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# An exegetical investigation of the concept of Yahweh's presence as expressed by יהוהצמד [yhwh 'mkh (romanized form)] and its variations

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study proposes to investigate exegetically the concept of Yahweh's presence as expressed by the Hebrew phrase  $\text{יְהוָה אִתּוֹ}$  and its variations. This study does not propose to be extremely detailed throughout. Rather it proposes to present this writer's conclusions supported by as much biblical evidence and examples as was deemed necessary considering the scope of the paper.

Chapter II will determine the scope of the biblical data, both of the phrase  $\text{יְהוָה אִתּוֹ}$  and of its variations. By nature of its scope, this chapter will be somewhat more detailed. Chapter III will attempt to answer two questions: 1) to and of whom is the concept of Yahweh's presence expressed by means of  $\text{יְהוָה אִתּוֹ}$  and its variations? and 2) who has the right to express the concept? Chapter IV will investigate two instances where Yahweh's presence appears to be "transferred" from one individual to another. Chapter V will investigate the contexts and specific tasks involved with the assurance of Yahweh's presence. Chapter VI will investigate the blessing and promise features of the concept as well as its results, obligations, and elicited responses. Chapter VII will outline an area for further study and summarize the findings of the entire investigation.

The bibliography lists those works which were either used as exegetical tools or read as background information. There were very few materials directly pertaining to the particular subject of this study. A conscious attempt was made to present the results of my own

investigation, thus there are very few footnotes other than the numerous ones which cite biblical references. The footnotes for each chapter are located at the end of the chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIBLICAL DATA

This study has found that one of the basic phrases which expresses Yahweh's being with someone is  $\text{לְפָנָיו יְהוָה}$ ; that is, a phrase or formula in which  $\text{יְהוָה}$  is the expressed subject and in which  $\text{לְפָנָיו}$  (the preposition  $\text{לְפָנָיו}$  with the second singular masculine object suffix) expresses the object. The preposition with the object suffix may be pointed  $\text{לְפָנָיו}$ . This is the contextual masculine form. The preposition with the object suffix may also be pointed  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ}$ . The latter pointing may be either the contextual feminine form or the pausal masculine form, but in the contexts of all the passages studied,  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ}$  is always pausal masculine, never contextual feminine.

The phrase  $\text{לְפָנָיו יְהוָה}$  occurs twelve times in the Old Testament. Twice the phrase is pointed  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה}$ .<sup>1</sup> Ten times the phrase is pointed  $\text{לְפָנָיו יְהוָה}$ .<sup>2</sup> One of the latter passages has a near-verbatim parallel in which  $\text{יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  is the expressed subject.<sup>3</sup> Though the basic phrase in all of these passages is  $\text{לְפָנָיו יְהוָה}$ , in some of them the phrase has been expanded to read  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ <sup>4</sup> or  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה}$ .<sup>5</sup> When a verb is expressed it is always some form of  $\text{יָהָה}$ .<sup>6</sup>

Another basic phrase that expresses Yahweh's being with someone is one in which Yahweh speaks in the first person. Again the object is expressed either by  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ}$  (four times)<sup>7</sup> or  $\text{לְפָנָיו}$  (eight times).<sup>8</sup> The subject may be expressed by the verb (always a form of  $\text{יָהָה}$ ),<sup>9</sup> by the personal pronoun,<sup>10</sup> or by both.<sup>11</sup>

Two instances of  $\text{לְפָנֶיךָ}$  do not precisely fit the above patterns. One

is Deut. 31:8, which reads  $\text{יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ . Here Yahweh is expressed as the subject of  $\text{יְהוָה}$  by the third masculine singular pronoun  $\text{אֵינוּ}$ . The other instance is Deut. 31:6, in which Yahweh is the expressed subject of  $\text{יְהוָה}$ , but reads  $\text{יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ .

A third basic phrase that expresses Yahweh's being with someone is one in which  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  is the expressed subject of  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$ , the preposition  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  with the third masculine singular object suffix. This occurs eleven times, sometimes in expanded form, and sometimes also with the verb, which again is always a form of  $\text{אֵינוּ}$ .<sup>12</sup>

Another category that expresses Yahweh's being with someone is that in which  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  is the expressed or implied subject of a prepositional phrase that is constructed with  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  plus a stated object.  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  is the expressed subject six times and in each case the stated object of the preposition is different.<sup>13</sup>  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  is the implied subject four times, three of which state  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  as the object.<sup>14</sup> All four of these instances occur in passages to which this study has already referred.

