used only once, in the blessing of Joseph by Jacob (Gen 49:24). In Isa 49:26 we are told that God is the only strongman Jacob needs (cf. Isa 31:1-3, where the school of Isaiah expands on this motif). This word provides a backdrop for the following section.

The verbal root from which comes the name Joseph, *ysp* (to add/increase/provide more), is not used in Isa 40-55 except twice (47:1, 5) at the outset of the judgment of Babylon (in lieu for all Adam, including Jacob) and twice (51:22; 52:1) in the last two judgment pronouncements before the fourth servant song. This use, astride the two parts of the work, marks the import of the transition from part one to part two. God's judgment will fall on the wicked, God will provide for the salvation he intended. This is described as the end of the travail of his people, and as the bountiful increase in their fortune and progeny. The use of the verb, however, is in all four instances in the negative. There will be “no more” of the bad stuff. We should remember that the “bad stuff” suffered by Jacob was described in the first part as resulting from the “bad stuff” produced by Jacob (43:22-28; 48:18-19). This same accusation is repeated in the first verse of part two (50:1). Jacob will not be mentioned by the name Jacob in part two. He, like Babylon, must give way to the servant. His “increase,” expressed as treachery in part one (48:8), led to the increase of the “bad stuff”. The writer announces in all four instances that there will be no more increase of this type, sounding in Hebrew very close to “no more Joseph.” Not only Jacob must disappear in part two. Joseph/Increase of this semantic pedigree must also disappear.

Excursus: In Gen 30:22-24, Rachel gives birth to Joseph as the culmination of the work and rewards of Jacob. He has acquired wealth and progeny, built himself up, gotten his favorite bride. In a word, he has it made. He is on the increase beyond measure. The birth of Joseph announces the climax of his wheeler-dealing. Indeed, the announcement of the story of the actions of Jacob and their results (Gen 37:2), expressed in the Hebrew text of Genesis as *tôlēdôt*, starts with the Joseph story. He is the summa of all the story/stories of Jacob. The naming of Joseph at his birth by Rachel in Gen 30:22-24 becomes a resume of the passages demarcated by the use of the verbal root *ysp* in Isa 47:1, 5; 51:22; 52:1, astride the two parts of Isa 40-55. Rachel, utilizing a wordplay on the consonance of the two roots *’sp* (here in the meaning to remove aside) and *ysp* (to add), describes the significance of the moment. The passage reads: “Then God remembered Rachel, and God heeded her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son, and said, 'God has taken away (*’sp*) my reproach'; and she named him Joseph, saying, 'May the Lord add (*ysp*) to me another son!'“ (NRSV). The verb indicating the end of the bad situation, her barrenness and shame, although from another root (*’sp*, in a usage corresponding to the negative of *ysp*), is used as the justification for the name Joseph. It is significant to note that the statement of Rachel underlines also that the appellation Joseph implies that more of the same will come. In other words, Joseph does not only describe the past of Jacob, it describes also the awaited/wished for future perspective, increase upon increase. The function in this passage of Benjamin, the one outstanding son of Jacob not yet born, is to underline the semantic implication of Joseph “more of the same”. Left at this point, the story of Jacob will continue as more of the same. The passages we saw

in Isa 40-55 say “no more of the same!” Isaiah 40-55 will go on in part two to offer another track. Jacob will be sidetracked.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.2.2 Part Two: Isaiah 50:1-55:13

The first part described the problem posed by Jacob as Adam redux. Jacob is repeatedly addressed and arraigned. The second part describes God's solution. I called it the Abraham part. Statistically this does not compare with the use of the name Jacob. In fact, statistically the name Abraham is used once in the first part (41:8) and once in the second part (51:2). In 41:8 it is used as a qualifier for Jacob from God's point of view. It anticipates as such the action of God in the second part, which is promised in the first part. In 51:2 it is not Abraham who is addressed. All those who seek righteousness are addressed and told to look at what can only be described as the *parable of Abraham and Sarah*. The word *parable* is not used, but the function of the statement “look to” is the same. The action will be addressed to Jacob, but it will be in continuation of Abraham. The image of Jacob as a woman initiates this section. The divorce had been due to her own actions. God neither sold her to get credit, nor had he been short of the means to retain her. The plaint of God is voiced, “Why was no one there when I came? Why did no one answer when I called?” (50:2a NRSV).

The answer to the plaint comes from the third song of the servant (50:4-11) initiating God's solution. The third song picks up on the second. The servant has been taught by God and has become a disciple capable of teaching and sustaining the weary with a word. God has opened his ear day in day out to accept teaching. Jacob had stubbornly rejected to hear, to give ear. The servant is described as not having done any of the wrong things Jacob is accused in the first part of having done in this regard. He had suffered every possible indignity and ridicule and persisted. Here we have again what appears to be a signature of the redactor as in 49:7ff. He stands alone, and sets his face as flint against the indignities of outrageous fortune he must suffer. Yet he continues to lay his trust in God, again in contrast to Jacob. The word that is often translated as flint in this passage is *ḥallāmîš*. The four other instances of the use of this word in the OT, Deut 8:15; 32:13; Job 28:9; Ps 114:8, all employ the word to indicate an otherwise forbidding obstacle/wall. But the word in the context of the third song can be heard also as a pun in reply to a to be inferred taunt. One of the indignities our author would have had to suffer would imaginably be that he is a daydreamer. He set his face “indeed as flint/as a man dreaming (the taunt would have been 'the man has been dreaming,' *ḥlm h'yś*)” and was certain he would not be put to shame. This is, in fact, the taunt Joseph is faced with on the part of his brothers (Gen 37:19). They call him a baal of dreams, meaning a daydreamer. In the story he proves to be an expert in dreams, knowing precisely what will come to pass. In the Joseph story the dream world expresses the reality of the deity. The non-dream world expresses the reality of either Jacob or Pharaoh, while the liminal Joseph stands between the two worlds. Even if the pun is not intended as such in Isa 40-55, the function of the delimiting nature of flint against catcalls and ridicule on one side, and trust in God's “imaginary” reality on the other, is expressed in the Joseph story as the liminality

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14 The question posed in the to be published second part of this study project will be: Is the semantic weight of the appellation Joseph in the book of Genesis subjected to modification? Does the storyline effect a semantic transformation on this appellation/type?

between the dream world and the real world. The notion is the same, the spin-off possibly a pun in reply to a taunt.

