PART I INTRODUCTION

1 THE FORMULATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 THE ISSUE AT STAKE AND THE PROBLEMS

In the course of the past few decades there has been a growing concern with the importance of the position of Israel when it comes to the Christian faith. The Jewish people had been ignored by and had suffered through the course of centuries at the hands of many Christians. The Jews, who were once the chosen people, have remained above historical considerations, and have been retained as it were in an antique shop window. The history of Israel was thought to have been finished on this earth by the event of the crucifixion of Christ. The situation was suddenly changed, however, after World War Two, by people learning of the suffering of the Jews in the holocaust and by the establishment of a new Israeli state. The people within and outside of Jewry began to think of Jewish survival as a historical factor (cf. Rotenstreich, 1958:138). The modern Zionists established their operative system not only on the foundation of their philosophical convictions, but also in terms of a tie to a specific physical setting or territory (1958:139). At the same time Christian scholars began to pay attention to the study of the theological significance of the existence of Israel in the light of the teaching of the Bible.

The Biblical encounter of Jewish history goes back to the narrative of Abraham. The most distinctive characteristic of the birth and history of Israel is the divine initiative, and the confirmation through Yahweh's covenantal oath to Abraham, Moses and David. The permanent character of Yahweh's covenant with Israel is stressed by the repetition of the word "forever" (Gn 17:7,13,19; Ex 16:30; 31:16; Lv 24:8; Nm 18:19; 2 Sm 7:13,16,25; 23:16; etc.) (see Part III, 7.3.3.5). But looking at the present situation of the Jewish
people, Christians face a dilemma created by the problem of the promises of the Bible and historical facts, because the promise of Yahweh cannot be false to Bible believers, and yet the fact emerges that Jews have lost their ability to keep the covenant. Since the Jews rejected Jesus Christ as the Saviour and the Jewish state fell by the Romans’ attack in A.D. 70, Gentile believers began to think that all the promises were given to the church, calling her the new and true Israel. Although a new recognition of Israel has arisen since the Jews began to establish the new state of Israel, we are still caught in an undesirable situation when it comes to interpretations of the promises to Israel by the prophets.

The aim of this study is to promote the understanding of prophecies which deal with the restoration of Israel. If there has been a fundamental misinterpretation in this area, it is hoped that this work will help in reaching a better understanding as far as the prophecies of the Old Testament about the restoration of Israel are concerned.

Quotations from Scripture are from NIV, unless otherwise indicated.

1.2 THE DELIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

Because the nation (or people) of Israel started with the covenant, and the continuation of her existence has depended on the promise of the covenant, it would be justified to study this subject within the perspective of the covenant. The message of the restoration of Israel can be found in most books of the prophets. However, because of the limited space of this thesis, one is forced to choose, as the core of the study, the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which are thought to be the most relevant to this purpose. In the books Jeremiah and Ezekiel the messages of the restoration of Israel are characterised as promises (very often linked with the covenant), in contrast to the other prophetic books, which are, in the general sense, concerned rather with the characteristics of the restoration as predictions. To test our
exegesis of the promises of the exilic prophets, we will first examine some texts of the post-exilic prophets which still convey the idea of the restoration. To supplement this we will also undertake an investigation in the New Testament to see to what extent those (covenantal) promises are valid, whether in the church or in Israel herself.

The method of study will be an exegetical and revelation-historical study of the texts relevant to our subject. When it comes to more specific texts, we will select certain texts which are thought to be the most important texts to convey the main idea. There are many brief utterances concerned with restoration throughout the prophetic books, but we will choose only those texts in which the whole context of the paragraph concentrates entirely on the restoration. And among the salvation oracles, we will select the texts which provide full details of the distinctive aspects of restoration.

2 HOW TO INTERPRET THE "DOOM" AND "SALVATION" ORACLES IN THE PROPHETS

To state a principle of hermeneutics is one of the biggest tasks facing interpreters. The task of an interpreter can range from "what the text meant in its historical context" to "what that same text means to me" (Kaiser, 1981b:23). One should therefore briefly examine some principles of interpretation, especially those in connection with Biblical prophecies.

