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**THE CONCEPT OF THE NEW AGE
IN CERTAIN HOPE ORACLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

⋮

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology**

by
Adam Cooper, Jr.
May 1968

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CHAPTER I

OLD TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY:

THE CONTROVERSY

Positions of Some Noted Scholars

The object of this study is to investigate some of the factors which give rise to eschatological thought in Israel.

Specifically we intend to present the positions presented by

Georg Fohrer in an effort to determine whether eschatological

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In the active discussion which presently surrounds the subject of eschatology in the Old Testament, one is confronted with two radically different positions. The one declares that eschatology as such develops only late in the history of the Jews while the other contends that eschatological thinking goes back at least as far as early monarchical times. Sometimes this disagreement seems to stem from differences in the way one defines the word "eschatological," but this is not

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CHAPTER I

OLD TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY:

THE CONTROVERSY

Positions of Some Noted Scholars

The object of this study is to investigate some of the factors which give rise to eschatological thought in Israel. Specifically we intend to test a hypothesis presented by Georg Fohrer in an effort to determine whether eschatological thought as he defines it developed only during and after the period of the exile or whether it has deeper roots.

This writer has discovered that such a discussion cannot move very far without becoming involved in the whole subject of eschatology in the Old Testament. In fact, it will be necessary for us to present a survey of related contemporary thought in that field so that the reader can more readily understand the formulation of the questions to which this thesis will address itself.

In the active discussion which presently surrounds the subject of eschatology in the Old Testament, one is confronted with two radically different positions. The one declares that eschatology as such develops only late in the history of the Jews while the other contends that eschatological thinking goes back at least as far as early monarchical times. Sometimes this disagreement seems to stem from differences in the way men define the word "eschatological," but this is not

always the case. There are individuals who operate with similar views on the nature of eschatology but whose conclusions place them in opposition to each other. To demonstrate this opposition and to set the stage for the statement of the scope and goals of this thesis, we present the following summaries of some contemporary views.

The first position for scrutiny is that of Georg Fohrer. At the beginning of his article, "Die Struktur der alttestamentlichen Eschatologie," Fohrer declares his intention to present his view on the eschatology of the Old Testament. In defining the Old Testament concept of eschatology, he states:

Ihr Heute [the prophets' own day] gilt ihnen als der Augenblick, in dem sich der grosse Wandel der Dinge abzuzeichnen oder zu vollziehen beginnt. Darin liegt der wesentliche Grundzug der eschatologischen Erwartung, nicht aber in der Ankündigung vom Ende der Welt oder der Menschheitsgeschichte, die höchstens als Voraussetzung der verheissenen Neuschöpfung unter der verschiedenen Strukturelementen begegnen kann . . . und nicht in dem transzendenten, übernatürlichen und wunderbaren Charakter der erwarteten Ereignisse, da dem alttestamentlichen Menschen alles geschichtliche Geschehen als "transzendent" gewirkt und beim unerwarteten Eintreten als "wunderbar" erscheint.¹

In other words, eschatology in the Old Testament for Fohrer is not related to the end of the world, neither is

¹Georg Fohrer, "Die Struktur der alttestamentlichen Eschatologie," Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXXV (June 1960), col. 403. Hereafter, when this writer uses the words "eschatology" or "eschatological thought" or their equivalents, he is defining them along Fohrer's line unless he notes otherwise.

it preoccupied with the transcendent. Rather the keystone of Old Testament eschatological thought is the idea that the history of the people of God is divided into two discernible ages. The prophet who paints such a picture views his own time as the turning point between the two eras. Concepts which picture the replacing of the present age with a supernatural, supra-historical one enter upon the scene only in the non-canonical writings of the intertestamental period.²

Fohrer feels that in the Old Testament one of the best examples of a passage which depicts two discernible ages in Israel's history is Hag. 1:15a and 2:15-19.

Den wesentlichen grundzug aller eschatologischen Erwartung enthüllt das in Hagg 1,15a; 2,15-19 überlieferte Wort, das der Prophet am Tag der neuen oder erneuerten Grundsteinlegung am Tempel in September 520 v. Chr. gesprochen hat. In ihm ruft er dazu auf, den Blick auf die Zukunft zu richten, auf sie zu achten und sie mit den bisherigen Verhältnissen, die nun der Vergangenheit angeboren sollen, zu vergleichen. Er verkündet für die Jerusalemer Gemeinde einen Wendepunkt, den der gegenwärtigen Tag als Grenzscheide zweier Zeitalter bildet. In die Vergangenheit zurückblickend, schildert er die bisherige Not, die--in einem auf allen Nahrungsmitteln ruhenden Fluch bestehend--die Gemeinde verzweifeln liesz. Vorausblickend sieht er die Zeit des Segens in Wachstum und Gedeihen die ihren Grund in dem Jahnewort hat: "Von diesem Tage an will ich segnen!". Das Heute dieses Worts am Tag der Grundsteinlegung ist für Haggai der grosse Umschwung aller Dinge, die Wende der Zeiten im Abschluss des alten und im Beginnen eines neuen Zeitalters.³

²Ibid., col. 413.

³Ibid., cols. 401-402.

He sees the same type of thinking in Zech. 1:1-6 and Is. 40:1-2,3-5,6-8,⁴ but for him this type of thinking goes back no farther than the time of the exile. The exilic and post-exilic prophets saw the end of one troubled age and the beginning of a new and better one for the whole people of God. But, says Fohrer, the pre-exilic prophets saw only the end of sinful age and the destruction of the people of God or of some other nation while the rest of the world continued as usual.⁵

Fohrer admits that the pre-exilic prophets did at times see a way out for a sinful people, but he argues that the alternative they offered was not a new age brought about by divine intervention. The pre-exilic prophets spoke of salvation based on a return to Yahweh and repentance. They did not predict a new age which Yahweh would initiate without prerequisites on the human side. Pre-exilic prophets spoke in terms of entweder/oder, not vorher/nachher.⁶ Fohrer also agrees that Old Testament expressions like "after those days," and "in that day" can be Old Testament forerunners of the concept of a new age, but he maintains that despite these

⁴Ibid., cols. 401-403.

⁵Ibid., col. 404.

⁶Ibid.

expressions the early prophets scarcely even came close to the idea of a new age.⁷

In summarizing Fohrer's position, one might say that at the time of the exile judgment had fallen heavily upon Israel, and hence the very concept of judgment as a future prospect for the nation was no longer a live option. Therefore, the prophets made the switch from the entweder/oder idea of repent or perish to the vorher/nachher way of thinking. No longer did the prophets offer a hope for the future based on the human action of repentance. Instead they announced a new age based solely on divine initiative.⁸

There are other men whose views give cause for questioning some of Fohrer's conclusions. They may not refer to Fohrer's arguments in their writings, and their definitions of eschatology might differ from his, but if their positions are carried to their logical conclusions, they do present alternatives to the view espoused by Fohrer.

The first view is that of Walther Eichrodt. Eichrodt's portrait of Old Testament eschatology incorporates transcendent

⁷Ibid., col. 403.

⁸Ibid., cols. 404-405. Views similar, but certainly not identical to those of Fohrer can be found in the writings of Sigmund Mowinckel and Robert H. Pfeiffer. See Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh translated from the German by G. W. Anderson (Oxford: Blackwell, c.1956), pp. 125-54, and Robert H. Pfeiffer, Religion in the Old Testament (London: Adam & Charles Black, c.1961), pp. 191-92.

and futuristic elements. He speaks of a future transformation of nature and of a superhuman king.⁹ He finds the roots of this eschatology firmly planted in Israel's history, especially in concepts surrounding the monarchy.

The king was considered Yahweh's adopted son. Israel's hopes for a superhuman king were already partially realized in the person of the reigning monarch. He was the pledge and the beginning of the divine work of salvation. In Judah this took the particular form of the divine promise to the Davidic line.¹⁰ However, this was a popular eschatology against which the great prophets rebelled. Instead of a glorious future they preached God's judgment. Or, as is the case in Hosea 2, they spoke in terms of a new spiritual relationship to Yahweh rather than a time of material blessings. Yet even in this preaching, Eichrodt contends that elements of the popular eschatology survive and come to light in a revitalized form in the writings of Haggai and Zechariah.¹¹

⁹Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, translated from the German by John A. Baker (London: SCM Press, c.1961), I, 473-74.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 476-80.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 480-87. Th. C. Vriezen, Roderock MacKenzie and John Bright hold views similar to those of Eichrodt. See Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, translated from the Dutch by S. Neuijen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 350-62; Roderock MacKenzie, Faith and History in the Old Testament (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, c.1963), pp. 104-10 and John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1959), pp. 135-37, 439-41.

If Eichrodt is correct, popular concentration of hopes for a better age in the king provide an example of Israelite thought which is at least a forerunner of the hope tradition which anticipates the arrival of a new and better age at a given point in history.

Von Rad contends that Israel's time concept was not the modern linear view. Rather the Israelite did not separate time from its content. History is a succession of content filled times. The prophets saw themselves as standing at the end of one content filled interval and at the beginning of another. The era at whose end they stood was the old era; their message concerned the new "time" which God would initiate. Their eschatological thought has elements of finality in it because they saw themselves standing at the end of one time and calling for the coming of the next.¹²

Working independently John Marsh has come up with conclusions similar to those of von Rad. His summary of the concept should make comparison with Fohrer's ideas easier.

times we have found are known by their content. There are two "times" in prophecy, one in the past, and one in the future, and their contents are frequently identified.¹³

¹²Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, translated from the German by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, c.1965), II, 100-15.

¹³John Marsh, The Fulness of Time (London: Nisbet and Co., 1952), p. 63.

A prophet standing between two content filled periods of time announcing better things to come is Fohrer's idea of eschatological speech, and apparently von Rad's and Marsh's as well. Fohrer, as we have seen, finds this way of speaking only in the post-exilic period, but both von Rad and Marsh claim to trace the same eschatological concepts to all of the prophets.

Nature of this Study

In testing Fohrer's hypothesis to determine whether eschatological thinking as he defines it developed in Israel only during and after the exile, or whether it has deeper roots, we will ask three questions. First, are there other Old Testament passages, especially from pre-exilic times, which speak in terms of vorher/nachher? By vorher/nachher this writer has in mind passages which see the time at whose end the prophets stand as one which has been corrupted (vorher) and which calls for a new time within history in which a new act of God will reverse the troubles of the old age (nachher). The study will concentrate on pre-exilic prophecies in order to determine whether or not the vorher/nachher concept is found earlier than the exilic times.