The concept of Yahweh's being with someone also includes occurrences in which the object is in the plural. In these cases the plural object is always expressed by  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  with the appropriate object suffix. Thus  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$ , the preposition  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  with the first plural object suffix, occurs six times with  $\text{אֵינוּ}$  as the expressed or implied subject.<sup>15</sup>  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  (second plural masculine object suffix) occurs nine times.<sup>16</sup>  $\text{עִמָּנוּ}$  (third plural masculine object suffix) occurs twice.<sup>17</sup>

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Contextual masculine form. The passages are Joshua 1:9 and Judg. 6:12. The Joshua passage reads  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$  for emphasis.

<sup>2</sup>Pausal masculine form. The passages are Gen. 26:28, Deut. 20:1, Joshua 1:17, 1 Sam. 17:37, 1 Sam. 20:13, 2 Sam. 7:3, 2 Sam. 14:17, 1 Chron. 22:11, 1 Chron. 22:16, and 1 Chron. 28:20.

<sup>3</sup>Compare 2 Sam. 7:3, which reads  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ , to 1 Chron. 17:2, which reads  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ .

<sup>4</sup>Deut. 20:1; Joshua 1:9 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); Joshua 1:17; and 2 Sam. 14:17 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ).

<sup>5</sup>1 Chron. 28:20.

<sup>6</sup>Gen. 26:28 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); Joshua 1:17 and 1 Sam. 17:37 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); 1 Sam. 20:13 and 1 Chron. 22:16 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); 2 Sam. 14:17 and 1 Chron. 22:11 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ).

<sup>7</sup>Contextual masculine form. The passages are Gen. 26:3, 2 Sam. 7:9 (parallel passage--1 Chron. 17:8), and Is. 41:10.

<sup>8</sup>Pausal masculine form. The passages are Gen. 28:15, Gen. 31:3, Ex. 3:12, Deut. 31:23, Joshua 1:5, Joshua 3:7, Judg. 6:16, and 1 Kings 11:38.

<sup>9</sup>Gen. 26:3 and 31:3 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); Ex. 3:12, Joshua 1:5, Joshua 3:7, and Judg. 6:16 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); 2 Sam. 7:9 and 1 Chron. 17:8 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ); 1 Kings 11:38 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ).

<sup>10</sup>Gen. 28:15 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ) and Is. 41:10 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ).

<sup>11</sup>Deut. 31:23 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$ ).

<sup>12</sup>Num. 23:21 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 3:19 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 16:18 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 18:12 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 18:14 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Sam. 5:10 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Kings 18:7 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Chron. 9:20 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Chron. 11:9 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 1:1 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 15:9 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ). 1 Chron. 11:9 is a near-verbatim parallel to 2 Sam. 5:10.

<sup>13</sup>Judg. 2:18 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 18:28 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Kings 1:37 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 17:3 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 19:11 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 25:7 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ). The last passage is a rare use of the negative expression, namely, that Yahweh is not with someone.

<sup>14</sup>Joshua 1:5 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); Joshua 1:17 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); Joshua 3:7 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Sam. 20:13 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ).

<sup>15</sup>Ex. 33:16 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); Judg. 6:13 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 1 Kings 8:57 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ); 2 Chron. 13:12 ( $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ ).

2 Chron. 32:7 (פִּי-יִפְתָּח וְגַבְרֵי מַלְחָמָה); 2 Chron. 32:8 (אֵלֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ).

<sup>16</sup>Ex. 10:10 (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); Num. 14:43 (אֵלֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ);  
Deut. 20:4 (פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); Joshua 7:12 (אֵלֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ);  
Ruth 2:4 (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); 1 Chron. 22:18 (אֵלֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); 2 Chron. 15:2  
(יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); 2 Chron. 20:17 (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); 2 Chron. 19:6  
(יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ).

<sup>17</sup>Judg. 1:22 (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ); Zech. 10:5 (פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ).

## CHAPTER III

### TWO PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

Two questions will be submitted and answered in this chapter. The purpose is to see if the answers will give any direction or help toward ascertaining what the meaning of the phrases expressing Yahweh's being with someone (cited in Chapter II) might be.