2.1 THE PROBLEM WITH MODERN CRITICISM

Biblical scholarship has unfortunately often been regarded as being in a crisis ever since the historical-critical method prevailed among Biblical scholars about the end of the last century (Childs, 1970; Kaiser, 1975:70f; Landes, 1970/1:273-279). Childs and others contend that modern criticism has failed to bridge the gap between exegesis and theology, and between what it used
to mean and what it means for today's Christians, and between the classroom

After Wellhausen introduced the idea of the evolution of Israel's religion, the
modern historical-critical approach in Biblical scholarship has mainly held that
the prophets in the eighth century B.C. created the higher ethical religion
of Israel. According to the precepts of this method, all the stories of the
patriarchs and Moses are fiction although they may contain a core of
historicity, and the concept of the covenant, which is the main line of thought
of Israel's religion, is thought of as having originated in the classical prophets
(cf. Brouwer, 1949:78f). The starting-point of the historical-critical method
can thus be that the Biblical narratives are not reliable historiography, but
a Hebrew religious tradition. Thus, the scholars of this criticism want to go
back to the ancient world and to portray the Biblical incidents as vividly as
possible, based upon the sources of archaeology, geography and ethnology.
They are interested in reconstructing what really happened in ancient Israel.

The weakness of this criticism is that it ignores the Bible and its significance
as God's Word. Generally speaking, this approach starts without an ac­
knowledgement of "revelation" which means "coming from above". It allows
no room for supra-natural phenomena or metaphysical interventions (Schulze,
1980:23). Even though some among these critical scholars often claim they
are dealing with the Word of God, they also make the mistake of minimising
the faithful and obedient response to it (Porteous, 1967:15).

According to the historical-critical method, there is no real unity of the
Scriptures. It splits the entity of the Bible into sources, traditions, styles,
etc. Its interpretation consists of the reconstruction of the historical narra­
tives and of the meaning of a particular text by studying its origin (author
or editor), social context ("Sitz im Leben"), growth, transmission, composi­
tion, and structure. It is concerned with sources in the Bible rather than
with the unified work of "the canon". It basically denies the assumption that
the single Author stands behind all the Scriptures. It is more interested in discerning human authors of the text, the author’s psychology, and particular purpose (Hayes, 1979:106). It considers only the confession of the authors without consideration to the "Giver" and the "receiver". Ladd rightly criticises this approach since it "can not deal adequately with the reality of God and his inbreaking history" (1974:25). Our study takes the approach that the Bible retains an ongoing process of "revelation-history". A theme such as "covenant" or "the kingdom of God" can accommodate the whole of Scripture in its framework (cf. Kaiser, 1978:20-40), although there is disagreement among scholars on choosing a certain theme (see Hasel, 1978:140-170, for the debate of a centre and a unity of the Scriptures; for disagreement with Hasel, see Kaiser, 1978: 24).

Since the late 1960s, Biblical scholarship has experienced a strong shift from its interest in source materials to the final form of the canon. The so-called new criticism, embracing the "canonical approach", "structuralist", and "reception criticism", considers the common interest of readers and the finished text that lies before readers. Readers are re-constructors of the meaning of the text, which can be different from the intention of the original author (cf. Vorster, 1985:1f). Thus "what it means" is the most important issue for new criticism when it comes to analysing the text. Biblical narratives are the constructions of authors. The world of the text and the story of the text are made-up worlds and made-up stories, even though they might be based on many historical events and persons. Now, it is the reader's responsibility to create his own image of the world of the story, the characters and their deeds from the image which the original narrator created in the selection of historical material. Thus it does not matter, for readers, whether it actually happened or not (Vorster, 1985:5). It turns out that revelation was not centred in real history after all, i.e., events as they "actually" or "really" happened (Kaiser, 1978:25f). It claims that "if our faith relies on the historiography in the Bible, it will be not tenable for long".
Kaiser, citing de Vaux’s challenge of this view of historicity, forces one to choose: "Either the interpretation of history offered is true and originates from God, or it is not worthy of Israel’s faith and ours" (1978:27). He advocates:

Further, such a view not only is unworthy of our attention, it is devasting in that it attacks the foundation of all faith: "the truthfulness of God" (1978:270).

De Vaux rightly puts stress on the internal or intrinsic connection, or the unity of events (original happenings) and their accompanying interpretation (1971:57f; cf. Kaiser, 1978:27).

Although one has admiration for the contribution of the new criticism, especially the canonical approach by Childs which draws our attention to the final form of the canon and its significance for our faith, our starting point must be a different one. Following Kaiser, our standpoint is rather to consider together the history and canonical significance of the passages which are relevant for our subject. Not only are we interested in the final form of the Scriptures but also in its historiography. The Old Testament is about what God did for his people in history (Eichrodt, 1961:504f). Studying the Bible as literature, without taking history seriously, is not adequate in understanding God and the truth of his words.