The second question concerns the turning point between the two ages. Do other Old Testament passages, especially from the pre-exilic period, designate a point in time at

which the change will be made from the one age to the other? An essential feature of Fohrer's definition of eschatology is recognition by the prophet or apocalypticist that his own day is the turning point between the two ages.¹⁴ Although Fohrer does make reference to expressions like "after that time" and "in that day" as possible turning point designations, he finally rejects them in pre-exilic situations, not because they would throw the turning point into the future, but because he feels that for the pre-exilic prophet they mark only the end of an age and not a beginning of a new one.¹⁵

The third question involves the character of the new age. If we do find that passages speaking of two discernible ages in history do exist in the pre-exilic prophets, we must determine whether the second age promises conditions which will completely relieve the corrupted conditions of the old age. To be sure the new age may contain concepts familiar to the old which suggest a restoration of its former glory, such as covenant and monarchy. But the new age may so change their character that they could be totally different from anything Israel may have experienced before.

¹⁴Supra, p. 3.

¹⁵Fohrer, col. 403.

At this point some terms need clarification. Specifically the terms "day" and "age." John Marsh holds that the Old Testament uses the word "day" and other words with time significance in two ways which he labels "temporal" and "realistic." The temporal use of day would be the twenty-four hour day, a circumscribed period of time. The realistic use would correspond to von Rad's content filled interval.¹⁶

Fohrer's interpretation of Hag. 2:15-19 lays stress on a specific date in history; however, this date becomes important only because of its content. It is the day of the laying of the cornerstone for the second temple. Hence, in this study we will be dealing with a "realistic" use of the term "day," that is, a use which stresses the content rather than the duration of the term.

Finally a word must be said about the term "age." We do not intend to use the term in the apocalyptic sense of a divinely predetermined segment of world history such as the seventy weeks of years in Dan. 10:24-27. Rather von Rad's concept of a content filled interval will serve as a working definition.

In summary, it seems that an investigation which operates within the confines of these definitions and concerns should

¹⁶John Marsh, "Time, Season," A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson (New York: Macmillan, c.1950), pp. 258-60.

be of some value in determining the early role which the concept of eschatology played in the Old Testament.

Method and Limitations

To achieve the above-mentioned goals we plan to proceed form critically. As far as this writer has been able to ascertain, this approach has not as yet been used in any specific study of the subject under discussion. Hence a form critical appraisal may shed some light on the question of eschatology in the Old Testament. However, if the form critical method is to be used, a few words about its limits and possible pitfalls are in order.

First it should be said that this study will deal primarily with the hope oracles of the prophets or the "promise" form. In fact, in subsequent chapters we will propose a new adaptation of this promise type.¹⁷ But precisely because we will propose a new adaptation of the promise form, we must listen to the warnings given by Georg Fohrer himself concerning the discovery of new forms. Fohrer's warnings deal with the relationship of the prophetic use of a form to the original use of that form in Hebrew society. He states:

¹⁷Throughout this paper we will designate this adaptation of the basic promise form as the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. The reader should remember that this Innovation and Reversal oracle is only a variation of the more general "promise" form. It comes under the classification "Announcement of Salvation" described by Claus Westermann in "The Way of the Promise," in The Old Testament and Christian Faith, edited by Bernhard Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, c.1963), pp. 206-8.

The first misconception is the theory that the forms of speech, when used by the prophets, still have their moorings in an established institution . . . that the basic structure of the discourse reflects an actual cultic event which could be described in detail; and the prophet who uses it is an ecclesiastical official in the institution.¹⁸

He goes on to say:

The second error inherent in uncritical form criticism is the thesis that form and content of speech are congruent. Such is far from the case. . . . A genre derived from the cult or from the law does not necessarily possess, in the case of the prophet, a cultic or legal content and significance. . . . A distinction must rather be made between the original meaning of a genre and the way in which it is utilized, that is, between the form and its function in prophetic proclamation.¹⁹

With these statements in mind, this investigation will concentrate, for reasons previously stated, on oracles which are held by noted scholars to be pre-exilic, and oracles contained in "historical" accounts which present the sources of the hope traditions of Israel. All quotations of biblical material will be from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted. However, in cases where the versification of the Revised Standard Version does not agree with that of the Hebrew text of Rudolf Kittel's Biblica Hebraica, this paper will use the Hebrew versification with the English text.

¹⁸Georg Fohrer, "Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXX (December 1961), 311.

¹⁹Ibid., LXXX, 312.

The Thesis in Outline

In order to test Fohrer's thesis that eschatological thought, as he defines it, appears in the Old Testament only after the exile this thesis will begin with a discussion of a proposed variation of the promise oracle, namely, the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. After describing this oracle, its use, and other forms possibly related to it, we will discuss the relationship of this variation to the hope traditions of Israel. Oracles outside the prophetic corpus which have a bearing on our study are Gen. 9:8-17, 2 Sam. 7:8-17 (cf. 1 Chronicles 17). From there the investigation will proceed to the prophetic materials, specifically oracles considered to be pre-exilic.

In its final chapter, the thesis will turn back to Hag. 1:15a; 2:15-19, which Fohrer uses as the basis of his work. After we have made our own exegetical study of the passage, we will compare the thought patterns of Haggai with those of oracles which date from pre-exilic times in order to determine whether or not Fohrer is correct when he limits eschatological thought to exilic and post-exilic Israel.

CHAPTER II

THE INNOVATION AND REVERSAL ORACLE

The Basic Form

To determine whether or not eschatological thought, as Fohrer defines it, exists in the pre-exilic period, this investigation will undertake first an examination of this writer's proposed promise form--the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal.

It will soon become apparent that we do not intend to introduce a completely new and different literary genre here. Rather the proposed Oracle of Innovation and Reversal follows closely forms already proposed by R. B. Y. Scott, Claus Westermann and others. Only certain details set this oracle apart as a special modification of the existing hope oracle form. In discussing this modification this chapter and those that follow will take into account chiefly the following Old Testament passages: Gen. 9:8-17; 2 Sam. 7:8-17; 1 Chron. 17:1-15; Jer. 31:31-34 and Hos. 2:18-25.¹

¹Other passages which the writer has identified as possible examples of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal or as forms in some way related to it are Gen. 17:1-8; 35:9-13; 2 Kings 2:19-22; Is. 2:2-4; 51:21-23; 54:4-6; 60:17-22; 65:17-25; Jer. 3:14-18; 16:14-15; 23:1-4,7-8; 30:8-9; 31:10-14; Ezek. 28:24; 29:13-16; 34:17-31; 36:13-15; 37:15-23; Amos 9:13-15; Micah 4:1-4 and Zeph. 3:11-13. We should state at the outset that we realize that these passages are mostly exilic or later.

As we have already indicated, the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal is similar to the promise form already described by R. B. Y. Scott in his article,² and to the Ankündigung of the messenger's speech described by Claus Westermann.³ All three contain these two basic parts:

- a. Divine action using the first person singular and directed toward an object in either the second or third person.
- b. Consequence or result of the action.

What tends to set the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal apart is the content of each part. The divine action is an announcement by Yahweh that he will act to change the situation in which the person or persons who are the object of the oracle find themselves. In changing the situation at hand, God will act in a new and different way. His action will be an Innovation. Examples of this Innovation feature include Jer. 31:31-34, a new covenant between Yahweh and his people and Hos. 2:18-19 which when seen in the context of Hos. 2:10-15 depicts a new betrothal and a new covenant for the people of God.

²R. B. Y. Scott, "The Literary Structure of Isaiah's Oracles," in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, edited by H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957), p. 182.

³Claus Westermann, Grundformen prophetischer Rede (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, c.1960), pp. 124-25. Westermann here is describing doom oracles, but as his title indicates, he is attempting to describe the basic forms of prophetic speech, hence the messenger's speech and its forms could prove useful for the study of hope oracles as well.

The consequence of the divine action seems to be a Reversal of conditions that existed before the action was taken. This Reversal can usually be identified by the presence of the Hebrew formula $\text{לֵאמֹר} \dots \text{וְיָשֻׁב}$. Hence the new covenants of Jer. 31:34 and Hos. 2:18-19 require a change of hearts and attitudes. Isaiah's people will no longer drink the cup, but their enemies will drink it (Is. 51:22-23).

If we now add to these features the opening and closing formulae common to prophetic oracles such as כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה and $\text{וְיָשֻׁב} \dots \text{וְיָשֻׁב}$,⁴ we obtain the basic form of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal.

- a. Oracular formula
- b. Innovation (Action of God) using the divine first person with the object of the action in the second or third person.
- c. Reversal (Consequence of the action) containing the $\text{לֵאמֹר} \dots \text{וְיָשֻׁב}$ formula.

An example of the proposed form which stems from pre-exilic times is Hos. 2:18-19.

Eschatological formula

v. 18 And in that day,

Oracular formula

says the Lord,

⁴Herbert Niermann adds these formulae to his oracles. Herbert N. Niermann, "A Form Critical Analysis of the Hope Oracles in the Book of Jeremiah" (unpublished research paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), pp. 14,22. Otto Eissfeldt also notes that they are helpful, but not always infallible guides in determining the beginning and end of an oracle. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, c.1965), p. 79.

Innovation	you will call me, "My husband,"
Reversal	and <u>no longer</u> will you call me, "My Ba'al."
Innovation	v. 19 I will remove the names of the Ba'als from her mouth,
Reversal	and they shall be mentioned by name <u>no more</u> .

Wolff divides Hos. 2:18-25 into three individual units: 18-19, 20-22, 23-25.⁵ Each of these units, he feels, is composed of two smaller parts as is evidenced by the change in person in the object: second feminine singular in 18, 21-22; third feminine singular in 19, 25a; third plural in 20; Jezreel in 23, 24; and not-pitied and not-my-people with suffix in 25. The themes treated also vary: Baal, 18-19; Covenant of Peace, 20; Marriage, 21-22; Answer, 23-24; Covenant of God, 25.⁶ Siegfried Herrmann holds to a similar division although he separates 20 from 21 and 22.⁷

⁵Wolff holds that these units belong to the category of Verheiszungsworte which he divides into Heilsansage and Heilszuspruch. In the first instance God, the subject of the action, is referred to in the first person singular, and the object of the action takes the third person (19,20,23,25). In the case of the Heilszuspruch the object of the action is referred to in the second person (18,21) with the other features remaining the same. Hans Walter Wolff, Dodekapropheten I: Hosea, in Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, edited by Martin Noth (Neukirchen: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, c.1961), XIV, pt. 1, 57.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Siegfried Herrmann, Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen in Alten Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, c.1965) p. 111.

If we accept this division of Hos. 2:18-25 by Wolff and Herrmann, then we may conclude that both verses 18 and 19 were originally separate oracles of Innovation and Reversal.

In verse 19 the subject of the divine action of the Innovation is expressed in the first person singular and the object in the third singular. The consequence of the action (the Reversal) uses a corresponding third plural.⁸

Verse 18 would appear to be an exception to the rule that the divine action of the Innovation uses only the first person singular. Here the subject of the action is stated in the second singular. However, this does not mean that Hosea sees Judah herself as the source of the new situation. Verses 19-20 indicate that for Hosea Yahweh was the one responsible for anything new in Judah's life.⁹

⁸The fact that the object of the divine action is third singular here and the subject of the consequence third plural does not necessarily indicate that they refer to different people. The "her" of the divine action can be taken collectively.