The first question is "Who has the right to express the concept?" Yahweh Himself has that right, which is obvious. He may speak directly in the first person,<sup>1</sup> or in the first person through a prophet such as Nathan,<sup>2</sup> Ahijah,<sup>3</sup> or Isaiah.<sup>4</sup> He may also speak through a prophet, but not in the first person.<sup>5</sup> Once Yahweh speaks the message of His being with someone through an angel.<sup>6</sup> Later the angel is identified as Yahweh Himself.<sup>7</sup>

Besides Yahweh Himself, a prophet, or an angel, it is possible for the king to express the concept. In ancient Israel, as well as in the neighboring cultures, kingship was viewed in a divine light. As the dynastic oracle of 2 Sam. 7 clearly demonstrates, the Israelite king was the adopted son of Yahweh Himself. Therefore it is not out of character for the king to express Yahweh's being with someone. Examples are Saul,<sup>8</sup> David,<sup>9</sup> Jehoshaphat,<sup>10</sup> Solomon,<sup>11</sup> and Hezekiah.<sup>12</sup>

Others who may express the concept are Moses,<sup>13</sup> the Israelites as a group,<sup>14</sup> Jonathan,<sup>15</sup> the woman whom Joab enlisted to appear before David for the purpose of negotiating the return of Absalom,<sup>16</sup> Abijah,<sup>17</sup> Pharaoh(!),<sup>18</sup> Boaz,<sup>19</sup> Azariah,<sup>20</sup> Jahaziel,<sup>21</sup> and Benaiah.<sup>22</sup> The Deuteronomic Historian<sup>23</sup> and, following his lead, the Chronicler<sup>24</sup> both reserve

the right to express the concept of Yahweh's being with someone in an evaluative sense. There seems to be a very general pattern expressed by these examples that if it is not Yahweh Himself who expresses the concept, it is usually one of His designated agents.

The second question which needs to be answered is "To and of whom is the concept of Yahweh's being with someone expressed?" Again, in answer to this question, there seems to be the very general pattern of those who have some relationship to Yahweh or serve as His designated agents. Thus, the following people are the objects of the concept: Isaac,<sup>25</sup> Jacob,<sup>26</sup> Moses,<sup>27</sup> Joshua,<sup>28</sup> the pre-monarchial judges<sup>29</sup> (particularly Gideon<sup>30</sup>), Phinehas,<sup>31</sup> Samuel,<sup>32</sup> the king,<sup>33</sup> the judges whom Jehoshaphat appointed,<sup>34</sup> the "upright",<sup>35</sup> and, of course, the people of Israel constituted as a group.<sup>36</sup>

Though answering both of these questions does not give many specifics as to what the concept of Yahweh's being with someone may mean, it has opened up other avenues for research. For example, since the concept involves many of Israel's leaders and important people in Yahweh's plan, it might be well to ask what specific tasks, if any, are involved and in what contexts the concept appears. Another approach is to ask if the concept appears to be passed on from person to person. We now turn to a discussion of these areas of the study.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

- <sup>1</sup>E. g., Joshua 1:5, 9; 3:7; 7:12.
- <sup>2</sup>E. g., 2 Sam. 7:9(cf. 1 Chron. 17:18).
- <sup>3</sup>1 Kings 11:38.
- <sup>4</sup>Is. 41:10.
- <sup>5</sup>E. g., 2 Sam. 7:3(cf. 1 Chron. 17:2); 2 Chron. 25:7; Zech. 10:5.
- <sup>6</sup>Judg. 6:12.
- <sup>7</sup>Judg. 6:14.
- <sup>8</sup>1 Sam. 17:37.
- <sup>9</sup>1 Chron. 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20.
- <sup>10</sup>2 Chron. 19:6; 11.
- <sup>11</sup>1 Kings 8:57.
- <sup>12</sup>2 Chron. 32:7-8.
- <sup>13</sup>Deut. 20:1, 4; 31:6,8; Ex. 33:16; Num. 14:43.
- <sup>14</sup>Joshua 1:17.
- <sup>15</sup>1 Sam. 20:13.
- <sup>16</sup>2 Sam. 14:17.
- <sup>17</sup>2 Chron. 13:12.
- <sup>18</sup>Ex. 10:10.
- <sup>19</sup>Ruth 2:4.
- <sup>20</sup>2 Chron. 15:1-2.
- <sup>21</sup>2 Chron. 20:17.
- <sup>22</sup>1 Kings 1:37.
- <sup>23</sup>Judg. 1:22; 2:18; 1 Sam. 3:19; 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10; 2 Kings 18:7.
- <sup>24</sup>1Chron. 9:20; 11:9; 2 Chron. 1:1; 15:9; 17:3.
- <sup>25</sup>Gen. 26:3.