In 50:10 the one-man choir of the servant makes of the profile of the servant just presented a lesson and an invitation for whoever would follow. The song ends with an abrupt and ominous warning. Those who play with fire will have to face the consequence of their actions. There is no hint whether fire here points to idolatry as in 44:19, or whether it implies warlike actions as in the ambivalent verse 47:14. In view of the first part of the composition, chs. 40-49, dabbling in idolatry would be the closer meaning at hand, but in view of the fourth song of the servant in conjunction with 49:26, it could be a cryptic reference to those who would take to warlike actions to achieve their gain. In this case Isa 31:1-3 would be a further expansion on this.

God announces his salvation in 51:1-52:12. A crescendo of exhortations to those who would be righteous and wish to join the company of his servant catapults the reader/listener to the ultimate lesson of the fourth song, the well pleasing offering of the suffering servant. The first subsection (51:1-8) of this hortatory section (51:1-52:12) introduces immediately the leitmotif of the whole second part (chs. 50-55).

The lesson of Abraham and Sarah (51:1-8) is the one to be adhered to by those who would pursue righteousness. It is proposed here that this lesson is constructed and expounded for the first time here in the composition we are studying, that is by the redactor of Isa 40-55. As in the case of the appellation Zion for Jerusalem, the lesson about Abraham and Sarah is not borrowed from outside the text, but is the very substance of this text at hand. The renaming of Abram to Abraham in the book of Genesis remains unexplained and unjustified there. The statement that this is because he will become a father of a multitude of nations is not a linguistic one. The pun utilized is rather a reference to the function of the servant of Isa 40-55 to be an emissary of God to all nations. It is an enactment of the lesson of Isa 40-55. The linguistic and pedagogical import of the name Abraham is given in Isa 40-55 and represents the very fabric of the “new” lesson being expounded here. In the following an attempt will be made to demonstrate this.

The book of Ezekiel has no knowledge of Abraham. The one mention in Ezekiel 33:24 is patently a gloss. It comes as an objection voiced mimicking the lesson of Isa 51:1-8 to draw an opposite conclusion to that made in Isa 40-49, that is, that only those pursuing righteousness will be saved. It sounds like a taunt in response to the text of Isa 50-55. The response to the objection is a resume of Isa 40-49. The passage, Ezek 33:24-29, comes sandwiched between 33:1-20 about individual judgment being meted out according to deeds after due notice is given by the prophet, and Ezek 34:1-31 about God as the good shepherd. These passages are most likely the basis for the teaching and imagery we have in the two parts of Isa 40-55. But Ezek 33:24-29 has a different *Sitz im Leben* (situation in life) than the two bordering passages. The occasion indicated in 33:21, the fall of Jerusalem, stands in tension with the *vaticinium ex eventu* of the body of the passage. The mention of Abraham comes in the objection of the people. The objection and the response do not deal with the meaning of the name Abraham, but are an occasion to thresh out the conflicting positions regarding the promise to the one person and the false security of trusting in greater number. Were the invocation of Abraham, as regards content, directly related to ch. 34, it would have been synthetically a construct of that text. But in fact, the invocation is purely incidental to this text and polemical.<sup>15</sup>

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15 Cf. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* (trans. James D. Martin; ed. P. D. Hanson and L. J. Greenspoon; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 191-202. Zimmerli analyzes the incongruities in the flow of the

The more conceivable literary matrix for the lesson about Abraham and Sarah is Isa 40-55. The redactor will have taken the teaching of Ezekiel about the good shepherd in Ezek 34 to coin or adopt the name. But the lesson is synthetically part and parcel of Isa 40-55. The mention of Abraham as being one at the time of his calling corresponds to the third song of the servant and to the exhortations that follow. The inferred *Sitz im Leben* of the redactor is also reflected in this motif. He stands alone and calls those who would be of like mind to join. The story in Genesis copies this topic and lesson, but the matrix is not original to it. The introduction of Sarah is in continuation of the motif barren land/woman, which, as we have seen in discussing the term Zion, is so fundamental to every sinew of the text of Isa 40-55.

The main reason for this conjecture, however, lies in the semantic field covered by the name Abraham, and its elucidation in the fourth song of the suffering servant. This name and “song” are the cornerstone of this whole composition, bringing all the strands of argumentation together. Abraham, *ʾabrāhām* in Hebrew, is to be derived from the Arabic. The fact that the name is said to be shared by the Ishmaelites may indicate an Arabic original also, but the lesson constructed is the teaching of Isa 40-55. The name is made up of *ʾab* (father), which is the same in both Hebrew and Arabic, and *rāhām*, which without vocalization becomes the trilateral *rhm*. In Arabic *rahām* refers to a lean and emaciated sheep or goat. It takes also the vocalization *rohām*. The adjective is *rahūm*. Another adjective from this root is *ʾarham* (more fruitful or plentiful), from *rihmah* (light drizzle). Another noun from the root is *marham*, referring to an unguent or dressing that is placed on a wound to bring about healing.<sup>16</sup> These usages of the trilateral in Arabic correspond to the description and function of the suffering servant in the fourth song. He is down, yet we take healing from his wounds, and the result of his work is a return of plenty and fruitfulness to the barren land/woman. Ezekiel makes of God the good shepherd who goes after and cares for the weak sheep. The composition of Isa 40-55 goes beyond that and makes of the emaciated servant the instrument of salvation. Further down we will see that he is presented as the scapegoat, the living sin offering. It is interesting to note that *rihmah* in Arabic, as well as its plural, means a light drizzling rain lasting a long time. In Hebrew the plural of the word *šā ʾîr* is used in Deut 32:2 to refer to a drizzle. The same Hebrew word in the singular is at the same time the designation used for the scapegoat in Lev 16, sent out on the Day of Atonement.

This derivation is still only the tip of the iceberg. Abraham becomes the father of this emaciated servant. The servant in the fourth song becomes the offspring of the story of Abraham. Jacob is bypassed semantically, and the continuation of the Abraham lesson is in the suffering servant. So in fact the apparent discrepancy mentioned above in the sequence of Abraham and Jacob between Isa 40-55 and Genesis, is resolved as such: In Isa 40-55 we have the sequence Jacob son of Abraham followed by the Suffering Servant son of Ab-raham, in Genesis we have the sequence Abraham followed by Jacob son of Isaac followed by Joseph. Abraham cannot be Abraham unless there is a *rahām*/suffering servant of which he would be the father. It is Abraham who is defined by the servant and not vice-versa. The name Abraham in this composition is a referential to the servant. In Genesis the promise of Gen 17:19 to Abraham stands in tandem with the testing of Abraham in Gen 22 (cf. vv. 16-17). Until Abraham is associated with an oblation resembling that of the suffering servant of Isa 40-55, the name Abraham is still not promulgated and the promise is still at risk of being

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text as it stands, and on pp. 198-199 juxtaposes the use of the mention of Abraham in Ezekiel with that in Isa 41:8 and specially Isa 51:2. Cf. also Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (trans. Cosslett Quin; OTL; London: SCM, 1970), 456-467.