⁹Other exceptions to the rule that the Innovation section of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle uses primarily the first person singular are Micah 4:1-4 and Is. 2:2-4. These passages are very similar versions of the same material. They use the Niphal of the root נָוַן in Micah 4:1 and Is. 2:2 to indicate divine activity with a passive verb. In Micah 4:3 and Is. 2:4 Yahweh is apparently the subject of the Qal third masculine singular, וַיִּנְוֶן . Eissfeldt apparently accepts the use of a passive verb as a proper reference to divine activity since he states that Yahweh may be quoted as the speaker, hence the use of the first person singular; or Yahweh's words and actions may be reported indirectly. Eissfeldt, p. 78.

Both verses 18 and 19 use the reversal formula TiY...X' . Mandelkern's concordance lists more than five columns of occurrences of the expression TiY...X' .¹⁰ Naturally, not all of these are used as reversal formulae. To qualify for this technical use the expression must occur in the Reversal section (the Consequence of the divine action) with the context clearly indicating that a reversal of the old situation is taking place and not simply a cessation. For instance, in Is. 51:21-23 the TiY...X' formula appears at first glance merely to refer to a cessation of activity. Israel will no longer drink the cup of staggering. However, verse 12, by further describing the action of God, shows that this is a reversal situation. Israel and her enemies will now change places. Those who tormented her previously will now be forced to drink that same cup of staggering. They will receive into their own hands the cup from which Israel was forced to drink.

In summary, the point which Hosea is making is that because of the new action of Yahweh in removing the names of the Baals from Judah's mouth (verse 19), the people will now be able to call him husband (verse 18). In the context of verses 18-25, it would appear that this action is part of the new betrothal of Israel to Yahweh.

¹⁰Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Berlin: F. Margloin, 1925), pp. 827-29.

A second example of the form of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal is Gen. 9:8-17. Although the oracle is not generally held to be pre-exilic, its content seems to indicate that the exile recognized a precedent for the two age concept.

Oracular formula

v. 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

Introductory word

v. 9 Behold

Innovation

I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you,
v. 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.
v. 11 I establish my covenant with you,

Reversal

that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.

Verses 12-14 speak of the covenant sign, and verses 15-16 preserve the form of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle, but not its content. They speak of God's preservation of creation and not a new creation. Verse 17 only repeats what has been said before.

Because of the doublets in verses 9 and 11 (covenant promise), verses 12 and 17 (covenant sign), and verses 14 and 16 (God remembers his covenant) von Rad feels that two different recensions are easily distinguished in this

passage.¹¹ He is probably correct. But even if one were to separate these two versions, he would still have a complete Oracle of Innovation and Reversal in verse 11.

In verse 8 the words **וְאָמַר אֱלֹהִים** substitute for the more familiar **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה** such as one finds in 2 Kings 2:19 or Ezek. 29:12¹² or for the frequent **וְאָמַר יְהוָה** which is found throughout these oracles (Hos. 2:19; Amos 9:13; Jer. 31:31, etc.).¹³

The object of God's action here is indicated by both the second person, verse 9, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you" and the third person, verse 10, "and with every living creature"

The Reversal sections of the oracle pick up the third person object of the action and demonstrate the use of the reversal formula **לֹא... עוֹד**. Verse 11 reads **יְהוָה עוֹד לְטוֹב**. Verse 15 states **וְלֹא-יִכָּרֵחַ כָּל-בֶּן-בָּשָׂר עוֹד... וְלֹא**. And verse 15 states **וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה עוֹד הַקָּיִים לְטוֹב**.

¹¹Gerhard von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary (London: SCM Press, c.1961), pp. 129-30.

¹²Occasionally a word descriptive of Yahweh may be inserted into this formula, such as **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** in 2 Sam. 7:8 or **כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה** in Ezek. 36:13 and 37:19.

¹³The expression **וְאָמַר יְהוָה** can be used to close as well as open these oracles (Jer. 23:4; 31:14; 31:34). It can also be expanded with descriptive words such as the **וְאָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה** of Ezek. 36:14 and 15.

At times the thought of the $\text{וַיַּגְדֹּל} \dots \text{אֱלֹהֵי}$ formula is carried on simply by adding a אֱלֹהֵי to the rest of the verbs in the Reversal section as in the case of Is. 65:19-25.

Finally, notice should be taken of the effect of the tabular character of this oracle.¹⁴ This particular feature makes it possible to insert one divine action and its consequences which contain the reversal formula into a list of actions and consequences which do not contain the formula. This is perhaps best shown by 2 Sam. 7:8-17. The oracle there lists all that God will do for David as king and then describes the consequences of this activity for David and his subjects. However, only one of this list of actions and consequences contains the $\text{וַיַּגְדֹּל} \dots \text{אֱלֹהֵי}$ formula (verse 10). This one occurrence hardly makes the whole pericope an Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. It simply means that perhaps due to the similarity in form to the basic hope oracle structure an Oracle of Innovation and Reversal was included in this list of blessings. One of the things which is included in God's promise to David is a secure territory for his people. The result is that the people will no longer be molested by their violent neighbors as in the amphictyonic times.

¹⁴Niermann maintains that blessings are often heaped one on top the other in hope forms. Niermann, pp. 22-23.

Other Typical Features

Both Gen. 9:8-17 and Hos. 2:18-19 contain all of the basic features of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle described earlier in this chapter. However, it must be noted that in the case of both oracles an additional feature was found. In Gen. 9:9 an Introductory word (הַכְרַתִּי) appeared, and in Hos. 2:18 an Eschatological formula (וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא) came to light. This brings up the question of other typical features which this particular form may contain. Apparently four may appear.

1. Eschatological formulae
2. Introductory words
3. Clauses introduced by the word
4. Erkenntnisaussagen

The Eschatological formulae usually appear at the beginning of the oracle, but not necessarily so. At times they close the oracle (Is. 60:22), or even appear inside of it (Jer. 3:16,17,18). Apparently, they are indicators that the reversal of fortune will occur at a given point in history, even if that point is not specifically mentioned. Generally they are fairly common phrases such as וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא, Hos. 2:18 and Jer. 39:8; בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, Zeph. 3:11; יָמַי בָּאִים, Jer. 31:31; וְהָיָה בְּאַחַר יְמֵי הַיָּמִים, Micah 4:1; יְהִי עַתָּה, Jer. 3:16,17,18 respectively, and בְּצֵאתָ, Is. 60:22. However, Ezek. 29:13 uses a definite date for the occurrence of the events which the oracles describes,

הַיָּמִים אֲרֻבָּיִם שָׁבָה , and Amos 9:13 adds a description of what the time will be like to its simple הַיָּמִים בְּאֵימָה.

Introductory words also usually appear at the beginning of the oracle, but they show less variation than the Eschatological formulae. Either הִנֵּה הַיָּמִים or הִנֵּה הַיָּמִים appears in Gen. 9:9; Is. 51:22; 65:17; Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 34:20; 37:21. Only Is. 54:5 begins with אֲלֵ-הַיָּמִים-אֵלֶיךָ . Their function is as yet unclear, but they remind one of the Introductory words of the priesterliche Heilsorakel described by Begrich.¹⁵

The use of the ׀ clause is not widespread in the oracles under study. When the word ׀ does appear (Is. 2:3; Micah 4:2,4; Jer. 31:33,34), it seems to have more of the force of an emphatic particle, rather than the introductory word of a Begründung.¹⁶

Finally there are the Erkenntnisaussagen. Both Ezek. 28:24 and 29:16 contain the clause, וְיִדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי, at the end of their respective oracles.¹⁷ Walther Zimmerli has found seventy-eight instances of this and similar phrases in the book of Ezekiel, and he has given these phrases the name

¹⁵Infra, pp. 27-31.

¹⁶Wolff gives Hos. 8:6-7 as an example of the word being used as an emphatic particle. Wolff, XIV, pt. 1, 173.

¹⁷Oracles associated with Hos. 2:18-19 and Is. 60:17-22 contain similar clauses, but they are not formally connected to those pericopes.

Erkenntnisaussagen.¹⁸ He confirms that they usually appear at the end of an oracle in which the Divine first person has been used to describe an action of God.¹⁹ They serve the function of identifying Yahweh by his action in history.²⁰ Begrich also notes the occurrence of such phrases in Deutero-Isaiah, and he declares that they there represent the goal toward which God's promise works.²¹ Zimmerli agrees with Begrich that in Deutero-Isaiah the phrase probably does serve the function of delineating the goal of God's action because in Deutero-Isaiah it is introduced by the stronger יָדָו (Is. 45:3,6) instead of the weaker יָדָו as in the passages from Ezekiel.²² Hence one is left with the impression that in Ezekiel these phrases are technical expressions incorporated into the oracle to explain that God is known by his acts in history.²³

¹⁸Walther Zimmerli, Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buche Ezeziel (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, c.1954), pp. 6-7.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰Ibid., p. 12.

²¹Joachim Begrich, Studien zu Deuterjesaja (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, c.1963), pp. 16, 18.

²²Zimmerli, p. 52.

²³For further information on the Erkenntnisaussage see Hans Walther Wolff, Dodekapropheten V: Joel in Biblische Kommentar Altes Testament, edited by Martin Noth (Neukirchen: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, c.1963), XIV, pt. 5, 68.

In summary, the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal is one which follows the general outline of the promise form, or salvation oracle, but whose content gives each part of that form a specific direction. The Action or Promise of God becomes an Innovation, something new which God will do for his people. The Consequence of the action becomes a description of a Reversal. The $\text{וְיָשׁוּב...אֲשֶׁר}$ formula indicates that the new thing will be sufficient to reverse the ills of the old. At times, the prophets, by the use of Eschatological formulae, even indicate that the new thing will be accomplished, and the old reversed at a certain point in history. However, the use of eschatological formulae may not be absolutely necessary for establishing the time. Gen. 9:8-17 uses a participle, וְעָשָׂה (9) and the perfect tenses, וַיַּעַשׂ (11), וַיִּבְרָא (15), to describe the Action of God, thus indicating that the action is taking place at the very moment. This plus the context of the aftermath of the Deluge is strong evidence that the writer sees the day of Noah as the time of the change, the turning point between two definite time periods.

Related Forms

As we shall see, it seems that elements of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle can be incorporated into other promise forms.²⁴ At this point a study of these related forms may

²⁴Infra, pp. 30,33.

prove helpful for a better understanding of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle and for the concept of the two ages in the Old Testament. Two forms will be discussed, the priesterliche Heilsorakel and a form described by Hans Walther Wolf in his Hosea commentary.