<sup>26</sup>Gen. 28:15.

<sup>27</sup>Ex. 3:12(cf. Joshua 1:5, 17; 3:7).

<sup>28</sup>Joshua 1:5.

<sup>29</sup>Judg. 2:18.

<sup>30</sup>Judg. 6:12, 16.

<sup>31</sup>1 Chron. 9:20.

<sup>32</sup>1 Sam. 3:19.

<sup>33</sup>Saul: 1 Sam. 20:13; David: 2 Sam. 7:9; Solomon: 1 Kings 1:37;  
Jeroboam: 1 Kings 11:38; Hezekiah: 2 Kings 18:7; Asa: 2 Chron. 15:9;  
Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. 17:3.

<sup>34</sup>2 Chron. 19:6.

<sup>35</sup>2 Chron. 19:11.

<sup>36</sup>Deut. 20:1, 4.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRANSFERRAL OF THE PRESENCE

Taking the last question first, we will look into the possibility of Yahweh's presence being passed on from one person to another. Based upon the answers given to the first question in Chapter III, we can see two very clear examples of Yahweh's presence with someone being "handed down", so to speak. One of these examples involves the change in leadership of Israel from Moses to Joshua. The other involves David's succession to the throne.

The first example is made quite clear in the Old Testament. Since it came at a crucial time in Israel's history, it was extremely important. The basis of Yahweh's presence with Moses is recorded in the Moses call narrative.<sup>1</sup> As Habel has pointed out, the call narratives exhibit a Gattung all their own. In the Moses call narrative the  $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה}$  formula of verse 12a serves as the reassurance section of the call Gattung.<sup>2</sup>

The formula  $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה}$  is identical with the response in Judges 6:16 and has essentially the same function. Yahweh's efficacious presence renders all objections invalid. This word of assurance, moreover, empowers Moses to execute his unenviable role.<sup>3</sup>

It is this promise, apparently, to which Joshua 1:5, 17, and 3:7 refer. Each of these verses contains a reference to Yahweh's being with Moses.<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of the promise, Moses can announce Yahweh's presence to the people<sup>5</sup> or His absence.<sup>6</sup> And he can announce it to Joshua.<sup>7</sup> As is the case with Moses, there is no doubt in the biblical record concerning Yahweh's presence with Joshua.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the biblical evidence for Yahweh's presence with these two

national leaders is found in Joshua 1, a chapter so crucial that the Historian encapsules in verses 5 and 6 the entire message and outline of the book:

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and of good courage; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

Besides giving this summary, Joshua 1 recounts the change in command from Moses to Joshua, and, on the basis of the evidence given so far, witnesses to the "transferral" of Yahweh's presence from Moses to Joshua.

The other example of the "transferral" of Yahweh's presence from one person to another is the succession of David to the throne of Saul. This study has shown a number of examples of Yahweh's being with the king. We now turn to demonstrating that at this time in Israel's history Yahweh's presence was "transferred" very dramatically from one king to another.

To begin with, Saul had the presence of Yahweh in no small measure at the beginning of his reign. Apparently the common proverb about Saul was "Is Saul also among the prophets?", a reference to his ecstatic prophesying under the influence of the Spirit of Yahweh.<sup>9</sup> However, it soon became apparent that Saul was not the "man of the hour" for Israel and another was prepared by Yahweh to take Saul's place. That person was David. Ironically he was anointed by Samuel, the same person who had anointed Saul.

After Samuel tells Saul

the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you,<sup>10</sup>

the Historian records the information on which our argument is grounded.