16 Cf. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863), 1171-1172. Cited 23 September 2010. Online: <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/TABS/Lane/index.htm>.

annulled.<sup>17</sup>

This dependency on Isa 40-55 is further highlighted by the wordplay in the Genesis story on Abram becoming Abraham (Gen 17:5). Abram can be translated as the lofty father, the first father, the founding father.<sup>18</sup> This construction is analogous to Hiram, the lofty king of Tyre. One of the implicit reproaches of the Deuteronomic historian addressed against Solomon is that he modeled his temple to that of Hiram and his riches. Abram is also similar to Abiram (my lofty first father). His title to fame in the Pentateuch is that of a Reubenite who joined the rebellion of Korah against Moses and was swallowed by the ground he stood on. Abiram could also be parsed as “their strongman,” from the noun *’ābîr* (strongman) with the attached possessive pronoun. In the previous section we had seen our writer end part one with the affirmation that God is Jacob's “strongman,” *’ābîr*.<sup>19</sup> In conjunction with the fourth servant song it becomes clear that no other source of strength may be resorted to. The abrogation of Abram in the story of Genesis, whether in the meaning of lofty, distant forefather, or in the meaning of resorting to one's own strength or strongmen, corresponds to the teaching and rhetoric running through the redaction of Isa 40-55. This is the implication of 51:1 “Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.” Do not confuse your pedigree. Look to the servant, the new tidings from God, the fabric you will have to conform to to become privy to the announced salvation.

The introduction of the name Sarah is also part of the new construction of our author. As we have seen, Jacob is referred to at the beginning of this section in the image of a woman. Jacob will not be used as an appellation in part two. Jacob had been used in conjunction with Zion in part one (Isa 40:9; 41:27; 46:13; 49:14). Zion was the parched land being offered salvation, but like Jacob objecting that she had been forsaken by God (cf. 49:14 echoing Jacob's objection in Isa 40:27 and 44:21). The parallelism between Jacob and Judah was spelled out in 48:1. We followed above the shift in metaphor from barren land to barren woman. The name Sarah corresponds to Jerusalem, a woman's name being appropriate as a designation for a city (both in Hebrew and in Greek). Zion, as a designation for a barren city, will again be offered salvation in the second part, precisely in the section 51:1-52:12 described above as a crescendo of exhortations leading up to the fourth song of the servant. The introduction of Sarah just before these exhortations shows that it functions as an invitation to Jacob/Jerusalem<sup>20</sup> to assume a different vocation conforming to the parable of Abraham. This corresponds not only to the role of Sarah in the book of Genesis, but more specifically to the renaming of Jacob in the mysterious passage we have in Gen 32. This will be discussed below in the section on that passage. The redactor of Gen 32 will chose to interpret the name Israel in terms of the verb *śrh*, identical to the name Sarah, thus reenacting in the granting of the title Israel to Jacob the call to Jacob in Isa 40-55 to conform to the parable of Abraham and Sarah and take on the appellation Sarah. As we saw at the commencement of the second part in 50:2, Jacob is addressed as the divine consort (in the sense of a city pertaining to a deity) who was divorced because of her treachery. Jacob now is

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17 Even if, for argument's sake, one were to concede the originality of the mention of Abraham in Ezek 33:24, the expiatory function of the weak lamb reflected in Gen 22 is inherently the synthetic composition of Isa 40-55.

18 Cf. Paul Nadim Tarazi, *The Old Testament: An Introduction: Volume 1: Historical Traditions* (rev. ed.; Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 92-94.

19 This, in fact, functions as a send-off from part one to introduce the second part juxtaposing the parable of Abraham and Sarah in the second part to Jacob, much as in Gen 17:5 Abram is to become Abraham.

20 Indeed to Judah, cf. 48:1. Note that Jerusalem is used in parallel with Zion in both part one and two.

asked to rectify his divine consort status in order to become Sarah. This appellation, in the context of Isa 40-55, is a pun on the title Israel.<sup>21</sup> “Ab-raham” will modify the appellation Israel.

The first of three emphatic (starting with a double imperative) exhortations in series, the subsection Isa 51:9-16 is addressed to Yahweh but is in fact an exhortation addressed to Zion to remember its deity. The first invocation of Zion in the second part of Isa 40-55 was already in the previous subsection in 51:3. There the tenor and purpose of the repeated use of Zion in this part, Isa 51:3, 11, 16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8, is made clear. Zion, the barren parched wilderness, is about to be converted into a garden of Eden. In this subsection Zion is named twice. In the second invocation in 51:16, the words of exhortation are said to have been placed in the mouth of the prophet by God, saying to Zion “You are my people.” The language is reminiscent of the book of Hosea addressed to the Northern Kingdom, and announces the readoption of Jerusalem.

The second emphatic exhortation in 51:17-23 is addressed to Jerusalem reminding her of her previous discharge. None of her children is up to the task of giving her guidance. In terms of the required function she is in the equivalent situation of a childless woman. This is the central passage in Isa 51:1-52:12. The metaphor of giving birth will be repeated twice after the fourth song of the servant announcing accomplishment. In 54:1 it is with reference to the barren woman. In 55:10 it rejoins the cosmic image of fertilizing the land and making it bear forth, accomplished by agency of God's word, wrapping up the use of this image begun in 40:3.

The other basic linguistic image (cf. section 2.1 above), expressed in the *pi'el* verbal form of *nḥm* (to comfort), is also invoked as a question in this central subsection, “who will comfort you?” After it was set as the leitmotif of the work in the opening 40:1, its use becomes characteristic of the second part of the work. It is picked up in 49:13 in anticipation of the second part, and then repeated in 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 54:11 (this last in the passive *pu'al* form).

The third emphatic exhortation, 52:1-6, is expressly addressed to Zion from the outset. In this section we have a reiteration of what we saw in 45:13 and 50:1. The redemption will not require any silver.