Joachim Begrich has isolated the basic features of the priesterliche Heilsorakel.

- a. Introductory words--Usually this is the expression, "Fear not!"
- b. The designation of the addressee in which the person or group to whom the oracle is addressed is named. If this is missing, there may follow immediately after the introductory words a begründender Satz introduced by the causal particle, 'ו. It contains an assurance of the nearness of Yahweh with Yahweh speaking in the first person.
- c. The speech of Yahweh--This speech may describe action that Yahweh will take and stand in the imperfect tense; it may describe destruction on one's enemies; it may describe the fate of the addressee, or it may even contain a statement in the perfect tense describing what Yahweh has already done as well as statements in the imperfect describing the future.²⁵

In a later work on the priesterliche Heilsorakel in Deutero-Isaiah, Begrich points out that the word "Behold!" (הַיָּהוָה) could substitute for the expression "Fear not!" (לֹא-תִירָא).²⁶ In that work he also divides the speech of

²⁵ Joachim Begrich, "Das priestliche Heilsorakel," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (August 1934), LII, 83-84.

²⁶ Begrich, Studien, p. 18.

Yahweh into two parts, the Action of God, and the Consequences of the Action. The first part usually uses the perfect tense and the second, the imperfect.²⁷

Begrich finds the priesterliche Heilsorakel intimately related to the Lament form²⁸ found in the Psalms and elsewhere in the Old Testament. And in this relationship he finds the Sitz im Leben for his form in the cult. He says:

Wenn ein einzelner, der im Heiligtum mit seinem Klage-
lied vor Jahwe getreten ist, seine Klagen und Bitten
erschöpft hat, so tritt ein Priester auf, der, veil-
leicht auf Grund eines Opferbescheides, sich an den
Beter mit einem Orakel Jahwes wendet und auf sein
Klagen und Bitten bezugnehmend, ihm die Erhörung und
Hilfe seines Gottes zusichert. Getröstet durch das
göttliche Orakel, spricht der Betende nunmehr die
Gewiszheit seiner Erhörung aus und schlieszt mit den
Worten des Gelübdes.²⁹

Begrich goes on to say that the recipient of the oracle viewed it as a direct word from Yahweh himself.³⁰ Hence it

²⁷Ibid., pp. 15-16.

²⁸Begrich bases his discussion on the Lament form described by Hermann Gunkel. The features of this form as described by Gunkel are: 1. Anrufung, 2. Hilfschrei, 3. Klage, 4. Bitte, 5. die Gewiszheit der Erhörung, 6. das Gelübde. For a more detailed treatment one should refer to Hermann Gunkel, Einleitungen in die Psalmen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933), pp. 238-50. For further information on the subject of the Lament form see also: Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, c.1962), II, 1-25.

²⁹Begrich, "Das priestliche Heilsorakel," LII, 82.

³⁰Ibid.

is possible that the prophets took over this form and expanded it for use in their prophetic announcements.³¹

What Begrich has described is an oracle which answers the complaint of the individual by telling him either that God has acted or will soon act to relieve his situation. In a sense the priesterliche Heilsorakel deals with a before and after situation. The plaintiff's complaint describes the situation "before"; Yahweh's answer speaks to the "after" which will be a change from previous conditions. It should not seem strange, then, if elements of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal appeared in pericopes identified as priesterliche Heilsorakeln. Is. 65:17-25 is a possible example of just an occurrence.

In Is. 65:17-25 James Muilenburg contends that one can find not only the priesterliche Heilsorakel form, but also elements of a prayer or lament which this oracle might have answered. Muilenburg feels that the work of Gunkel on the forms of lament and oracular response is directly applicable here, for he considers chapter 65 an answer to 63:7-64:12.³²

³¹Ibid., LII, 91.

³²James Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction and Exegesis", in The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1956), V, 744-45. Douglas Jones does not feel that chapter 65 was originally an answer to 63:7-64:12, but takes it together with chapter 66 as a unit. However, he does admit that enough rough correspondence between the two passages exists to enable the editor to make them serve the purpose of a prayer or lament and oracular answer. Douglas R. Jones, Isaiah 56-66 and Joel: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press, c.1964), p. 104.

Yahweh is the speaker throughout, and the objects of his action are the heavens and earth, Jerusalem and its people. The $\text{לֵב} \dots \text{לֵב}$ formula of verse 19 is supplemented in the preceding and following verses by a series of occurrences of the simple word, לֵב . The general use of the imperfect tense suggests that the time of the reversal of fortune is in the future even though there is no eschatological formula to say so.

Muilenburg feels that verse 24 takes up the thought of verses 1 and 2 in answering the complaint about the silence of Yahweh in 63:15 and 64:12.³³ But perhaps one can also see a relationship between the creation of a new heaven and earth and a new Jerusalem in verses 17-19 as an answer to the complaint of the holy city's being in ruins in 64:10-12.

Prior to God's action, the conditions under which the people were living were bad. After it, they will be radically different, and old trends will be reversed. There are portrayed here two periods of time, one evil, and the other good. Perhaps Jones states it best when he speaks of verses 21-23.

This is consciously the reverse of the curse in Deut. 28:30, and of the situation which the Jews faced after the fall of Jerusalem. These verses describe the normal weakness, cf. 62:1-9; 1:7.

³³Muilenburg, V, 757.

Henceforth the proper wealth and prosperity of God's people will not be the prey of others. The fruits of the earth will go where they belong³⁴

There is yet one other form which may be related to the proposed Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. In his discussion of Hos. 2:4-17 Hans Walther Wolff describes an oracle whose form has two parts: 1. the section relating the reason for God's calling his people to account and 2. the section announcing the verdict which, in this case, is not a punishment, but a better course of action which will lead to blessings for the person concerned. The transition from one section to the other is indicated by the message formula, $\gamma \text{ } \text{?} \text{ } \text{?}$.³⁵ Actually, it appears to be a variation of the form, Begründung und Ankündigung, isolated by Westermann.³⁶

In this pericope, Yahweh has called Israel into court to charge her with harlotry because she has been following after false gods. Having stated his charges, he renders a verdict and sentence, but repeatedly the judgment pronounced by Yahweh is not punitive.³⁷ In verse 8 the function of the wall of thorns is to keep the adulterous people from hurting themselves

³⁴Jones, p. 113.

³⁵Wolff, Hosea XIV, pt. 1, 37, 42-43.

³⁶Westermann, pp. 124-25.

³⁷For a discussion of the relationship between doom and hope, see Hans Joachim Kraus, The People of God in the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, c.1958), pp. 62-63, 67.

by preventing their following the false paths of the Baalim.³⁸ Verses 16 and 17 indicate that Yahweh will lead Israel into the wilderness to "allure" her back to him because there the Baalim do not dwell.³⁹

The consequences of the judgment are not harmful, but as verse 9 shows are indications of the radical nature of Yahweh's grace. The return of the divorced woman described there is contrary to the marriage law of Deut. 24:1ff., but Yahweh will take the bride back anyway.⁴⁰ The old rules are radically overthrown by Yahweh's new action.

Jer. 16:10-15 and 23:1-4 possibly demonstrate the use of the Innovation and Reversal features in the verdict of this type of oracle. The form of Jer. 16:10-15 is as follows:

Verses 10 through 12 relate the prophet's commission and the reason why the judgment is to be pronounced.

Transition formula

v. 13 therefore

Judgment

Action of God

I will hurl you out of this land into a land which neither you nor your fathers have known,

Consequence

and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.

³⁸Wolff, Hosea XIV, pt. 1, 42-43.

³⁹Ibid., XIV, pt. 1, 50.

⁴⁰Ibid., XIV, pt. 1, 43.

Transition formula	v. 14 Therefore,
Introductory word	<u>behold,</u>
Eschatological formula	<u>the days are coming</u>
Oracular formula	<u>says the Lord,</u>
Judgment (not punitive) Consequence with Reversal formula	when it shall <u>no longer</u> be said, "As the Lord lives who brought up his people out of the land of Egypt," v. 15 but "As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the coun- tries where he had driven them."
Action of God	For I will bring them back to their own land which I gave to their fathers.

It must be admitted that some scholars contend that verses 14 and 15 are a fragment which was not a part of the original oracle.⁴¹ They feel that it was added to soften the harsh judgment of verse 13. And the fact that this same fragment appears again in 23:7-8 would be added evidence in this direction. However, even if this is a later addition, the fact that it corresponds so well to the structure described by Wolff might indicate that an editor at least saw the

⁴¹John Bright, Jeremiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes in The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, c.1965), pp. 112-13. See also James Philip Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1956), V, 947.

relationship between the explanation of doom and its pronouncement, and a promise of better things to come.

Verses 14 and 15 show some variation in the Innovation and Reversal Oracle, in that the Reversal formula, וְלֹא־אָחַר עוֹד , appears first in the oracle, and the divine action follows. Basically the juxtaposition of this oracle with verses 10-13 seems to be saying that in place of the present evil age (verses 11-12) which will end in catastrophe (verse 13) God will initiate a new age which will outshine the features of the present to such an extent that the greatest event in Israelite history, the Exodus, will no longer be the basis on which Yahweh is known. His new event will change all that.

In Jer. 23:1-4 the basis for judgment is in the form of a Reproach while the judgment itself is in the form of the Threat.⁴² The Reproach, characterized by the introductory וְיִי and the participles, $\text{וְיִשְׁפְּרוּ וְיִשְׁחָדוּ}$, is directed against the shepherds of God's people (presumably the kings).⁴³ They are charged with scattering and destroying the flock. After the וְיִי the charge is reviewed and judgment is passed. The judgment against the shepherds is harsh, but verses 3-4 take

⁴²For the form of the Reproach and Threat see R. B. Y. Scott, pp. 179-82.

⁴³Eissfeldt, p. 356; also Hyatt, V, 987; also Bright, p. 145.

up the care of the scattered people. In Innovation and Reversal terms it describes God's gracious action for them, as well as the consequences of this divine action which are the reverse of the present bad conditions. Again an age of trouble is to be supplanted by one of a better nature.⁴⁴

The point of this discussion of the priesterliche Heilsorakel and the form described by Wolff is to show that there are other forms in the Old Testament whose character allows them to incorporate elements of Innovation and Reversal into their structures. Hence, it is possible to suppose that these oracles too are capable of expressing the same thought as the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal.

Sitz im Leben

No discussion of a particular biblical form is complete without at least a reference to its possible Sitz im Leben. However, since this investigation is dealing merely with a variation of the basic promise form, any complete investigation of a Sitz im Leben would necessarily include a study of the Sitz im Leben for the promise form in general. And that is obviously too large a question for this study. Therefore,

⁴⁴Hyatt argues against the genuineness of action parts of this passage, and Bright and Eissfeldt argue for them. Whether or not they are genuine makes little difference here. In their present form they do illustrate the point at issue. Hyatt, V, 987; Bright, pp. 145-46; Eissfeldt, pp. 356-57.

we will present here only a few observations based on passages which might tend to point the way for a longer treatment of the question of Sitz im Leben in general.