In 1 Sam. 16:14 we read

וְרִיחַ יְהוָה עָרָה מִצֶּמֶת שְׂאוֹל וְבִיַּעַן תָּתִיב  
 רִיחַ - נִצָּח מִיָּת יְהוָה

This is reinforced by 1 Sam. 18:12, which reads

וַיִּרְא שְׂאוֹל מִסִּפְּנֵי דָוִד כִּי-הָיָה יְהוָה עִמּוֹ  
 וַיִּמָּצֵם שְׂאוֹל קָר

1 Sam. 20:13, in which Jonathan says to David

יְהִי יְהוָה עִמָּךְ כְּהָיָה עִמִּי-אָבִי

and 2 Sam. 7:15, part of the dynastic oracle, in which Yahweh says of

David

וְהָיָה כִּי-יָשִׁיב אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 שְׂאוֹל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיָּת

Obviously this is not the same kind of transferral as we saw between Moses and Joshua. This is evidenced by  $\text{וַיִּמָּצֵם}$  in 1 Sam. 16:14, 18:12, and 2 Sam. 7:15. It appears that  $\text{וַיִּמָּצֵם שְׂאוֹל}$  is the exact opposite of  $\text{יְהוָה עִמּוֹ}$ . Thus the difference between the Moses-Joshua "transferral" and the Saul-David "transferral" is that Saul was abandoned by Yahweh. Saul also had no choice in the matter, whereas Moses was a willing party to the transferral of leadership.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>Ex. 3:1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXXVII (1965), 304.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Joshua 1:5(הַשׁוֹמֵר אֶת הַבְּרִית וְהַשְׂמֵרָה); Joshua 1:17(הַשׁוֹמֵר אֶת הַבְּרִית וְהַשְׂמֵרָה); Joshua 3:7(הַשׁוֹמֵר אֶת הַבְּרִית וְהַשְׂמֵרָה).

<sup>5</sup>Deut. 20:1, 4; 31:6.

<sup>6</sup>Num. 14:43.

<sup>7</sup>Deut. 31:8.

<sup>8</sup>Deut. 31:23; Joshua 1:5, 9, 17; 3:7.

<sup>9</sup>1 Sam. 19:24.

<sup>10</sup>1 Sam. 15:28.



וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ

One of the causes of such a state has been recorded in Joshua 7:12. In this passage Yahweh threatens to be with Israel no longer unless they remove what is under the ban from among them. The Jerusalem Bible points out that

the violation of the "anathema", or "ban", is a sacrilege, ...and the whole community is contaminated(it becomes "anathema") by the presence of the booty that has been pilfered. The community can only be released from the effects of the ban, when these have been executed on the guilty individual.<sup>6</sup>

When the matter is set right, the conditions for holy war are again present and the people are assured of Yahweh's presence. In fact, His presence during holy war is made objective and concrete by the presence of the ark. When Abijah addresses Jeroboam and his northern army, he says (making reference to the ark),

יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ בְּרִאשׁוֹתָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ  
 וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ בְּרִאשׁוֹתָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ  
 וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ בְּרִאשׁוֹתָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָהוָה אֵלֵינוּ

Besides such a concretization of Yahweh's presence, it is still possible to notice that Yahweh is with someone, even though such objectifying elements are lacking.<sup>8</sup>

Other contexts or tasks dependent upon Yahweh's presence are pre-monarchical judgeship<sup>9</sup>(especially Gideon<sup>10</sup>), kingship(see Chapter III), Joshua's and Moses' leadership(see Chapter IV), and the building of the temple.<sup>11</sup> Even included are legal activities.<sup>12</sup> We must remind ourselves that these are explicit examples. Yahweh's presence for the Israelite most certainly enveloped every aspect of his existence.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>L. E. Toombs, "War, Ideas of," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick, et. al. (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, c. 1962), IV, 797.

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 20:1.

<sup>3</sup>Deut. 20:4. Other passages that fit the holy war context are Deut. 31:6, 8; Judg. 1:22; 1 Sam. 17:37; 2 Sam. 7:9; 1 Chron. 17:8; 2 Chron. 13:12; 20:17; 25:7; 32:7-8; and Zech. 10:5.

<sup>4</sup>Num. 14:43.

<sup>5</sup>2 Chron. 25:7.

<sup>6</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Alexander Jones, general editor (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), p. 283, footnote "b".

<sup>7</sup>2 Chron. 13:12.