The fifth and last subsection of the hortatory section 51:1-52:12, subsection 52:7-12, prepares for the fourth song of the servant. This subsection is a song of the author, the bringer of good tidings. While comfort and redemption are mentioned in v. 9, the vocabulary used in this passage is that of the victorious king bringing salvation and announcing it to all the nations. The redemption of the imprisoned is itself described as a victory at war (v. 11f). The terminology is reminiscent of the exodus out of Egypt in the book of Exodus.<sup>22</sup>

It is at this point that we have the culminating passage of the whole work, the fourth song of the servant, 52:13-53:12. The teaching embodied in the fourth song modifies the content of the whole work. It is paradoxically juxtaposed to the passage announcing ultimate victory (Isa 52:7-12). The victory was not achieved by force of silver (Isa 52:1-6), it will not be achieved by force of arms. The polemic is very clear. It is reflected explicitly in Isa 30:1-31:9, which appears to be a commentary by the school of our author. It is interesting that in Isa 30:7 Rahab is mentioned as a name for Egypt, the same Rahab mentioned as a

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21 More on the implication of the pun and the meaning of the names Sarah and Israel below.

22 It is in this subsection that we have the last use of the term Zion in this composition. The servant of the following fourth song will bring to an end the barrenness of Jerusalem. The function which Jacob failed to provide, thereby making of Jerusalem for the God of the redactor a figure of a barren ground, is supplied by the servant. The scapegoat will end the drought.

mythological monster in 51:9. These are the only two instances in the book of Isaiah. Given that the mention in 30:7 purports to explain a previous mention, again priority in this instance must be given to Isa 40-55.

The fourth song is again in the third person like the first song. There it was an expression of a wish on the part of God, here it is a judicial ruling after the event. Following the resume of the case in 52:13-15, we have a listing of the facts (53:1-9) and then the pronouncement of God's verdict (vv. 10-12). If the first song was in God's imaginary/wishful future, the fourth song is in the redactor's wishful future. God *will* endorse the work that is being written out. The "Amen" of God will be spoken to the work in progress. It is an expression of the trust in Yahweh of the servant that we were told of in the second and third songs.

The section 53:1-9 starts with a rhetorical question, the function of which is to call disciples to the teaching being expounded, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (53:1 KJV, differently the NRSV). A paraphrase giving a feel of the Hebrew within the flow of the whole composition would be: "Who will say 'Amen' to the pronouncements we have decreed/made to be heard, who has had his eyes opened to see in them the power of the arm of Yahweh?" It is an appeal to would-be disciples to adopt the disposition of the servant as the only well pleasing oblation to Yahweh, in order to have a share in the promised covenant. It is this servant who has been set as a *bērît* (covenant) for the people according to the first song (42:6) and the commentary extension of the second song (49:8). What is explicated in the following verses is the very fabric of the eternal covenant that will be referred back to in 54:9-10 invoking Noah, and in 55:3 invoking David. The Abrahamic covenant in part two is an unconditional covenant, in contradistinction to the one with Jacob explicated in part one. Paradoxically the only port of access to it and to a share in its heritage is in the shape of the servant of the fourth song. The notion of salvation/victory is being redefined here such as to be in total contradiction to that held by the opponents! The one servant stands against the many and disjunct from all. Those who would join his company must become obedient to the pronouncement in this section as expressing God's mindset and as defining of the domain of His rule. The word translated as "report" in 53:1 is *šēmû 'â* (that which is heard/a report). In the LXX it is translated as *ακοη*. It is from the same verbal root, *šm'* (to hear), as the name Simeon, *šim 'ôn*.<sup>23</sup> To hear is to obey in the Semitic usage<sup>24</sup>. Obedience must be given to the teaching of Isa 40-55 exemplified in the teaching about the servant.

In the following verses we are given a profile of the faceless servant. We have already discussed his profiling as a *rahām* with all the possible attached connotations. But this emaciated sheep has also a job description added to his CV and profile. Although he is not called a goat outright, he shares his job description with the scapegoat as outlined in Lev 16. He is, from the point of view of God, an acceptable living sin oblation, rejected outside the land of the living (v. 8). Verse 9 repeats the three things negated in him. He had done no violence, his speech harbored no deceit/treachery, and he was by mistake buried with the rich, implying that he was not by the nature of his job description to be associated with the wealthy/aggrandized.<sup>25</sup>

Verse 7 in this passage has two particularities. The servant is likened to a sheep being

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23 The significance of this appellation will be expanded upon in the announced part two in connection with the Joseph story. In the Joseph story Jacob must cede obedience to Joseph.

24 Cf. Kamal Abou-Chaar, "The Two Builders: A Study of the Parable in Luke 6:47-49," *Near East School of Theology Theological Review* 1 (1982): 44-58. Paragraph II.B is relevant to the statement above.

25 This last ambivalence is reduplicated in the liminal character of Joseph in the Genesis story.

led to the slaughter, *ṭbh* in Hebrew. The word for sheep used is *śeh*. We translate sheep because it is used in the image of a sheep led to the slaughter. In fact it is a male sheep or goat. Thus the reference to a goat, while not explicit, is maintained. The second matter to be noticed is that in the parallel expression “like a sheep that before its shearers is silent” (NRSV), the word used for sheep in Hebrew is *rāhēl*. This refers to a ewe, a female sheep. This fits into the shift in the metaphor to that of a barren woman, shorn of her children. The word implies a healthy well off female sheep.<sup>26</sup>

In 53:10-13 trust in the verdict of God is expressed. Although God was pleased to see the servant bruised with blows and left emaciated, he will surely pronounce him not guilty. The restitution involves the many, because his wounds brought healing to those who had been onlookers, his oblation was a sin offering for others, and he made intercession for those guilty of transgression. Thus restitution takes the aspect of enthronement of the victorious. The aspect of his work that triggers all this is that he had made himself destitute of all things to the point of death, caring for the many. This stands in stark contrast to Jacob, both as he is represented in Isa 40-49, and as he is represented in Genesis, where he makes a grab for anything he can get his hands on, from the heel of his brother coming out of the womb, to the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh on his deathbed. The two disjunct tracks, the one of Jacob, the other of the servant who, as the emaciated lamb is in continuation of the story of Abraham, the father of the weak lamb, have now been put into total relief.

As to the priests and the levites, their sacred precinct has been declassified by the desecrated servant outside the camp. His sin offering has proved to be the acceptable and effective oblation. The living scapegoat, who carries the sins of others including those of the sons of Aaron and the levites, has made of the offering they present on behalf of their own sins as well as of those of the people a lame duck oblation. Again this is reflected both in Isa 40-49 and in the books of the Former and Latter Prophets as a whole.

The image of the barren woman meets us again at the beginning of the last section of the second part and of the work as a whole, 54:1-55:13. The regalia of the servant have already been described in 52:13-53:12. Now the victory achieved thereby is announced and sung. The image of the divine bridegroom is used in tandem with the image of the barren woman. The over-abundant fruitfulness to come upon her is solely the work of this bridegroom, her God.