Operating on this basis, the first clue to the origins of the Innovation and Reversal form lies in the use of certain of its features in the priesterliche Heilsorakel. It has already been shown that the priesterliche Heilsorakel was probably originally a divine answer to the prayer or lament of a worshipper.⁴⁵ The question, then, is: "Do other occurrences of this form appear as answers to prayers, entreaties, or requests of any kind?" Apparently they do.

In 2 Kings 2:19-21 Elisha's oracle comes as an answer to the complaint of the men of Jericho about a spring which was causing "unfruitfulness" in the land.⁴⁶ The Innovation and Reversal section of Yahweh's covenant with David, 2 Sam. 7:10-11, is part of Yahweh's answer to David's plan to build a temple. In Jer. 16:10-15 the oracle is the divine answer to the hypothetical question on the part of the people as to why they were under judgment.

⁴⁵Supra, pp. 27-29.

⁴⁶John Gray feels that this passage is a legend about a ritual release from a curse which gradually became included in the Elisha hagiology. But the matter of its genuineness does not concern us here. Only the form and the situation are important. John Gray, I & II Kings in The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1963), pp. 426-27.

Admittedly these few instances do not constitute sufficient evidence on which to base even a tentative conclusion. Supporters of Sigmund Mowinckel might see support here for their theory that prophetic forms originated in the cult.⁴⁷ While others like Westermann, Ross and Habel could claim that this answer was delivered by a divine messenger and so find support for the theory that prophetic forms have their origin in the messenger's speech of the ancient near east.⁴⁸ A solution to this problem must be left for future study.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to demonstrate the form of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle and to show its relationship to certain other forms. In some cases indications were given as to its use in presenting Fohrer's eschatological patterns. In summary, we have discussed a particular group of prophetic oracles which seem to indicate that Yahweh will initiate a new action for the recipients of the oracles (Innovation). This new action will bring about a dramatic change in the life situation of that recipient (Reversal).

⁴⁷Mowinckel, II, 53-58. See also Hyacinthe M. Dion, "Patriarchal Traditions and the Literary Form of the 'Oracle of Salvation,'" The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XIX (April 1967), 198-206.

⁴⁸Westermann, pp. 70-91. See also James F. Ross. "The Prophet as Yahweh's Messenger," Israel's Prophetic Heritage, edited by Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper Brothers, c.1962), pp. 98-107; Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narrative," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXXVII (1965), 297-323.

CHAPTER III

THE ORACLE OF INNOVATION AND REVERSAL AND THE NEW AGE

The Hope Traditions

The task of the previous chapter was to sketch the form of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. That oracle describes a reversal of fortune which Yahweh promises to accomplish for the addressee. This writer has suggested that this promised change in the life situation of the addressee fits the definition of eschatological thought which Georg Fohrer has proposed in his discussion of Hag. 2:15-19, namely that eschatological thought occurs in the Old Testament in those passages where the prophet sees his own day as the turning point between two ages in history.

The task of the present chapter will be first of all to determine whether the content with which the various biblical writers fill the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal also parallels Fohrer's definition of eschatology. Secondly, we will ask whether or not these oracles date from a period in Israel's history earlier than the time of Haggai and the return from the exile.

Passages which demonstrate how Israelite writers viewed the past, as well as those which show how the prophets regarded the future will be discussed. No attempt will be made to

include every passage which shows features of the Innovation and Reversal form. Only a sample will be taken. First the form of each passage will be sketched, and then its content will be explored.

In accord with Fohrer's definition of eschatology, three questions will be put to all passages discussed in this chapter. (1) Does the passage describe a former situation in the life of God's people? (2) Does it describe a future situation which will be radically different from the old one? (3) Does it designate the time for the change?

Our discussion begins with those passages which look to the past and attempt to relate the origins of several of the hope traditions of Israel. Gen. 9:8-17 is first for consideration. Its form has already been examined.¹ We may proceed directly to its content.

In the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal the obvious place to look for a description of a former situation is the Reversal section. In the case of Gen. 9:8-17 verse 11 deals with the former situation. In this passage the thing reversed is the attitude of God to man's disobedience. This changed attitude of God produces, then, some changes for men. Verse 11 states, "never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." As verses 1 through 7 show, the basic

¹Supra, p. 20.

relationships between God, mankind and the rest of creation remain mostly unchanged.²

The new thing that God will do to guarantee this reversal is to make a covenant (verses 9,11,15). Apparently the only term of this covenant is the negative assurance that there will never again be such a flood (verse 11).³ However, most scholars place the emphasis not on the terms of the covenant, but on the fact that the covenant here comes by divine initiative, and its continuance is not conditioned on any human response.⁴

Although the Yahwhist's parallel to this section (Gen. 8:20-21) seems to connect the sacrifice of Noah with the initiation of the covenant,⁵ one might agree with von Rad

²Gerhard von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary, translated from the German by John H. Marks (London: SCM Press, c.1961), pp. 127-28. Von Rad also notes here that the only change has to do with man's relationship to life itself. He may take it for food (vv. 3-4) or in punishment (v. 6), but in both instances the taking of life is hedged about by certain restrictions.

³John Skinner notes that analogous situations, e.g. the covenant with Abraham, would indicate that there is more to a covenant than a mere negative assurance. Therefore, he says that some would include Gen. 9:1-7 as covenant stipulations. However, he feels that even if this is so, the speeches of 1-7 and 8-17 are separate entities, and that 1-7 would have been added by another writer in the priestly tradition who felt that the idea of covenant could not be left with so little content. John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 173-74.

⁴Rad, p. 130. See also Skinner, p. 171.

⁵David N. Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation," Interpretation, XVIII (October 1964), 425.

who sees it more as a sign of human confession than as a meritorious act.⁶ The change in man's situation in both the priestly and Yahwistic accounts is due not to a series of human actions at various points in time, but to one divine act at one specific point in history. The question yet to be answered is, "What is that point?"

Further, Freedman, in commenting on the covenant in the Yahwist says:

The promise to Noah and his descendants is the only case of a covenant commitment to mankind as a whole. While that commitment stems in part from Noah's obedience in building the ark, other factors are present. Coupled with God's disillusionment about mankind whose wickedness occasioned the flood (Gen. 6:5-8), there is the recognition that a new arrangement is necessary if mankind is to survive. This cannot be established on the basis of human performance, which has proved consistently inadequate. However, in full view of man's ineradicable tendency to do wrong, God makes a unilateral and unconditional commitment that so long as the world endures there will never again be a cataclysm like the one which destroyed humanity.⁷

No specific time is mentioned in this Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. However, the writer of the priestly account does date the beginning of the flood itself and the disembarking of Noah and his family from the ark. The flood begins "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the

⁶Rad, p. 118.

⁷Freedman, XVIII, 425-26.

seventeenth day of the month." (Gen. 7:11). The waters dry up on the earth "In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month," and Noah is commanded to leave the ark (Gen. 8:13a,15,16).⁸ The context seems to indicate that the time of the reversal is the immediate aftermath of the Deluge. This point in Noah's life becomes a turning point between two ages, one in which chaos reigns and another marked by a new creation.

In summarizing, perhaps von Rad's interpretation of the passage will be helpful. He notes that the priestly writer was not speaking of distant, primeval things, but was answering questions of significance to the faith of Israel. The issue at hand was not the story of the Deluge, but the description and degeneration of the creation which was originally created as "very good."⁹ Why does God continue to bless in the face of increasing human sin? Von Rad answers:

Here a divine will of healing forbearance is at work; indeed, faith even knows of a solemn guarantee of the cosmic orders which were disturbed by the temporary invasion of chaos. But that was only the beginning

⁸Gen. 8:14 states that "In the second month, on the twentieth-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry." Gerhard von Rad dismisses this as inconsistent with 8:13a and as deriving from a different literary tradition. Rad, p. 125. E. A. Speiser suggests that לִבְיָבֵשׁ of verse 13 denotes "to be or to become free of moisture" while וְיָבֵשׁ of verse 14 signifies complete dryness. E. A. Speiser, Genesis: Introduction, Translation and Notes in The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, c.1964), p. 53.

⁹Rad, pp. 126-27.

for this theology: the preservation and support of an aeon, which would be lost without the word of blessing which the Highest God spoke to it. The natural orders, fixed by God's word, mysteriously guarantee a world in which in his own time God's historical saving activity will begin.¹⁰

In Innovation and Reversal terms, God makes a new covenant which brings in a new age in which he will no longer destroy man as he has just done.

The next passage for discussion, 2 Sam. 7:8-17 remains within the context of the covenant idea. Let it be said at the outset that we do not claim that the entire passage is an Innovation and Reversal Oracle. Rather, we are suggesting that one part of it (verses 10-11a) shows Innovation and Reversal characteristics.

James Rimbach has presented the case for seeing the entire section as a variation of Egyptian Königsnovelle form which consists basically of:

1. The king appears before the assembled court.
2. The king announces his plan of action.
3. The court approves the plan and praises the king's wisdom.
4. The plan is put into effect.¹¹

However, he notes that here the king's announcement is made not to the court, but to Nathan alone. Nathan's initial

¹⁰Ibid., p. 130.

¹¹James A. Rimbach, "Berith Olam: Studies in the Davidic Covenant Traditions" (unpublished S. T. M. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1966), pp. 55-81.

response is favorable, but changes when Yahweh reveals his negative decision.¹²

The concern of this investigation is the form in which one particular part of Yahweh's decision is communicated through Nathan--the form of verses 10-11a.

Innovation

10. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place

Reversal

and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more as formerly, 11. from the time I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies.

There is nothing particularly striking or different about the way the form is used here. The idea of the $\text{TiY} \dots \text{X}^{\text{b}}$ formula of verse 10 is extended in 10b by the simple X^{b} plus the verb. The verbs recording Yahweh's action in verses 10 and 11a are perfect consecutives. Under normal rules these would be translated as future tenses. But Hans W. Hertzberg notes that such clauses are usually preceded by the imperfect or imperative, and that is not the case here. In addition the things mentioned--great name, secure dwelling for the people, rest--have already been achieved. The statements actually refer to

¹²Ibid., pp. 60-61.

the past. Hertzberg suggests that they were left ambivalent intentionally to show that God will cause these conditions to continue.¹³

Apparently the object of the divine action changes from the people in verse 10 to David in verse 11a as indicated by the shift in person from the third plural to the second masculine singular.

However, since the verses under study are only part of a larger oracle, there must first be an explanation of the thrust of the whole pericope before this investigation can proceed to answering the three questions directed at the passages under study.