According to historical-critical scholarship, on the other hand, events and interpretations have been viewed in their individuality, uniqueness, and separation from the totality of the Bible. But our interpretation must be worked out from the point of view of wholeness, namely, a progressive revelation-history. We reject any method of interpretation, for instance, "typological interpretation" or "spiritualisation", which interprets revelation-history as stopping at a certain point. Eichrodt is right when he understands that the Scriptures are not such teachings of dogma, but rather the teachings of history from age to age. He dismisses the position of "spiritualisation", because it allows hope beyond the territorial and historical character (1961:503). He states:
This directly implies, however, certain definite basic features of the hoped-for salvation which clearly distinguish its content from that other religious hope. Foremost among these is the fact that redemption is linked to time and history, to space and form. (1961 1:505).

2.2 PROBLEMS WITH "SPIRITUALISATION" OR "TYPOLOGICAL" INTERPRETATION

Now we must face the question whether it is "proper to interpret prophecies in the way of interpretation, by adapting any possible method of spiritualisation, or mainly by adapting the principle of the literal sense?" (cf. Raitt, 1977:4). By taking one of these principles over against another, one will get totally different results: Either the promises in the Prophets are given to Israel, namely the physical descendants of Abraham; or to the church, namely the spiritual descendants of Abraham (one may incline to call it "spiritual" Israel). The scholars who work from the principle of "spiritualisation" on the interpretation of prophecies apply the two oracles of "doom" and "salvation" to different levels: "Doom" on the literal and historical level, and "salvation" on the spiritual or "Heilsgeschichte" level; "doom" was preached to the decadent community of Israel, while "salvation" was offered to the repentant individual Jew. Furthermore, they tend to apply "doom" to Jews and "promise" to the Church (Raitt, 1977:9). For instance, Renckens asserts that the classic prophets, facing a catastrophe, transplanted the traditional religion among Israel's scattered remnants, where it was to find "a new form of organisation, not as a state, but almost as a church" (Renckens, 1966:239). Renckens is right in saying that the true religion of Yahweh was transferred to Israel's remnant, but he fails to see the ethnic entity of Israel as a promised nation (or people) that could not come to an end in a catastrophe. The importance of the issue in the matter of the remnant would be that Yahweh's ultimate concern was not just to save a few Jews, but to preserve the nation through the remnant.

"Spiritualisation" is often found among so-called "covenant theologians". For instance, Hughes interprets even the promise of the land to Abraham in a
spiritual way. He puts a question, "what and how did Abraham understand the promise of an 'everlasting possession' (Gn 17:8)?" He feels that the promised land is hardly to be taken as meaning the physical country because the promise was never fulfilled in Abraham's time (cf. Gn 23:4; Ac 7:16). Quoting some New Testament references which speak about our hope in heaven (1 Jn 2:15-17; 2 Cor 4:18; Hb 11:9f,27; 12:22f; 13:14; Phil 3:20; etc.), he answers that "Abraham's hope was fixed on something far more than a mere this-worldly fulfilment of the promises God made to him" (Hughes, 1976: 38ff, esp. 41). According to him, the "land" promised to Abraham must not be viewed in terms of earthly territory, but "sacramentally, as a sign pointing beyond itself to a distant and transcendental reality" (1976:42). In response to Hughes, we, of course, do not deny that Abraham may have had a hope of a heavenly place. But the land promised is the place which Abraham could see before his eyes. He was told, "lift up your eyes", and look north and south, east and west". The very land which he could see was given to him and to his offspring forever (Gn 13:14-17). Throughout the progress of revelation, the promises of the offspring and the land expand in scope (McComiskey, 1985:49). When the promises of the land seemed an empty hope to the Israelites in bondage to Egypt, Yahweh "remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob" (Ex 2:24). So He "looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" (v 25). The conquest was more than a historical event; it was also a theological event, for it served to confirm the promise to Abraham and the fact that the Lord was continuing to act on their behalf (McComiskey, 1985:42). At times it involved a catastrophe, the promise remained for the remnants, ensuring their return to the land, and it never went beyond the physical Israelites.