The theme of the benefit coming to all nations will be echoed in ch. 55. Central to ch. 54 is the announcement that the new covenant of the servant will be eternal, non-conditional, like the decision to stop the destructive waters at the time of Noah.<sup>27</sup> This is fitting in conjunction with the image of the God of all the earth (v. 5). It also prepares for ch. 55 and the introduction of the nations. Forthwith God will not act destructively. The last verse in ch. 54 reminds us that this announcement of victory and the concomitant covenant applies to the servants of Yahweh. The shape of the servant has already been communicated.

The opening verse of ch. 55 brings forward a central motif, which had been introduced in Isa 40:11 and which we meet also in the Joseph story. In the Joseph story the exhortation is to all who have need to come and be fed. The image used here, however, is that of thirst and water. We are returned to the basic vocabulary of barren land and God of the waters as at the

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26 It is also the name *Rachel*, mother of Joseph and Benjamin, and favorite bride of Jacob in Genesis.

27 The invocation of Noah is especially pertinent as his lesson/parable in terms of the nations parallels that to Jacob as presented in chs. 40-49. Jacob had been practically annihilated as a result of his sins, and yet is being offered an analogous unbreakable covenant. The name of Noah is also to the point. In Hebrew Noah is *nḥ*. This is the same as the unvocalized hollow root *nḥ/nūḥ* meaning “to rest/give rest.” While not the same as *nḥm* (to comfort), which is the leitmotif of Isa 40-55, it is a term (“interim” rest) which bears analogy to it.



outset in ch. 40, and this will remain throughout this last chapter. No silver will be required. We are told that the new covenant, concomitant with being unconditional, is unilateral and freely given. To underline this, reference is made this time to the hard and fast love of God for David. Central to ch. 55 is the call to return to Yahweh (v. 7). The covenant is unilaterally worked out by Yahweh, but everyone is exhorted to take to heart the announcement so as to enter into its proffered benefits. The work is carried out by the unfailing work of God's word which accomplishes its task and bears fruit (v. 11). The exhortation is a call to hear the communication of the word as regally effective. We had already been told that God alone is king in part one. The reference to David in the last chapter returns this image to the fore, together with the announcement of victory.<sup>28</sup> The victorious king demands obedience to the reign of his alone effective word. He is gracious and full of mercies. The last verse, indeed the last word, underscores this with a pun. The signs of his victory will never be broken. This is a play on the Hebrew phrase used to express the promulgation of a covenant. In Hebrew the expression is "cut/break (*krt*) a covenant." This is an ominous sign that warns of the consequence incumbent on a breach of contract. The negated passive of the same verb is used here. Strangely it sounds more ominous. It is as if the redactor is saying, "Try as you may, what you may, this covenant will stand unbroken."

### 3. The Reenactment of the Lesson of Isa 40-55 in Gen 32

The reading proposed above made three principal points. The first is that Isa 40-55 was written as a program launcher for the books of the Law and the Prophets. The second is that it posits two juxtaposed tracks: the one of Adam/Jacob as the problem track, the other of God acting in terms of the parable of Abraham and Sarah as the solution track. The third point made is that the paradigm of the servant-*rahām* presented provides at the same time the basic module with which to effect a literary transformation and thus produce/generate the texts and motifs in conformity with and as required by the project.

Since the basic organization of Isa 40-55 as deciphered above is a contrasting of the actual Jacob with the required servant-*rahām* and an invitation to Jacob to enter into the covenant that is concomitant with the servant-*rahām*, it is a good starting point to test the basic thesis on the passage in the book of Genesis which offers Jacob a new venue by way of the name Israel in Gen 32. This pericope, as will be demonstrated in the following, describes the conditions requisite for the land to open up to Jacob and for the granting of the title Israel. Israel corresponds to the name Sarah, introduced in the parable of Abraham and Sarah in Isa 40-55. In order to be granted the title and the venue, Jacob will have to "put on" the servant profile as validation of credentials and port of entry into the coveted land of plenty. The chapter runs in "imaginary" time, the time of the wishful thinking of the deity, as can be seen

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28 In accordance with the teaching of part one where God alone is king over Jacob (43:15), David is not called king, he is only a prince/commander. There is no mention of a covenant with him (this is predicated only of the servant in Isa 40-55). The covenant with the servant has the same attribute of being "sure" like the "love" manifested to David by God. The reference to David/Jerusalem, coming after the reference to Noah in the previous passage, makes David's blessings hinge on and subject to the Noahic promise to the nations. This is reflected in Isa 1-39 (Isa 2:2-4; 11:6-9) and runs parallel to the teaching found in the book of Jeremiah (29:7). The surety expressed to David is similar to the surety expressed to the nations, and both find their fulfillment in the covenant that comes concomitant with the servant-*rahām*. The servant, as we saw, has no lineage or progeny. The various to be conjectured "opposing" versions/receptions of the promised divine love for David/Jerusalem (for example Ezek 37:22, 24) are channeled to and subsumed (and critically so) under the covenant of the servant-*rahām*, much as the covenant with Ab-raham in Genesis subsumes all other subsequent actions of the deity with Jacob.

by the immediately subsequent developments setting in with ch. 34 and functioning as a foil to ch. 32.

The names Jacob and Israel play the major role in the chapter. As will be suggested below, the name Israel will be reinterpreted in terms more conducive to the arguments of Isa 40-55. At the same time, it will be seen that a certain polemic can be discerned in the motifs and terminology chosen, which is apparently directed against a “mystery religion” type of religious induction.