<sup>8</sup>Gen 26:28; Ex. 33:16; Judg. 6:13; 1 Sam. 16:18; 18:28; 2 Chron. 15:9.

<sup>9</sup>Judg. 2:18.

<sup>10</sup>Judg. 6:12, 13, 16.

<sup>11</sup>2 Sam. 7:3; 1 Chron. 17:2; 22:11, 16; 28:20. The temple itself is an objective sign of Yahweh's presence.

<sup>12</sup>2 Chron. 19:6.

## CHAPTER VI

### BLESSING, PROMISE, OBLIGATIONS, RESPONSE, RESULTS

One of the questions that yet needs to be answered is the following: "Is Yahweh's being with someone a blessing or a promise? If it is a promise, with which covenant theology is it most closely associated?"

The answer to the first question is "yes". Taking all of the instances of Yahweh's presence as expressed by  $\text{יְהוָה בְּיָמֵינוּ}$  and its variations as a whole, it will be seen that the concept is both a blessing and a promise. There are also many instances which classify in neither the blessing or promise category. Those passages that are neither blessing or promise occur primarily in the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler, in which the passages in question are of an evaluative nature.<sup>1</sup> There are also numerous passages included in the scope of this study that are neither blessing, promise, a combination of the two, or theological evaluation. For lack of clearly definable categories, these passages are merely listed in the footnote for the reader's ready reference and study.<sup>2</sup>

It is not easy to sort out which passages are purely blessing and which are purely promise. This study has, however, made an attempt to do so.<sup>3</sup> There are passages which are blessing/promise; that is, they contain elements that are both blessing and promise.<sup>4</sup> Many of these passages translate into English as statements of fact.

It is important to notice that the passages that are pure promises are from Yahweh Himself speaking in the first person. The covenant that is the most closely associated here is the Sinaitic Covenant. The other two covenants associated with the concept of Yahweh's presence are the

pre-Sinai Patriarchal Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. One would expect the idea of covenant to be linked with the concept of Yahweh's presence and vice versa. This study has shown one more alternative by means of which the association is made. Covenant ideas will be discussed again later in this chapter.

Another basic question which yet needs to be answered actually centers around the following group of questions: "Does Yahweh's being with someone involve reciprocal action or obligations on the part of the other party? What immediate response by the other party is indicated? And what results does Yahweh's presence bring?"

One of the more obvious obligations incumbent upon those who are the recipients of Yahweh's presence is the proper conduct of the holy war. This is obvious from the fact that the improper conduct of the holy war is a threat to Yahweh's continued presence with His people, e. g., when the ban has been violated.<sup>5</sup> Further, and because of this, improper conduct of holy war eventually leads to defeat.<sup>6</sup> The lack of Yahweh's presence itself leads to chaos and confusion.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, Yahweh's presence results in successful military engagements.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Yahweh's presence brings general success,<sup>9</sup> particularly in a special undertaking in which Yahweh has special interest, such as the building of the temple.<sup>10</sup> Yahweh's presence also results in material well-being<sup>11</sup> and bestows qualities of leadership upon an individual, the qualities being clearly recognizable.<sup>12</sup> Yahweh's presence guarantees protection and safety<sup>13</sup> and elicits worship in certain instances.<sup>14</sup> A classic example of the results of Yahweh's presence is 1 Chron. 22:18, which mentions the major elements of "peace" and "land";<sup>15</sup>

וְשָׁלוֹם וְאֶרֶץ וְיָמֵינוּ וְיָמֵי בָנֵינוּ וְיָמֵי בָנֵי בָנֵינוּ וְיָמֵי בָנֵי בָנֵינוּ וְיָמֵי בָנֵי בָנֵינוּ וְיָמֵי בָנֵי בָנֵינוּ

כִּי לִפְנֵי קִדְדֵי אֵת יְשֻׁבֵי קִדְדֵי ! וְנִכְבְּשָׁה קִדְדֵי  
 סִפְּרֵי קִדְדֵי ! סִפְּרֵי קִדְדֵי .