Concerning the promises in the Prophets, which are our main concern, spiritualisation cannot easily be justified, either. Against dispensationalists, Hoekema, a covenant theologian, claims that "what the Old Testament said about Israel can now be said about the church" (1979:198). He says:
No longer are the people of Israel to be thought of exclusively as constituting the chosen race. The Jewish-Gentile church is now God’s chosen race (1979:198).

He argues that the church of the New Testament has now not only been substituted for the Israel of the Old Testament, but has also taken over the name of Israel so that the church could claim for herself all the promises given to Israel in the Old Testament. Thus, there is no future hope for Israel at all (1979:200).

The most crucial question that links with our subject is "who is to be understood by the term Israel"; "to whom all the promises of restoration were given?". Robertson claims that the term "Israel" can not be defined purely by Abraham’s ethnic line, because throughout Israelite history, any one of Abraham’s racial descendants could be declared not to be a part of the covenant nation of Israel if he violated the covenant (1980:288). The question, however, we must ask is, "was the term ever defined on any other than Abraham’s ethnic line?"

Robertson goes further:

Old Covenant Israel may be regarded as a typological representation of the elect people of God. This assertion does not intend to suggest that Israel functioned merely in a typological role. But from an old covenant perspective, one significant aspect of Israel’s existence was the nation’s typological representation of the chosen of Yahweh (1980:288).

He takes the example of the "serpent of brass" as a typological anticipation of Christ on the cross. Many passages of the Old Testament, like "serpent of brass", can surely serve as typological interpretations. But such a fact cannot justify the whole system of revelation history in the Old Testament as typological interpretation.

In recent years, LaRondelle has advocated "typological interpretation" in prophetic eschatology. Quoting 1 Corinthians 10:11, he takes Israel’s salvation-historical events as types of the eschatological community of the Messiah, i.e., the church (1983:39). He claims that "the Church, as the
eschatological Israel, with its new covenant in the blood of Christ, is the fulfilment of God's plan with ancient Israel" (1983:40).

Typological interpretation does not involve any principle of the literal or historical interpretation of the Old Testament. It never concerns itself with "what it meant" in terms of Old Testament passages. It disregards the fact of time, history, space, and form of text, but only takes seriously the theological significance of the text. Thus we can not adopt this method of dealing with all the prophecies of restoration. The practice of this interpretation must be limited to certain passages of the Old Testament as in symbolic enactments (e.g., Levitic priesthood and ritual, sanctuary, etc.) (cf. Payne, 1973:24ff).

2.3 THE PRINCIPLE OF LITERAL INTERPRETATION

We would most likely incline to the principle of sixteenth century reformers, like Calvin and Luther, namely the "literal sense as much as possible", as Luther says: "The Holy Ghost is the all simplest writer that is in heaven or earth; therefore his words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning" (cited from Kaiser, 1981b:61). Literal interpretation can be defined in various ways: As "giving to language its reasonable and grammatical meaning"; as "the literal, normal, or plain meaning" (cf. LaRondelle, 1983:23); or "the simple, direct, plain, ordinary, and literal sense of the phrases, clauses, and sentences" (cf. Kaiser, 1981b:88). But it must be distinguished from "literalism" which demands an identical or absolutely literal fulfilment of prophecies. Prophets freely use symbolism and metaphor. Their language is often filled with figurative words and concepts. If we insist on sticking to the principle of "literal interpretation", we may run a serious risk of interpreting passages wrongly (see Green, 1984: esp. 37-39).

We reject the dispensationalist practice in which word-by-word study is often applied directly to certain phenomena of earthly history. The greatest mistake of this approach is confusing "Israel" (referred to as the covenant people)
with the modern state of Israel (cf. Vanderwaal, 1978:56). For instance, Hal Lindsey talks about the rebirth of Israel by the return of the Jews to Palestine as their homeland and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 (1970:32ff). He applies it to the fulfilment of the restoration of Israel spoken by Ezekiel (esp. ch 37). It is quite dangerous to interpret such Biblical passages only by equating the term "Israel" of the Old Testament with the modern state, and by the fact that the Jews are physical descendants of the Israel of the Old Testament. It must be proved by thorough exegesis that the prophets speak about the restoration of Israel by means of secular political rebuilding or by means of spiritual revival, namely conversion to the true religion of Yahwehism. It must be tested by a revelation-historical observation to see whether all the physical descendants of Abraham are to be Israel as the covenanted people, or whether thus should be only believing Israelites. Thus, it is our task to discern what kind of restoration of Israel is spoken about by the prophets and to whom the promises are to be applied.