### 3.1 The Name Jacob

Jacob in Hebrew means basically acolyte, adjutant, manservant, someone who follows after someone or something both in a friendly and in a hostile sense. This notion is played upon in Lev 25:42, 55, “For to me the people of Israel are servants: they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (55 NRSV). This comes in an address by God to Moses, Lev 25-26, culminating the Code of Holiness in the book of Leviticus, and recapitulating the basic address of Isa 40-55 to Jacob. In fact the one and only mention of Jacob by name in the book of Leviticus comes towards the end of this address in Lev 26:42. It is reasonable to assume that Jacob pertained to a class providing services, but having no domain of their own, and consequently no king. More important though is the wordplay exercised on the name in the texts of the OT. Jacob derives from the Hebrew root *'qb*. This refers to some thing or action that doubles back up on itself, a protrusion, a heel, a chicane, chicanery, a pursuer, that pursuant upon which (as in the use of *'qb* with the meaning “in consequence of,” indicating cause), and thus can be employed with the connotation crooked, treacherous, making a grab for something. This last is highlighted in Gen 25:26 through the explanation of the name Jacob is given at birth. The explanation given is that he grabbed at his twin brother's heel as he came out of the womb. This is reiterated in the plaint of Esau in Gen 27:36. Esau cries out that Jacob lives up perfectly to his name, having taken a grab at and usurped both his birthright and his blessing. We have a similar appreciation of the name in Hos 12:4. An interesting pun on the name is found in Isa 40:4. In a description of the program of God as delineated in Isa 40-55, we are told that “the uneven ground ('crooked' in KJV) shall become level” (NRSV). The “uneven ground” in Hebrew is *'āqōb*, from the same Hebrew trilateral root as Jacob. The Hebrew word translated as “level” is *mîšōr*, this means also “upright,” and is from the root *yšr*, from which the adjective and verbal root “to be upright” comes. As we saw above, the problem posed in Isa 40-49 to which an answer is given in Isa 50-55 is precisely how to make of Jacob an upright person!

### 3.2 The Name Israel

We are provided in Gen 32:29 with a derivation of the title Israel from the rare and obscure verbal root *śrh* (*śry*). This is repeated in Hos 12:4. Another derivation, or possibly an intended pun, is given in Hos 12:5 from *śwr* or possibly *śrr* (to rise as one who would rule), that is from the same root as the name Sarah, *śrh* in Hebrew, (if this last is understood as “princess,” the feminine of the Hebrew noun for prince). The basic meaning of this last root, *śrr*, would seem to have the meaning “to rise high.”<sup>29</sup> As such the noun Sarah, *śrh*, would be etymologically distinct from the identically written verb *śrh*. The verbal root *śrh* is found

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<sup>29</sup> I would suggest that in Hos 12:4-5 we do not have a synonymous parallelism but rather a climactic one which follows the storyline of Gen 32:2-35:15. This explains the two different derivations in vv. 4 and 5.

only in the two aforementioned verses, Gen 32:29 and Hos 12:4. Translators, having no other recourse other than these two pericopes to try to surmise the meaning of the word, usually derive contextually the translation “strive with” for want of a more informed translation. This “seems” to fit with the story line, and indeed, the suggested derivation is not an etymological designation but a pun on the name to highlight the teaching of the story (and, as we have seen, it is the identical formal equivalent of the name Sarah even though it is not usual to derive the name Sarah from this root).

The Arabic language provides better help in deciphering the enigmatic use of this verbal root in Gen 32:29. The matrix of meanings associated with the cognate Arabic roots *śry*, *śr*, *śrr*, and *śrw* match well with the story as in Gen 32. These include secret, night travel, night escapade, concubine (both free or slave), pleasure, a type of tree from which arrows are made, the highest part, to be elevated.<sup>30</sup> All the meanings can be summed under the general heading of either masculine virility or nighttime activity. The possibility suggests itself of a possible use in forms of initiation such as a mystagogical initiation into the intimacy of a supposed higher order. There is a later parallel to this usage in the Islamic tradition about the miraculous night journey/assumption of the prophet Mohammad to the “farthest/ultimate” mosque. It is named *al-isrā*, from this same root.<sup>31</sup> The analogy from the Islamic use in conjunction with the miraculous night journey of the prophet Mohammad which initiates him into the divine designs of God’s address to Israel and Moses and to man in general through the verses of the Qur’an would point to a journey/transposition to a new awareness/insight/body of secrets. On the other hand, if this root were to be applied as a feminine noun, one would expect it to indicate the autonomous domain of a man, in one sense or another, with the connotation of private or secret. In the parable of Abraham and Sarah, Sarah represents Jacob/the barren Zion, called by the deity to become His initiate/consort city. As such it is a political usage. In Isa 40-55 God’s measure of manhood is the suffering servant. The servant has his hidden dwelling in the deity, he expresses the *gratia* of the deity, and his elevation is the work of the deity. It is highly likely that the play on the root *śry* would have been polemically borrowed from a usage by forms of mystery religions and employed as a political term (In line with the teaching in Isa 40-55 that the hidden God is made manifest through His addressed words).

A sociolinguistically more likely original derivation for the title Israel would be from the Arabic *yśr*.<sup>32</sup> The many connotations of the various constructions can be summarized in easy/made easy, well off, left side.<sup>33</sup> It stands opposite to the right side (as indicative of might/power), and to an obstacle course. As such it stands opposite to the “forked” Jacob, and opposite to Benjamin (more below on Benjamin as indicative of a warrior clan/might/power). We could sum up the linguistic meaning, if this derivation is correct, as “making it/being on easy street.”<sup>34</sup> The aspiring yuppie Jacob would have his heart's desire set on making it to easy street while remaining subject to the mighty and powerful. This etymology is not made by the text, but it would fit both the sociological class we seem to be confronted with, as well as the caricature of Jacob we have in the Jacob cycle, grabbing every which way in order to “make it.” This would be more applicable to a general usage not impacted by Isa 40-55 (The notion of wealth being associated by Isa 40-55 with the wicked and not expressive of well-

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30 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1337-1340, 1353-1356.

31 Qur’an 17:1.

32 Cf. the Arabic name Yasser.

33 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2975-2978.

34 Our texts indeed associate the name Israel primarily with the Northern Kingdom, Ephraim. Ephraim is described as very wealthy and fruitful (cf. Gen 41:52; Hos 12:8-9).

being). Jacob, if and when functioning optimally, would make it on God's "easy street."

The notion of wealth not being viewed as a measure of success by the redactor of the servant songs, it is very plausible to conjecture that he reinterpreted the title Israel in terms of the root *śry*. This would have served a double purpose. On one hand, he would have downgraded the notion of wealth as a measure of divine success. On the other, he would have polemically countered the attempt to lure "Jacob" into religious practices indicated as Canaanite in the books of the Law and the Prophets, but apparently very similar to what we encounter in the Hellenistic period. That we do have a reinterpretation of the term Israel in Genesis is very likely. In the case of Abraham we have a change of name, which, as discussed above, appears to be a construct of Isa 40-55. In analogy to it we have a change of name for Sarah. The pericope that initiates the change of name for Jacob in Gen 32 introduces a "new" title which is not new. The book of Ezekiel uses extensively the name Israel, and it is a common usage throughout the literature we are dealing with, as well as being attested extra-biblically. The suspicion arises that in fact in Gen 32 we do not have a new designation for Jacob, but a redefinition of the title Israel. The conjectured "original" derivation from the Arabic *yśr* would have been reinterpreted in terms of the root *śry*. It is proposed here that this is the work of Isa 40-55. The analysis in the following sections will try to demonstrate that Isa 40-55 is indeed behind the redaction of the pericope in Gen 32.