By comparing 2 Samuel 7 to the structure of the Deuteronomic history as a whole, Dennis J. McCarthy has proposed that this chapter holds a key position in that history.¹⁴ He feels that this chapter is a part of a transition period in Israel's history from the Judges to the monarchy. True, Saul had been the first king in Israel, but Samuel gave him only grudging recognition, and in the end he was rejected as king. McCarthy claims that the rejection came because Saul's monarchy was not rooted in the will of God but in the self-will of the people.

¹³Hans W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel: A Commentary, translated from the German by J. S. Bowden (London: SCM Press, c.1964), pp. 285-86.

¹⁴Dennis J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXIV (July 1965), 131-32.

In 2 Samuel 7 the sin of self will is avoided as David's line is established not by the popular will, but by the divine will.¹⁵

Another feature which marks this pericope as representing a turning point is the use of the phrase, "my servant David." The only other occurrence of precisely the same phrase, "my servant _____," in the whole Deuteronomic work is "my servant Moses" in the address of Yahweh to Joshua when he takes the leadership in Israel, Joshua 1:2. This would call attention to David's importance and the importance of the new thing being done--the establishment of the dynasty of David.¹⁶

Finally the account twice states that Yahweh has given David rest from his enemies (verses 1 and 11). McCarthy suggests that נְצַח in the Hiphil is practically a technical term in the Deuteronomic writings for Yahweh's ultimate blessing on Israel. Thus the realization of the ancient hope of Israel is tied to the Davidic line.¹⁷

This glorification of David and his line is even heightened in the books of Chronicles where the account of 2 Samuel 7 is repeated almost word for word (1 Chron. 17:1-5).

¹⁵Ibid., LXXXIV, 133-36.

¹⁶Ibid., LXXXIV, 132. McCarthy does not note that in Joshua 24:29 Joshua is called the servant of the Lord, making the succession Moses, Joshua, David.

¹⁷Ibid.

Th. C. Vriezen says that the Chronicler begins a completely new period of history with David and Solomon.¹⁸ Jacob M. Myers feels that the books begin with David in order to show that he and his line are the way out of the troubles of the past.¹⁹ Robert North feels that the Chronicler was silent about the Exodus and Sinai in order to show that "The primacy of Israel's 'chosenness' . . . was not Moses on Sinai at all. No, it was David on Zion!"²⁰ And W. F. Stinespring says that the Chronicler "glorifies" David in order to depict for his readers not an historical personage ready for "canonization," but rather an eschatological figure to connect with the future hopes of Israel.²¹

In verses 10 and 11a, however, the main concern is not with David, but with his subjects. The destiny of the people is tied to David's destiny. The author of 2 Samuel 7 does not explicitly state this though. Blessings for the people are simply listed along with those for David. In the middle

¹⁸Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, translated from the Dutch by S. Neuijen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 358.

¹⁹Jacob M. Myers, "The Kerygma of the Chronicler," Interpretation, XX (July 1966), 268-69.

²⁰Robert North, "Theology of the Chronicler," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXII (December 1963), 378.

²¹W. F. Stinespring, "Eschatology in Chronicles," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXX (September 1961), 209-19.

of the pronouncements about David's office, there appears a notice that the people have been given a secure dwelling place.²²

The Reversal which takes place concerns the conditions under which the people are to live in the new era of the Davidic reign. They shall not again be disturbed nor afflicted by violent men "as formerly." The "as formerly" is the key stress. Some question as to just what the "as formerly" means has arisen. The Massoretic text could be read so as to connect the phrase with the opening words of the following verse, "as formerly and from the time that I appointed judges" Certain Septuagint versions, however, separate the two phrases. Reading them together would mean that what is being reversed is the unstable conditions of the time of the judges. However, William McKane objects that this makes no sense since the judges were instruments of rest for Israel and prefers to connect the phrase "as formerly" with the promise of 11a. Hence they will have rest as in the deliverance from Egypt.²³ Hertzberg agrees.²⁴

However, whether the judges were instruments of rest or not, the fact remains that age was indeed one of unrest, and if the writer of 2 Samuel 7 is trying to picture the reign of

²²McCarthy, LXXXIV, 132-33.

²³William McKane, I & II Samuel: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press, c.1963), p. 214.

²⁴Hertzberg, p. 286.

David as the beginning of a new era for Israel, he might well contrast his reign with the era just gone by. If the full phrase, then, is connected with verse 10, the unrest of the preceding era will be reversed. It will be reversed because in connection with his promise to David, Yahweh will act to bless his people also (the Innovation). The writer does not specifically say when this will take place, but the mention in verse 10 of the appointment of a place for Yahweh's people may be significant. Canaan had been given them in fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs. However, their occupation of the land does not appear to have been a stable one until the time of the Davidic conquests. Thus, the mention of a secure dwelling place may indicate that the time of a change of fortune is the reign of David, for he has been Yahweh's instrument in reversing the people's bad fortunes.

Two other passages deserve at least a brief mention Gen. 17:1-8 and 35:9-13. In both instances they deal with a change in a patriarch's life due to God's action. Since each passage deals only with an individual and not with a larger group such as the nation or the human race, we may not have eschatological thought here. However, the passages may be helpful for understanding the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal. In both of them God acts (Innovation) to promise land and posterity. The immediate result of the action (Reversal) is a name change--Abram to Abraham in chapter 17

and Jacob to Israel in chapter 35. Von Rad suggests that the priestly author may have been preserving a double tradition of the patriarch's name.²⁵ But be that as it may, it seems likely that the change of name is symbolic of a change of fortune for both men.²⁶ The moment of the promise seems to be the beginning of new blessing.

The Prophetic Materials

In dealing with the prophetic materials using the Innovation and Reversal form, the procedure will be much the same as before. The same three questions will be asked, and only a sample of the materials will be considered. The sample will concentrate on oracles considered pre-exilic by modern scholars with only brief consideration given to the Exile itself. As stated in the introduction, this concentration is an attempt to discover whether the thought forms which Fohrer confines to the exilic and post-exilic periods in fact appear earlier in Israel's history.

The first passage up for consideration, Zeph. 3:11-13, is one of five short sections at the end of the book of

²⁵Rad, p. 194.

²⁶Speiser, p. 127.

Zephaniah which depict the greatness of the salvation of the city of God.²⁷ Formally it works out as follows:

Eschatological formula

11. On that day

Innovation

you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me;²⁸ for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones.

Reversal

and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

Innovation

12. For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly

Reversal

They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord,
13. those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

The Innovation here is expressed in the Divine first person in verses 11b and 12a. The reversal formula of 11b

²⁷J. H. Eaton, Obadiah, Nehum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: Introduction and Commentary, (London: SCM Press, c.1961), p. 154.

²⁸The opening part of this oracle could be a case of a hope oracle whose action is expressed in other than the divine first person. Perhaps it is similar to the examples already discussed in chapter II in Is. 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4. Or it could be that Zephaniah has here modified the form to include a description of the promised new situation before the actual announcement of the Innovation.

is picked up in the triple use of the simple χ^i in verse 13 so that its sense is carried to the end of the present oracle.

Some suggest that the passage is not authentic. For instance, Charles L. Taylor, Jr. feels that the language lacks originality; most of the phrases are paralleled elsewhere, and the section could have been built up by anyone familiar with scripture.²⁹ However, Otto Eissfeldt accepts the passage and assigns it to the period of Josiah ben Amon of Judah, 639-609 B.C.³⁰ Others who accept the pericope, namely James P. Hyatt and Donald L. Williams, assign it to the reign of Jehoiakim.³¹ However, whether the oracle stems from the time of Josiah or that of Jehoiakim, it would still be pre-exilic in origin, and that is the issue we are most concerned about at this point.

With regard to its content, verse 11 describes an Innovation and Reversal situation. Jerusalem will no longer be put to shame in the coming age because the conditions which

²⁹ Charles L. Taylor, Jr., "The Book of Zephaniah: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, c.1956), VI, 1032.

³⁰ Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, translated from the German by Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 424-25.

³¹ James P. Hyatt, "The Date and Background of Zephaniah," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, VII (January 1948), 25. See also Donald L. Williams, "The Date of Zephaniah," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXII (March 1963), 83.

formerly had brought about such humiliation will be replaced by new and wholesome ones. Verses 12b and 13 describe the conditions in Israel as exactly the opposite of the conditions in which it stands.³² The former situation of pride, haughtiness (verse 11), wrongdoing, lying, deceit, and fear (verse 13) will be reversed, and God will act to create a new people, humble, lowly, dependent upon him (verse 12). It is a hope that proceeds out of judgment (the removal of the proud). The time of the change is indicated by the phrase, "On that day," **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא**. This would appear to cast the time for the reversal of present conditions into the future. It should be noted here that the new age is not portrayed primarily as one of physical or material blessings, but rather as a time of moral, religious change.

The next passage for consideration is Jer. 30:8-9. It is part of Jeremiah's "Little Book of Comfort" (Jeremiah 30 and 31) whose authenticity scholars generally accept, but with qualifications. It is assumed by many that the book is composed of a core of Jeremiah's sayings originally applied to the northern kingdom, but which are here reapplied to the south. These

³²John M. P. Smith, William H. Ward and Julius A. Bewer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1911), p. 251.

oracles may have undergone later expansion, but most agree that the thought expressed is Jeremianic.³³

Eschatological formula	8. And it shall come to pass <u>in that day</u>
Oracular formula	<u>says the Lord of hosts</u>
Innovation	that I will break the yoke from off their neck and I will burst their bonds
Reversal	and strangers shall <u>no more</u> make servants of them. 9. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

Hyatt says that the passage has in mind the reversal of conditions depicted in Jer. 25:14 and 27:1-28:16, that is foreign domination and slavery.³⁴ The Innovation is the action of God to break the slavery which results in a new servitude to Yahweh under a new David (verse 9). The time of the Reversal is again in the future as indicated by the formula $\text{אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַתֶּם עַבְדֵי יְהוָה}$. Again the spiritual character of the new age is strong.

³³Eissfeldt accepts the poems of 30:5-21 as genuine. Eissfeldt, p. 361. John Bright calls 30:8-9 a prose insertion which interrupts the poetry of 30:5-21, but makes no further comment on its genuineness. John Bright, Jeremiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes, in The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, c.1965), p. 285. Hyatt denies the oracle to Jeremiah. James P. Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah: Interpretation and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press), .V, 1023-24.

³⁴Hyatt, Interpreter's Bible, V, 1024.

The prophetic passages discussed so far have dealt with a new day for Jerusalem, and a release from bondage to serve Yahweh. The final two passages designated for detailed treatment deal with a common subject--a new covenant.