Literal interpretation (or grammatico-historical exegesis) alone is not sufficient for the interpretation of Scripture (cf. Kaiser, 1981b:87-90). Theological exegesis is also necessary. Therefore, we must interpret passages in the perspective of revelation-history. Understanding the simple meaning of a word or a phrase is not enough to be adopted as the principle of our interpretation. Thus, we are inclined to adopt both principles, the "literal sense as much as possible", and the "revelation-historical point of view".

2.4 REVELATION-HISTORICAL OBSERVATION

Biblical history is called "revelation history" (commonly called "salvation history"). It shares common ideas with "history", such as time, place, and people. But it differs from secular history because the former attains the

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1 We avoid the terminologies of "Heilsgeschichte" and "salvation history," because the former has been used to distinguish Biblical historiography from secular history, and the latter is not enough to retain the entire concept of judgment and salvation themes in the Bible. Thus we prefer the term "revelation history" (cf. Hwang, 1985:1-5).
theological affirmation (Cullmann, 1957:19). Revelation history is unique because it is neither limited to the mundane sphere in order to be subjected to modern historical science, nor to the heavenly realm. The kingdom of God is dynamic and is not totally involved in the physical descendants of Israel, the temple building, and sacrifices; yet it does not exclude the mundane sphere, either. Thus we reject the Barthian theology which expresses the view that it is not interested in history but "Heilsgeschichte" ("above history") (cf. Porteous, 1967:11).

"Revelation history" takes place along the course of a time line (1967:32). But it is governed by theological guidelines. The purpose of a continuous time process is salvation. If any portion of Biblical history is taken out of this on-line process, it becomes a meaningless story or event in terms of our faith. Although individual basic facts of Biblical history are subject to historical investigation, revelation history must be taken as a whole in its grouping, interpretation and joining of events, centring on Jesus Christ (1967:22f). Robertson insists that even though there are distinctive characteristics of the different dispensations, namely, the Creation, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New covenant, one perspective of the covenant must be kept in view when one wishes to study the whole Bible (1980:201-228, esp. for discussion about differences between covenant theology and dispensationalist theology). Thus, we will see whether there is continuity or discontinuity between the two major dispensations, the old and the new. If the continuity is strongly proved, the promises of the old covenants to Israel then must still be valid for the same Israel in the new era.

In the continuous time process of revelation history, the event of Christ's death and resurrection is the centre (Cullmann, 1957:32f; cf, Eichrodt, 1961 1:22f; Hwang, 1985:2.4). The redeeming work of Jesus is the very fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. We may even say that the coming of the Messiah was the end of all promises. However, it does not mean that revelation history finished with Christ, but it goes on forward to the final consummation.
Christians now have the privilege of living in the fulfilled era, but still have expectations (Ladd, 1974:68; Floor, 1981:19). Revelation history is, at the present time, still on the way to its final consummation as will be seen in the discussion of the New Testament passages. On these grounds, it is wrong to claim that the promises of the prophets were completely fulfilled by the time of Christ's redemption on the Cross, and to apply those promises to the present church. Thus, we may say that salvation has already come but is not yet completed. We are still waiting for more things to become fulfilled.

3 THE COVENANT THEME IN "DOOM" AND "SALVATION" ORACLES IN JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL

Eichrodt has drawn our attention to the remarkable covenant theme in the Bible. He evokes the importance of "covenant":

In the face of all objections, the "covenant" has been retained as the central concept, by which to illuminate the structural unity and the unchanging basic tendency of the message of the OT. For it is in this concept that Israel's fundamental conviction of its special relationship with God is concentrated (Eichrodt, 1961 I:13).

Unlike historical-critical scholars who started with the prophets in the eighth century B.C. to develop the covenant idea and Israel's religion, Eichrodt took the Mosaic covenant at Sinai as the starting point of his thesis. However, we rather take Abraham's covenant as the starting point for the consideration of our subject (cf. Brouwer, 1949:83). The Abrahamic covenant is the very foundation of God's free choice of the Israelites. The Sinai covenant exists on the foundation of God's upholding his covenant with the patriarchs (Ex 3:6,15,16; 4:5; etc.).