The passage in Gen 32 remains enigmatic. As it is central to the redactional scheme directing the flow of the storyline, we must fall back on other elements in the passage to decipher the intended situation. The time of day is given as nighttime before the break of dawn. The action of the stranger who jumps (*nip'al* of *'bq* "jumped him like a sandstorm/engulfed him like fine dust") Jacob is described in terms of a deadly sandstorm (*'bq*), like the plague that hits Egypt in the book of Exodus (Exod 9:9). It is a very severely testing situation. The use of the pun on the obscure root *śrh*, which I summarized from Arabic under the general title of "masculine virility," after Jacob had left himself naked of all goods and alone, would point the attention to a testing expressed in terms of a rite of passage, or possibly of an induction testing of a mystery religious type. The highlighting of the ford of Jabbok (to be derived from the root *bqq*) as the location for the story shows that it is a testing in terms of a passage into another order. The sparsely used Hebrew root *bqq* would appear to highlight the notion of a destructive testing. The Arabic usage of *bqq* in the sense of dividing and consequently opening a breach would support the notion of opening a passage. The Arabic root *bqy* in the sense of remain/prove to be perdurable goes also in the direction of a proving testing. Indeed, the root *bq*, *bqy* in Syriac includes outright the meanings to try/prove/examine/inquire into and trial/investigation.<sup>35</sup> The meaning of the passage would seem to be that Jacob undergoes a very severe testing (*śrh* would have to be understood as such rather than as "to strive.") He persists until he proves himself, and becomes a proved inductee. The acolyte has come of age and become the initiate of God, "Isra-el." How this functions within the wider context will be discussed in the following sections 3.3 and 3.4.

### 3.3 Mahanaim

The master location given for the events of Gen 32 is indicated in v. 3 as Mahanaim. This sets the framework for the ensuing events. Jacob recognizes the place as God's encampment, and uses the dual form of the word encampment as the name of the locale. We are theatrically in

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35 Cf. J. Payne Smith, ed., *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary: Founded Upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of Robert Payne* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 52. Cited 23 September 2010. Online: <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/TABS/PayneSmith/index.htm>.

God's location and in God's time. The use of the dual/plural is to be expected in a toponym. But in view of the developments described in Exod 33 (following the events surrounding the worship of the golden calf by all the people led by Aaron, whereby God removes His tent of meeting/Tabernacle to a tent outside the encampment of Jacob so as not to destroy Jacob), the name Mahanaim assumes a critically important redactional function. The location is described as at a time and place where and when Jacob can encounter the deity face to face and survive (compare Gen 32:31 with Exod 33:20-23), effectively a time and place where the encampment of Jacob and the tent of meeting are located in the same place.

### 3.4 Genesis 32: Reenactment of Isa 40-55 and Reinterpretation of the Title Israel

The story of Jacob in Gen 32 comes as the culmination of his exorbitant increase, symbolized by the birth of Joseph, on the eve of his return to the land where his fathers sojourned. It is equivalent to the situation of Jacob/Israel at the end of the Pentateuch, with Moses looking across the Jordan to the promised land. Jacob in Gen 32 paradigmatically does what is required in order to be granted access to the land, and consequently to have the name Israel bestowed upon him.

In vv. 4-9 Jacob divides his camp defensively into two camps. He is apprehensive about the reception his brother Esau prepares for him on his crossing the Jordan.

In vv. 10-13 Jacob prays to God for succor in order to be allowed reentry into the land. This elucidates fully the topic of the pericope.

In vv. 14-21 Jacob prepares a gift to appease his brother and gives exact commands to the leaders of the companies sent as to what to say to Esau.

Having done all actions that are humanly advisable, military/defensive, diplomatic, and most importantly presented supplication to the deity, Jacob is still where he is in his own camp, outside the land. We are reminded of the parable of the rich man in the gospel of Mark 10:17-27. Jacob still has to find a way to pass through the proverbial eye of the needle! It is at this point that we have the reenactment of the role of the servant of Isa 40-55. The deity from whom he requested succor has very specific requirements before the requested succor is provided and safe passage and entry is ensured. He must be severely tested to determine if all requirements are satisfied, and he may become the inductee of the deity into the promised land.

The environmental circumstances surrounding the events in this pericope set the tone for the developments. It is nighttime and obscurity is the dominant motif. A cloud of darkness and mystery engulfs the players. These circumstances bring together two different sets of topics. We have a double motif. One set is the set of topics associated with testing and mystagogical induction. The other set is the syntactical presentation of Isa 40-55. The God of the servant is a hidden God, and the servant is trained for his public service while hidden in the hiddenness of God.

In Gen 32:23-32, Jacob acts out the servant of Isa 50-55. He first makes himself bare of all that appertains to him of wealth and children, (Joseph emblematically being the last one to be let go off as we will be informed in the immediately following passage in 33:2 describing and enacting the entry). Then he stands alone with the faceless and nameless figure of the deity, taking all blows from God and man, and remaining till the early hours of the morning, not releasing nor rejecting the deity until he is blessed by this deity and morning dawns. His "flag" remained up all through the night, enduring all the blows, not relenting to despair, and so "earned" the title "Israel." The land, represented by his brother Esau/Edom, opens up to him. This is the work of the servant in Isa 50-55 standing opposite to that of Jacob in 40-49.

Genesis 32 expresses the imaginary time of the deity of the redactor of this text, his unrealized wish as expressed in Isa 40-55. Only by denuding himself of all his possessions, and taking the shape of the suffering servant, enduring all possible injury from men and the deity, and holding on to hope in the blessing of the nameless and hidden deity does he achieve entry into the land/blessings of the covenant. The verb *śry* proves to mean in this context: Going the road with God, being tested and proven, and becoming intimate of God!<sup>36</sup>

As fates would have it here, determined by the redactor, this is made possible for Jacob because Benjamin has not yet been born to him. He still does not have a warrior clan (I derive Benjamin from the Arabic root *ymn* indicating the right hand/good fortune, in the sense of those wielding power by means of a mighty right arm/having the upper hand).<sup>37</sup> Our writer, after all, wishes to understand the name Israel in this pericope as derived from *śrh*, as indicating becoming intimate of the deity and initiate into the realm of God (in other words he proved himself into the realm, not as over and above God). God, the stranger who jumps him and has the upper hand, will function as his strongman and as his king, again exactly as in Isa 40-55. The inductee will function as subject to and under the protection of the inducting stranger/deity. This is why he insists on receiving the blessing from the stranger, and names the locale as the locale of the meeting with the nameless deity and surviving. It was not by his strength that he passed the test, but by his holding on to the stranger and sustaining all the bruising from God and men. Hosea will understand it as repentance to God, as weeping and entreating the deity (Hos 12: 5), thus becoming proven, and making the Jacob clan the addressee of God and recipient of His word. “Real” time resumes in Gen 34-35 where we have the beginning of the story of the collapse of Jacob, expressed as the sins of the sons of Jacob. The birth of Benjamin, the warrior clan, in Gen 35:18 puts an end to Jacob’s good time with Rachel.