The basic immediate response to Yahweh's presence is the stance of faith. This is evident from the use of verbs that denote a mindset (to the Hebrew, a spiritual set). With the one exception of the Isaiah passage, all of these passages come from the Deuteronomistic corpus (or the Chronicler, who follows the Deuteronomist). The stance of faith involves being strong,<sup>16</sup> being bold,<sup>17</sup> not fearing,<sup>18</sup> not being terrified or shattered,<sup>19</sup> and not trembling.<sup>20</sup>

Since the Deuteronomist is highly involved with the Sinaitic Covenant, we may assume that he sees this faith response as being the same as the response to the covenant and that the obligations, explicit or implied, are nothing out of the ordinary when compared to covenant obligations. Other passages as well portray the covenant relationship between Yahweh and people as one of Yahweh's presence with His people and their response to that presence. Particularly noteworthy is Ex. 33:16, in which Moses queries Yahweh

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְנוּ אֵלֵינוּ  
 וְאָמַרְנוּ אֵלֵינוּ ! וְאָמַרְנוּ אֵלֵינוּ !  
 וְאָמַרְנוּ אֵלֵינוּ - אֲנִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל .

An even clearer picture is given in Joshua 1:1-9. It is in this section that we see the faith response (verses 6, 7, and 9), the results (in summary form, verses 5 and 6), and the obligations (verses 7 and 8). Here we have the covenant relationship outlined clearly in nine verses. Further evidence which connects Yahweh's presence with the covenant relationship is found in 1 Kings 11:38 and 2 Chron. 17:3. Both are explicit statements of covenant obligations. Negatively, it can be demon-

strated that a departure from the covenant results in the loss of the presence of Yahweh.<sup>21</sup> The loss of the presence of Yahweh is equated with being deserted by Yahweh, again in a covenant context, as 2 Chron. 15:2b clearly shows: **וַיִּזְכֹּר יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּזְכֹּר יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל**. This is the very effective working out of the covenant curses, as Judg. 6:13 also clearly shows. Elsewhere, Solomon prays that the curses may be avoided<sup>22</sup> and Yahweh promises that they will be.<sup>23</sup>

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup>Judg. 1:22; 2:18; 1 Sam. 3:19; 18:12, 14; 2 Sam. 5:10; 2 Kings 18:7; 1 Chron. 11:9; 2 Chron. 1:1; 17:3.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 26:28; Ex. 33:16; Num. 14:43; 23:21; Joshua 7:12; Judg. 6:13; 1 Sam. 16:18; 18:28; 2 Sam. 7:9; 1 Chron. 22:18; 2 Chron. 13:12; 15:9; 25:7; 32:7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Blessing--Joshua 1:17; Ruth 2:4; 1 Sam. 17:37; 20:13; 2 Sam. 14:17; 1 Kings 1:37; 8:57; 1 Chron. 9:20; 22:11, 16; 2 Chron. 19:11.  
Promise--Gen. 26:3; 28:15; 31:3; Ex. 3:12; Deut. 31:23; Joshua 1:5; 3:7; Judg. 6:16; 1 Kings 11:38; Is. 41:10.

<sup>4</sup>Deut. 20:1, 4; 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:9; Judg. 6:12; 2 Sam. 7:3 (cf. 1 Chron. 17:2); 1 Chron. 28:20; 2 Chron. 15:2; 19:6; 20:17; Zech. 10:5;

<sup>5</sup>Joshua 7:12.

<sup>6</sup>Joshua 7:12-13; 2 Chron. 25:7-8.

<sup>7</sup>Judg. 6:13.

<sup>8</sup>Deut. 20:4; Joshua 1:5; Judg. 1:22; 2:18; 6:16; 2 Chron. 13:12; 20:17; 32:7-8; Zech. 10:5.

<sup>9</sup>1 Sam. 18:14 (שׁוֹפָן), cf. also 1 Sam. 18:15); 2 Sam. 5:10; 2 Kings 18:7 (שׁוֹפָן); 1 Chron. 22:11 (שׁוֹפָן); 2 Chron. 1:1; 2 Chron. 13:12 (שׁוֹפָן).

<sup>10</sup>2 Sam. 7:3; 1 Chron. 22:11; 28:20.

<sup>11</sup>Gen. 26:28.

<sup>12</sup>Deut. 31:23; Joshua 1:16-18.

<sup>13</sup>1 Sam. 17:37; 20:13.

<sup>14</sup>Ex. 3:12; 2 Chron. 20:17-19

<sup>15</sup>For a good discussion of how these issues are treated by the Deuteronomistic Historian, particularly the land issue, see Patrick D. Miller, "The Gift of God: The Deuteronomistic Theology of the Land," Interpretation, XXIII (October 1969), 451-465.