The discussion begins with Hos. 2:18-19 whose form has already been discussed.³⁵ Although William R. Harper regards verse 18 as a gloss,³⁶ hardly anyone agrees with L. W. Batten that Hos. 2:16-25 is not authentic.³⁷ In general they see the message of Hosea as basically one of judgment, but judgment out of which grows hope for a new covenant.³⁸ As far as the date is concerned, Eissfeldt dates Hosea's work during and immediately after the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, somewhere between 786 and 733 B.C.³⁹

In verses 18 and 19 the Innovation and the Reversal which it brings have to do with the name by which Israel calls Yahweh. Apparently at the present time, they are calling him

³⁵Supra, pp. 16-19.

³⁶William R. Harper, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1905), p. 234.

³⁷L. W. Batten, "Hosea's Message and Marriage," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVIII (December 1929), 269.

³⁸Robert Davidson, The Old Testament (London: Hodder and Stroughton, c.1964), pp. 213-14. See also John M. Oesterreicher, The Israel of God, in the Foundations of Catholic Theology Series (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, c.1963), p. 79.

³⁹Eissfeldt, p. 385.

יְהוָה (verse 18) which suggests one who possesses or is the master of his spouse. In the new relationship they will call him אִשְׁתִּי, a term of endearment for a husband.⁴⁰ Walther Eichrodt also suggests that Israel appeared to be calling Yahweh יְהוָה instead of אִשְׁתִּי because she had carried her Baal worship into Yahweh's sanctuaries.⁴¹ But no matter why Israel has been calling Yahweh, יְהוָה, it is Yahweh who makes the change by taking the very name from her mouth. The eschatological formula אֲנִי וְהוּא יְהוָה again sets the time for the change in the future.

However, if one is to appreciate the radical nature of the new thing which Yahweh will accomplish here, one must look to the entire context in which this oracle is spoken. As George Farr has pointed out, Hosea taught that the righteousness of God which demanded punishment for those who broke his covenant could live side by side with God's love, which was ready to forgive these transgressions.⁴² The prophet analyzes every aspect of Israel's national life and finds it wanting. The result is a consistent threat of judgment and

⁴⁰Hans Walther Wolff, Dodekapropheten I: Hosea, in Biblische Kommentar Altes Testament, edited by Martin Noth (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, c.1961), XIV, pt. 1, 60.

⁴¹Walther Eichrodt, "The Holy One in Your Midst," Interpretation, XV (July 1961), 266-67.

⁴²George Farr, "The Concept of Grace in the Book of Hosea," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXX (1958), 98.

doom.⁴³ But the new thing that happens is that the change which Israel could not make, now takes place in Yahweh himself. His love overcomes his wrath (Hos. 14:4).⁴⁴ In this victory of love Yahweh offers a new covenant, (verses 20-21) of which the removal of the name יְהוָה in verse 19 is a part, to replace the old one, which Israel had broken.⁴⁵

The Innovation here, then, is a new relationship initiated by God which will abrogate all failures in the old one.

Later on, nearer to the time of the Exile, Jeremiah again takes up Hosea's theme of the new covenant⁴⁶ in Jer. 31:31-34. There is again some discussion of the authenticity of the pericope, but most agree that it expresses the thought of Jeremiah if not his actual words.⁴⁷ Below is the form critical analysis:

Introductory

31. Behold,

Eschatological formula

the days are coming,

⁴³Leroy Waterman, "Hosea, Chapters 1-3, In Retrospect and Prospect," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XIV (April 1965), 107-08.

⁴⁴Hans Walther Wolff, "Guilt and Salvation," Interpretation, XV (July 1961), 285.

⁴⁵Eichrodt, XV, 263-64.

⁴⁶Hans Joachim Kraus, The People of God in the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, c.1958), pp. 63-64.

⁴⁷John Bright, "An Exercise in Hermeneutics," Interpretation, XX (April 1966), 192-93. See also Eissfeldt, p. 362, and Hyatt, Interpreter's Bible, V, 1038.

Oracular formula

says the Lord,

Innovation

when I will make a covenant with the house of Judah 32. not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband

Oracular formula

says the Lord,

Innovation

33. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel

Eschatological formula

after those days,

Oracular formula

says the Lord:

Innovation

I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Reversal

34. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,

Oracular formula

says the Lord;

Innovation

for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Innovation and Reversal section of the oracle, verses 33-34, comes after the reversal nature of the whole pericope has been previewed by the "not like the covenant which" of verse 32.

The new thing which God will do is to give a new covenant, and this new covenant is presented as a turning point in history. Siegfried Herrmann states:

In dieser Weise fungieren widerspruchslös und ohne sichtbare Beziehung oder Störung Agyptenbund, Josuabund und Josiabund im deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk nebeneinander. Doch handelt es sich in jeden diese Fälle um von Jahwe her gesehen bedeutsame geschichtliche Wendepunkte, die durch den jeweils neuen Bund manifestiert werden sollten. Die Heraufführung einer solchen geschichtlichen Wende meint auch Jer. 31,31ff., die durch einen neuen Bundesschluss als epochale Wende verstanden werden sollen.⁴⁸

This new covenant will be a reversal of the former covenant, the Sinai covenant, referred to in verse 32.⁴⁹ Whereas in the former covenant, the law was written on tablets of stone, now it will be written in men's hearts (verse 33).⁵⁰ This means that something new has been added to the new covenant ideas expressed by Hosea. Not only has Yahweh's love triumphed over his wrath, but now he has given his people the ability to keep his new covenant.⁵¹

The Innovation is a new covenant. The Reversal is a negation of the old situation in which men broke the old

⁴⁸Siegfried Herrmann, Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, c.1965), p. 180.

⁴⁹Hyatt, Interpreter's Bible, V, 1038.

⁵⁰Kraus, pp. 63-64.

⁵¹Bright, "Exercise," pp. 194-95.

covenant and to a new situation in which they will keep the new one. Only the question of the time of the change remains to be answered. Jeremiah, like the other prophets says only, **וְאֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבִים** in verse 31 and **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהָיָה** in verse 33, giving the oracle an eschatological dimension.⁵²

As far as the prophets of the Exile are concerned, it has already been shown that Deutero-Isaiah uses the Innovation and Reversal style in his priesterliche Hellsorakeln⁵³ designating the turning point in the life of the people of God as a time when their fortunes and those of their enemies will be reversed--Is. 52:21-23.⁵⁴

Perhaps the best example of Ezekiel's use of the Innovation and Reversal form is Ezek. 34:20-31. In this pericope God judges the recent rulers of Israel under the imagery of shepherd and sheep. The shepherds of the past have been careless, useless, selfish people, and the sheep have suffered. But Yahweh will reverse the fortunes of the sheep by giving them a new son of David as shepherd who will protect them under a new covenant of peace.⁵⁶

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Supra., pp. 29-31.

⁵⁴James Millenbarg, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1956), V, 602.

⁵⁵Ibid., V, 635.

⁵⁶William Neil, Prophets of Israel (2): Jeremiah and Ezekiel (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964), p. 83.

Summarizing, then, what the Innovation and Reversal oracle appears to be saying about the new age, one could theorize that although the oracle uses various figures to portray this age--new covenant, new David--certain features remain constant. Yahweh is always the initiator of a radical new thing--a thing far beyond any Israel has known before. This new thing brings in a new time which is usually compared to the old by means of a reversal formula Ty...X^{b} . The time for the change is given sometimes in the future by the use of an eschatological formula. At other times the reader is led by the context to feel that the time at which the oracle is delivered is the beginning of the new age, as in Gen. 9:8-17 and 2 Sam. 7:8-17. In view of this one might say that the Innovation and Reversal does in some instances reflect concepts which Fohrer labels eschatological.

CHAPTER IV

HAGGAI 2:15-19 AND THE ORACLE OF INNOVATION AND REVERSAL

Haggai 2:15-19

The purpose of this final chapter is fourfold. In addition to an exegesis of Hag. 2:15-19 (the passage on which Fohrer bases much of his argument) it will include a summary of the materials surveyed in chapters two and three, and by way of comparison, some conclusions about the relationship of that material to Fohrer's work. The chapter will close with some suggestions for future study.

We will begin the exegesis of Hag. 2:15-19 with a few general observations. First of all the text is paralleled by Zech. 8:9-13. However, Haggai seems to be the original, since Zechariah refers to his hearers in verse 9 as those "who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets." Presumably "the prophets" are Haggai and his associates.¹

¹Hinckley G. Mitchell, John P. M. Smith and Julius A. Bewer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1912), p. 210.

Few question the integrity of the passage,² but there is much speculation as to whether or not its present position in the book is the proper one. Both Otto Eissfeldt and Hans Walther Wolff would connect Hag. 2:15-19 with 1:15a. Wolff explains that 2:15a has no apparent connection with either the foregoing or following pericopes. Formally it is the remains of the introduction to a new oracle. 2:15-19 is a speech which, unlike all the others in Haggai, is missing a word at the beginning giving a date. 1:15a appears to have been joined to 1:14 as a date for the beginning of the work on the new temple. Wolff feels that on the basis of content 2:15-19 fits the date of 1:15a but that 2:15-19 can be connected to 2:10-14 only artificially; therefore, he concludes that 1:15a could possibly go with 2:15-19.³

On the other hand Hinkley Mitchell feels that the connection between 2:10-14 and 2:15-19 is strong and leaves it in its present position.⁴ And Douglas R. Jones, although he

²One who questions the authenticity is Francis S. North who reduces the book of Haggai to a very small core of authentic material to which much secondary material was added. Francis S. North, "A Critical Analysis of the Book of Haggai," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXVIII (1956), 25-46.

³Hans Walther Wolff, Haggai: Eine Auslegung, in Biblische Studien, (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1951), I, 20. See also Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 427-28.

⁴Mitchell, Smith, and Beyer, p. 66.

recognizes an "affinity" between chapter 1 and 2:15-19, feels that one must keep in mind those features in the passages which led to the present arrangement.⁵ Since, however, Fohrer takes 1:15a and 2:15-19 together,⁶ we have no choice in the matter. If only for the purpose of discussion, we must consider 1:15a and 2:15-19 as originally one unit.

With the individual verses, two major problems appear.

D. Winton Thomas notes that the Hebrew text (אֲלֵךְ אֲחֵרָה אֲלֵךְ) of verse 17 is untranslatable as it stands. The best solution, he proposes, is to emend it on the basis of the final words of Amos 3:9 to read אֲלֵךְ אֲחֵרָה אֲלֵךְ, and translate with the Revised Standard Version, "yet you did not return to me."⁷

The other problem concerns the date in verse 18. If 2:15-19 is connected to 1:15a, there is an obvious contradiction between the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month (1:15a) and the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2:18). Those who make the connection usually drop the date of 2:18, and

⁵Douglas R. Jones, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, in the Torch Bible Commentaries (London: SCM Press, c.1962), pp. 50-51. Jones feels that the fact that this passage refers to the future justifies the present arrangement.