Lion-Cachet, after having examined the contents of both covenants (promises) and the theological implication of the promises between the two, concludes: "Die kontinuïteit van die Abrahamitiese verbond in die opset van die Sinaïtiese verbond is in alle opsigte bevestig. Die beloftes van die Abrahamitiese verbond word gehandhaaf of veronderstel.... " (1977:262). And the precise relationship between the two is expressed by Lion-Cachet: "Die Abrahamitiese verbond vind in die Sinaïtiese verbond 'n voorlopige vervulling... Die Abrahamitiese verbond is met die verbondshoof Abraham gesluit en persoonlik aan Jakob en Isak
The covenant denotes the relationship between God and his people. It contains two main ideas, namely, God’s election from his own free will and the people’s submission to the law (Brouwer, 1949:84). Law and obedience are not the decisive elements (or prerequisite) for salvation, but instruments to help the people to keep the right relationship with God. Judgment for Israel, after they fail to keep the law, is not aimed at punishing the covenant-breaking people, as it would be in the case of secular treaties. Brouwer understands that:


When the people’s submission to the law broke down and more and more social injustice toward the poor and widows prevailed, the only way of restoring the pure relationship with God was to impose mispat on the corrupted people. But it does not mean that human weakness destroyed the validity of the covenant relationship with Yahweh. The teaching of the prophets notes that in spite of their rejection of the law, God would never renounce his promise to their fathers (Jr 16:15; 25:5; 30:3; 32:13; Ezk 20:42; 36:28; 37:25; cf. Ezk 16:59f).

The setting of the oracle of judgment in Jeremiah and Ezekiel is both prophetic and covenantal. It is an undeniable fact that the Mosaic covenant serves as the background of the "doom" oracles in the prophets (esp. Jeremiah and Ezekiel) (Raitt, 1977:20). When an obligation exists, an accusation can be uttered. This obligation, presupposed by the prophets, is defined best through the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel which was im-

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2 There has been a long argument whether or not the classic prophets knew the technical word "covenant". Raitt proposes evidence from Hosea: The word bryt is used by Hosea in the sense of the Mosaic covenant in 2:18; 6:7; 8:1, and the covenant formula also appears in 1:9; 2:23. see Raitt, 1977:23; Brueggemann, 1968:26-105.
posed by the Mosaic covenant. The genre of "lawsuit" is often found in the "doom" oracles (see Part II, 1.2.1). The motif of the old deliverance from Egypt frequently appears in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jr 2:6; 7:22,25; 11:5; Ezk 20:5,8,10,36; etc.). The gift of the land is also mentioned, which implies the Sinaic event (Jr 2:7; 7:7; 11:5; 17:4; Ezk 20:42; 36:28; see Part III, 5.3.3.5). The term Mosaic covenant is also found in Jeremiah 11:5 with numerous instances of an indirect indication of the old covenant (Jr 7:23; Ezk 20:18; etc.). All these facts indicate that the announcement of judgment by the two prophets is to be understood as a legal demand from the vassal who violated the covenant obligation.

Salvation preaching is also directly or indirectly related to the covenant. The most explicit restoration messages are found in the covenant passages (Jr 31:31-34; 32:36-44; 33:14-26; Ezk 34:23-31; 37:15-28). It is also striking that in most restoration oracles, in both prophetic books, the covenant formula is recited. This fact may indicate that the prophets always had in mind the covenant concept when they delivered the restoration messages, although they did not often mention the word "covenant". Thus, we may say that the background of the restoration is also the covenant.

Then, there is a problem with the question "to whom were the new covenant and the relevant promises given?". Were they given to the same audience who heard the judgment announced, or another group, namely the church? The next question arises: "In what sense is the new covenant different from the old?" The questions would directly link up with the issue of continuity or discontinuity between the old and the new covenants. In other words, the first question would be about the restoration of the covenantal relationship that is between God and his chosen people, or entering another relationship between God and his new people, the church. The last question would concern whether the restoration means returning to the old kingdom of Israel or entering into an eschatological kingdom which has new dimensions.
Thus, our effort will be concentrated on the question whether there is a unified perspective of revelation history between the old and the new covenants, between the judgment and the salvation oracles, and between the old promises and the new promises. Then, our next task is to form a picture of what kind of restoration of the nation would be provided by the prophets. It would be relevant in terms of the question, did the prophet speak about a truly political state of Israel, such as the modern state of Israel?; if not, then what kind of a restored nation is to be expected to come?.