<sup>16</sup>Deut. 31:6, 2 Chron. 19:11, 32:7 (שׁוֹפָן); Deut. 31:23, Joshua 1:9, 1 Chron. 28:20 (שׁוֹפָן).

<sup>17</sup>Deut. 31:6 and 2 Chron. 32:7 (שׁוֹפָן); Deut. 31:23, Joshua 1:9, 1 Chron. 28:20 (שׁוֹפָן).

<sup>18</sup>Deut. 20:1 and 31:8 (שׁוֹפָן); 1 Chron. 28:20 (שׁוֹפָן); Is. 41:10

(אֲרָא-סֵל); Deut. 31:6, 2 Chron. 20:17, 32:7(אֲרָא-סֵל).

<sup>19</sup>Joshua 1:9 and 1 Chron. 28:20(אֲרָא-סֵל); Deut. 31:8(אֲרָא-סֵל); 2 Chron. 20:17 and 32:7(אֲרָא-סֵל).

<sup>20</sup>Deut. 31:6(אֲרָא-סֵל); Joshua 1:9(אֲרָא-סֵל).

<sup>21</sup>Num. 14:43; 2 Chron. 15:1-2.

<sup>22</sup>1 Kings 8:57(אֲרָא-סֵל; אֲרָא-סֵל).

<sup>23</sup>Deut. 31:6, 8, 1 Chron. 28:20(אֲרָא-סֵל); Joshua 1:5(אֲרָא-סֵל); Deut. 31:6 and 1 Chron. 28:20(אֲרָא-סֵל); Deut. 31:8(אֲרָא-סֵל); Gen. 28:15(אֲרָא-סֵל); Joshua 1:5(אֲרָא-סֵל).

## CHAPTER VII

### FURTHER STUDY AND CONCLUSION

A brief survey of all the passages referred to in this study will show that with very few exceptions they are all pre-exilic, and particularly almost half of the passages occur in Deuteronomy through Kings, the great historical corpus of the Deuteronomist. This is very interesting. Apparently the trauma of the exile had something to do with the fact that the formula  $\text{יהוה אלהינו}$  and its variations seemingly fell into disuse. What could have caused this? The answer to that question deserves further study and will not be dealt with in detail here. However, a tentative suggestion will be submitted.

First of all, we have seen that Yahweh's presence was objectified by the ark and the temple. With the exile these vanished, as did Israel's status as a dominant nation. The institutions collapsed. Everything that assured the Israelites that Yahweh was alive and well among them went by the board. Questions began to be asked by the exiles. Has Yahweh abandoned us? Is He present with us any longer? Is Yahweh really God? Or is Yahweh dead? Can Yahweh be as much of a God in Babylon as He apparently was in Jerusalem? Ezekiel, for one, answers these questions in his own way. He may be said to be one of the first theologians to combat an "active" God-is-dead theology.

The Deuteronomistic Historian also undertakes to give answers to some of these questions by putting together the great historical corpus of Deuteronomy through Kings. It is in this corpus that half of the passages occur. Could it be that  $\text{יהוה אלהינו}$  and its variations is one of the

Historian's ways of assuring those in Exile that their problems are in God's hands? If this is indeed the case, this aspect of the Historian's methodology of getting his message across has been pretty much ignored by biblical scholarship.

Nevertheless, post-exilic Israel lost the concept of Yahweh's very real presence among His people in a concrete way. In fact, Ezekiel's own answers began to give Israel a transcendent God. This transcendent mood in Hebrew theology reached a zenith in the production of apocalyptic literature. Yahweh was "up there".

Into the "vacuum" Yahweh thrust His very being by sending His Son to be His visible assurance that He was still with His chosen people. When His own rejected Him, unable to stomach the concrete realization of His love for His creatures, Yahweh, through His Son, accepted those who came to Him, assuring them of forgiveness, love, and divine presence: Lo, I am with you always, even to the close of the age." It is this promise to which those in faith cling. And it is in this promise that all the nuances of meaning of the concept of Yahweh's presence as expressed by יהוה יהוה and its variations reach their greatest fulfillment.

יהוה יהוה!

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