⁶Georg Fohrer, "Die Struktur der alttestamentlichen Eschatologie," Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXXV (June 1960), col. 401.

⁷D. Winton Thomas, "The Book of Haggai: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1956), VI, 1043.

Thomas considers all of the verse a gloss except for the last word, "consider."⁸ Even Mitchell who does not connect 1:15a and 2:15 drops the date of verse 18 as repetitious.⁹

Turning now to the background against which this particular oracle was delivered, one finds a situation which was most discouraging. Zech. ⁴1:10 describes it as a "day of small things." The Jewish response to Cyrus' edict had been less than unanimous. By 522 B.C. the population of Judah, including those already in residence when the exiles returned, was about 20,000. Jerusalem itself remained largely a ruin, and the once extensive territory of David now consisted of about a twenty-five mile long stretch.¹⁰

In addition to the disappointing proportions of the new territory, the new comers faced other hardships. Although the people had well-roofed homes (Hag. 1:4) and fields, orchards and vineyards were tended (Hag. 1:6; 2:16), returns from agriculture were poor. Drought, blasting, mildew, and hail (Hag. 1:11; 2:17) had damaged already scanty crops. Unemployment remained prevalent (Zech. 8:10).¹¹

⁸Ibid.

⁹Mitchell, Smith, and Bower, p. 70.

¹⁰John Bright, A History of Israel, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1959), p. 347.

¹¹Fleming James, "Thoughts on Haggai and Zechariah," Journal of Biblical Literature, LIII (December 1934), 230.

Finally to add to the misery, hostile neighbors regarded Judah as part of their territory and resented this pre-empting of their prerogatives. Perhaps, even the people already in the land considered it their own (Ezek. 33:24) and disliked the intruding newcomers. And if Hag. 2:10-14 is taken to mean that the returning exiles regarded their neighbors as less than orthodox brethren and unclean, the returnees were not making matters easier for themselves.¹²

These conditions, then, lead right up to the immediate occasion for the oracle of Hag. 2:15-19, the laying of the foundation stone of the second temple.¹³ Harrassed by Samaritan resistance, bureaucratic delay and their own material weakness, it is no wonder that the returned exiles had delayed work on the temple.¹⁴ It is also not surprising that such a word of motivation and encouragement from Haggai was in order at this occasion.

The next step in the investigation of Hag. 2:15-19 is that of a form critical analysis. Aside from Wolff's

¹²Bright, pp. 347-48.

¹³If one accepts Fohrer's date, which as has been seen is the one many noted scholars prefer, the oracle is dated on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month. This puts it about three weeks after Haggai's original appeal (Hag. 1:1-6). The oracle then probably refers to the day of the cornerstone laying (Hag. 2:18) rather than the day the work was actually begun. See Thomas, VI, 1043 and Wolff, I, 21.

¹⁴Bright, pp. 348-49.

statement that the oracle is a "Werktagpredigt,"¹⁵ and Thomas' assertion that the book of Haggai is more a report of what a prophet said than a collection of his sayings,¹⁶ this writer has found that little has been written concerning the form of this passage. Therefore, we offer the following structural analysis:

Introduction (Date)	1:15a. on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.
Exhortation	2:15. Pray now, consider what will come to pass
Eschatological formula	<u>from this day onward.</u>
Review of situation	Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, 16. how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the winevat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty.
Explanation of situation	17. I smote you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not return to me;
Oracular formula	<u>says the Lord</u>
Exhortation	18. Consider
Eschatological formula	<u>from this day onward</u> Since the day the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid,

¹⁵Wolff, I, 21-22.

¹⁶Thomas, VI, 1037.

Exhortation

Consider

Review of situation
(Implied Reversal)

19. Is the seed yet in the barn? Do the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree still yield nothing?

Eschatological formula

From this day on

Explanation of situation
(New Action / Innovation)

I will bless you

It seems that the oracle does not parallel any of the forms discussed in this paper. However, it does contain features of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle.¹⁷ The divine first person with the imperfect occurs in verse 19 to describe the action of God, and verses 15-16 and part of verse 19 might even be considered the results of that action. Modifications of eschatological formulae appear in verses 15, 18-19 (from this day onward), but the basic formula of reversal, the וְיָ... אֲלֵ , is missing. The oracle appears to modify the thought patterns of the Innovation and Reversal Oracle. Instead of describing what will no longer be, it reviews for the hearer what was and then announces a change.

The divine action, the result of the action, and the eschatological formulae are also characteristic of the priesterliche Heilsorakel.¹⁸ Zech. 8:13, part of a parallel to this passage, even contains the וְיָ... אֲלֵ characteristic

¹⁷Supra, p. 16.

¹⁸Supra, p. 27.

of the priesterliche Heilsorakel. The historical situation with its hardships and disappointments for Judah might even suggest that the people had brought a lament to God and evoked from him this response.

Finally, if the oracle is divided into two halves, 15-17 and 18-19, it might even bear some resemblance to the oracles described by Wolff in his discussion of Hos. 2:4-17.¹⁹ In the first half God explains the situation and in the second promises to do something about it. But the characteristic $\gamma\text{?}$ of that form which establishes the connection between the explanation and the promise is missing. In addition the explanation of 15-17 involves not the charge which Yahweh brings against his people, but the poor condition of the land. Even the promise varies from the usual type found in this oracle. In Hos. 2:4-17, the promise described a punishment leading eventually to purification and blessing. Here there is no corrective chastisement, only blessing.

But despite this form critical quandry, we can say certain things about the content of Hag. 2:15-19. Haggai appears to picture himself as standing between two eras of Israelite history.²⁰ The old order which ended in the disaster of the Exile and still lingers on in the poor condition of the

¹⁹Supra, p. 31.

²⁰James, LIII, 229.

people (2:15-17) is about to pass. God's attitude is about to turn from wrath to blessing (2:19).²¹ The turning point between those two eras is the very day on which the oracle is spoken. The laying of the temple cornerstone marks the beginning of a new age (2:18).²²

Summary and Conclusions

The next logical step in this chapter is to compare the thought of Hag. 2:15-19 with the material presented in Chapters II and III. And for that, a brief summary will perhaps be helpful.

In Chapter II, this writer proposed a new variation of the basic promise form which he called the oracle of Innovation and Reversal. Basically the oracle begins with a new action of God, an Innovation, which begins a new period in the history of God's people. This is followed by a section stating the result of the Innovation, but stating it in such a way as to compare it to the former period in the relationship between God and the object of his action. The usual

²¹Ibid., LIII, 230.

²²Jones, p. 52. The argument over whether the date in verse 18 or the date of 1:15a applies is here irrelevant. The fact remains that whatever date is used, Haggai sees that date as the day on which he stands, and as the turning point between two ages in history.

method of such a comparison is the use of the reversal formula, **Ṭiy...X̄ḇ**. The time for the beginning of the new period is sometimes designated as being in the future by the use of certain eschatological formulae, while at other times, it appears that the day of the delivery of the oracle is the day of the change (Gen. 9:8-17 and 2 Sam. 7:8-17). Chapter III attempted to show that this form was in fact used to mark the turning point between two periods in time in the lives of individuals, the Jewish nation, or mankind as a whole.

We compare this date, now, to Hag. 2:15-19. Hag. 2:15-17 describes a recent age in Israel's history, one which had been plagued by disappointment and deprivation. The description of Israel's plight up until the prophet's day seems to parallel the Reversal section of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal which contrasts the new age to the former situation.²³ In verse 19, Haggai describes the new thing which God will do for Israel. He will bless them. The Innovation section of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal describes the new thing which God will accomplish for his people to bring about a reversal of former conditions.²⁴

²³Hos. 2:18, "and no longer will you call me 'My Ba'al.'" Gen. 9:10 "that never again shall all flesh be cut off . . . and never again shall there be a flood . . ." Supra, pp. 16-22.

²⁴Hos. 2:18 "you will call me . . ." Hos. 2:19 "I will remove the names . . ." Gen. 9:9 "I establish my covenant . . ." Supra, pp. 16-22.

Hag. 2:18 designates the day of the delivery of the oracle as the turning point between two ages. Often the Innovation and Reversal Oracles throw this into the future with eschatological formulae, but there is evidence to suggest that at least in Gen. 9:8-17 and 2 Sam. 7:8-17 the day of the oracle is looked upon as the turning point between the ages.²⁵

What, then, can be said about Fohrer's thoughts on how far back into Israelite history this idea of two ages can go?²⁶ On the basis of the study just completed, it seems that there is strong evidence to support the two following conclusions.

The evidence points to the fact that pre-exilic prophets as far back as Hosea did use some form of the two ages concept in their salvation oracles. There is even reason to believe that the concept of two ages haunted the hope traditions surrounding Noah, David on Zion. Therefore, it seems that Fohrer's dating of the origin of the idea of the two ages in the post-exilic period, or at the earliest, in the late exile is in need of some modification.

There are also indications that the prophets like Hosea, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah set the date for the great

²⁵Supra, pp. 41-42,49.

²⁶Supra, pp. 4-5.

transformation. In fact, Gen. 9:8-17 and 2 Sam. 7:8-17 apparently picture the prophet as viewing his own day as the turning point between two ages. Therefore, it also seems that Fohrer's suggestion that Haggai was the first to set a date or see his own age as a turning point likewise needs modification.

The use of the Oracle of Innovation and Reversal in Gen. 9:8-17 and in Jeremiah indicate that the two age feature of eschatological thought²⁷ was already present in Israel at the time of the exile. The appearance of the same type of oracle in Hosea and possibly Zephaniah would indicate that the exilic authors were drawing on a way of thinking which had already begun to express itself possibly as early as the eighth century.

Suggestions for Future Study

The point at which this investigation has ended seems to suggest three areas which could definitely use more work. Admittedly we have made no serious attempt to discover a Sitz im Leben for the oracle of Innovation and Reversal. To do so in this paper would have taken the writer into a field much too broad for the confines of this discussion. As we

²⁷Supra, p. 3.

have seen, the question of the Sitz im Leben of this form is closely tied to the yet unsettled question of the form and Sitz im Leben of all hope oracles.²⁸

The second suggestion for future study concerns the character of the new age itself. Only its basic outline was sketched throughout the discussion. A thorough study of its nature including an analysis of the old and new ages, the relationship of the various hope traditions to the new age, and a study of the meaning of the eschatological formulae used in the oracle would, in this writer's opinion, be necessary for a full understanding of the whole field of eschatology.

Finally it should be noted that in Gen. 9:8-17; 2 Sam. 7:8-17; Jer. 31:31-34 and Hos. 2:18-25 the oracle of Innovation and Reversal was connected with the idea of a new covenant. Perhaps it would be worth-while for someone to pursue the possibility of some connections between this variation of the promise form and the covenant idea.

²⁸Supra, p. 35.

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