#### 4. Interim Conclusions

The thesis being argued is that Isa 40-55 was written as the project launcher for the books of the Law and the Former and Latter Prophets. It presents the basic scheme of scriptures as the parable of Abraham and Sarah in conjunction with the songs of the servant. At the same time it functions as the “transform/transformational paradigm” to be applied on the material being redacted, making of the various passages and pericopes modules reflective of this scheme. I borrow the term transform from mathematics, and employ it in the sense of a predisposed literary transformation to be applied to the material. Isaiah 40-55 is thus the redactional implement launching and delineating the redactional work required. The primary structuring element is the setting up of two tracks of action, in dialogue with one another but disjunct; the one of Jacob/Adam representing the sins of all Adam, the other of God/God’s word delineated by the servant-*rahām*. Together with this, it traces graphically the paradigmatic form of this servant-*rahām*, providing the rule/canon for the promulgation of the covenant with this deity and for arriving at the solution/salvation to the problem posed by Adam/Jacob.

This servant stands outside the camp of Jacob, and consequently stands opposite the clerical organization being attempted by the opponents.<sup>38</sup> The elucidation of the major

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36 The mysterious blow Jacob receives on his hip joint in v. 26 appears also to be an assimilation to the profile of the servant in the fourth song. The hip would stand for the procreative capacity of a man. The servant appears to have no progeny who would keep his memory (Isa 53:8).

37 More on the name Benjamin and its redactional value in Genesis will follow in part two.

38 Cf. Paul Nadim Tarazi, “The Book of Jeremiah and the Pentateuchal Torah,” in *Sacred Text and Interpretation: Perspectives in Orthodox Biblical Studies* (ed. Theodore G. Stylianopoulos; Brookline,

elements of this thesis will require the study of several texts and motifs in the books of the Law and the Prophets. The central argument comes in a second part discussing the Joseph type and its transformation in the Joseph cycle in the book of Genesis. The illustration of the thesis in the analysis of Gen 32 and the reinterpretation of the title Israel in this chapter is proposed as emblematic of the program and procedure put forth by Isa 40-55 and implemented in the production of the corpus of texts of the Law and the Prophets. The unity of the corpus is one proposed, launched and generated by the text of Isa 40-55. The verification of the thesis awaits the analysis and the argumentation of key texts, types, and structuring elements in the upcoming parts/chapters of this study.

#### 4.1 Postscript

The thesis underlying this paper is that the Pentateuch and the books of the Former and Latter Prophets are a redactional project initiated by the redactor of Isa 40-55, and completed by his school. The work presupposes and is founded upon the corpus of the work and the approach of Paul Nadim Tarazi, accessed both through his written works, as well as through his oral teaching and discussions. In several recent works he has postulated the book of Ezekiel as the writing from which and around which Scripture formed. He has expressed this in different ways,<sup>39</sup> including description of the book as the blueprint<sup>40</sup> for the Law and the Prophets. In two other instances he mentions Second Isaiah in conjunction with Ezekiel.<sup>41</sup> The priority of the book of Ezekiel is concurred to and premised in this paper. It is also premised to be the bone of contention between the Isa 40-55 group and their opponents with primarily a priestly and levitical posture.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, I propose Isa 40-55 as deliberately and technically the blueprint, or proposal, for the redaction of the full corpus we know as the Law and the Prophets. It is part and parcel of the “new” that “will be heard for the first time” (Isa 48:6-8). The centrality of Ezekiel is that it is the text that is being reclaimed, after having been misappropriated by the temple group<sup>43</sup> according to the Isa 40-55 group. The new corpus is being proposed as the “place” within which Ezekiel is to be read, as opposed to the temple. Moses becomes the frame of reference for the reception of Ezekiel, not the temple and the priesthood. P. D. Hanson in his seminal work<sup>44</sup> sees in Isa 56-66 a development towards a sharpening of the acrimony directed against the priests and the levites due to the injustices in a failed new Jerusalem. He projects this as having occurred after Isa 40-55. I shift this conjectured development to the interval of time between the book of Ezekiel and Isa 40-55 (cf. section 2.2.1 above).

The attempt was made above, in the first three sections of the paper, to show the impact of Isa 40-55 on the redaction of Gen 32 and the reinterpretation of the title Israel. This remains only an initial piece in the jigsaw puzzle, albeit a paradigmatic one. The cornerstone of the argument will come in a discussion of the Joseph type and its transformation. Much of

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Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), 7-36.

39 Cf. Tarazi, *The Old Testament: An Introduction: Volume 1: Historical Traditions*, 23-25, 29-40.

40 Paul Nadim Tarazi, “Paul, the One Apostle of the One Gospel,” *JOCABS* 2.1 (2009): 15-18. Cited 23 September 2010. Online: <http://ocabs.org/journal/index.php/jocabs/article/view/40/15>.

41 Paul Nadim Tarazi, *The New Testament: An Introduction: Volume 4: Matthew and the Canon* (St Paul, Minn.: OCABS Press, 2009), 48 n. 9, and Tarazi, *Genesis*, 32-33, where Ezekiel and Second Isaiah are named as the two “fathers of scripture.”

42 This position is given expression to and argued at length, as regards the Pentateuch, in: Tarazi, “The Book of Jeremiah and the Pentateuchal Torah.”

43 Idem.

44 Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

the evidence adduced could point to an inverse theory to the effect that Isa 40-55 is a resume of Scripture. I believe enough evidence was cited to start questioning this. A final decision would await a survey of all the Law and the Prophets. It should be pointed out that if Isa 40-55 is seen as a “perfect” resume of Scripture, then it is practically equivalent to stating that it expresses the design behind the work. Still, technically, the thesis presented here is that it actually is the blueprint composed to set off work on the project.

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