

The New Covenant Rhetoric in Ezekiel 11:14–21 and 36:16–38

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ABSTRACT: In the Book of Ezekiel, the new covenant is announced in 11:14–21 and 36:16–38. Crucial to these prophecies is the future renewal of the heart and spirit of Israel. While the two prophecies share numerous similarities at the level of form and content, there are also fundamental disparities between them. These are not only due to differences concerning the inner renewal but also to the rhetorical dynamic of the new covenant. To describe this dynamic, we first examine the place of the announcement of inner renewal in these prophecies. Then we analyse the rhetorical structure of Ezek 11:17–20 and 36:24–28. Finally, on the basis of these analyses, we ask the question to what extent Daniel I. Block's thesis of resumptive exposition in the Book of Ezekiel can be applied to establish the rhetorical relationship between the prophecies in question. Rhetorical analysis allows us to conclude that they are part of a work-in-progress logic. Accordingly, various affirmations of the new covenant, announced in different historical contexts, are preserved in the book. Considering other Ezekiel prophecies on the new covenant, especially those on the covenant of peace in 34:25–30 and 37:26–28, one can speak not so much of a single covenant theology as of multiple covenant theologies in the Book of Ezekiel.

KEYWORDS: Book of Ezekiel, new covenant, covenant of peace, resumptive exposition, Ezek 11:17–21, Ezek 36:16–38

Among prophetic texts announcing the new covenant, two of them deserve special attention – the one of Jeremiah that speaks directly of the new covenant (Jer 31:31–34) and of Ezekiel, whose prophecy does not use the term ‘covenant’ but associates it with the gift of a ‘new heart’ and a “new spirit” (Ezek 36:24–28). Since Ezekiel's oracle in chapter 36 is one of biblical texts read out at the Easter Vigil (Ezek 36:16–17a, 18–28) and its key passage (Ezek 36:25–27) is read on the 2nd Sunday of the Ordinary Time in the Liturgy of the Hours, one may overlook the fact that there is a twin prophecy in the Book of Ezekiel, or at least that is the impression one can get at the first glance, in 11:14–21. When these two prophecies are compared, especially the parallel parts that directly foretell the covenant renewal (11:17–20 and 36:24–28), the following question arises as to the relationship between these oracles: to what extent are they similar, and how are they different? It is not only about the repetition of individual words, phrases, or sentences, but about the rhetorical structure of these two prophecies. If ‘form is the door to meaning’¹ then noticeable

¹ Paul Beauchamp in the introduction to R. Meynet, *L'analisi retorica* (Biblioteca Biblica 8; Brescia: Editrice Queriniana 1992) 7.

differences in their composition may account for different dynamics of the new covenant outlined in these prophecies. It also seems reasonable to ask about how they relate to each other. In the diachronic approach, the aim is to determine which of the two prophecies precedes the other and thus is the source of the other. However, when looking at it from a synchronic perspective – a proper biblical rhetoric – it is necessary to examine how the oracle in chapter 11 is modified in the later chapter 36: whether it is a correction of the earlier covenant announcement or its further development. In this context, it is reasonable to question the coherence of the concept of the new covenant in the Book of Ezekiel.

To resolve this research problem biblical rhetoric will be used.² In the first stage, we will carry out rhetorical analysis of the oracles of Ezek 11:14–21 and 36:16–38, both of which contain an announcement of the new covenant. Having established the rhetorical position of these prophecies in both oracles, we will proceed to rhetorical analysis of the prophecies of the new covenant in 11:17–20 and 36:24–28. An examination of their rhetorical dynamics will allow us to verify not only the relationship between these prophecies, but also the rhetorical – and consequently also theological – coherence of the new covenant oracle in the Book of Ezekiel.

1. The Rhetorical Position of Proclamation of the New Covenant in Ezek 11:14–21 and 36:16–38

The promise of the new covenant, associated with the gift of a new heart and new spirit, occurs in two different oracles in the Book of Ezekiel – 11:14–21 and 36:16–38. A rhetorical analysis of these oracles will reveal not only Israel's role in the inner renewal of the new covenant, but also the reason why the renewal of the covenant is so crucial.

1.1. Rhetorical Analysis of Ezekiel 11:14–21

The basis of this analysis is the Masoretic text Ezek 11:14–21. The following translation departs from the MT in v. 15, which quotes the people of Jerusalem speaking about the exiles. Changing of the imperative רָחֲקוּ ('go away') into the perfectum form רָחֲקוּ ('they are far away') is supported by the next sentence, in which God speaks of 'scattering' (הִרְחַקְתִּים) the exiles among the nations (v. 16).³ There is no difficulty in delimiting the oracle. Its boundaries are set by conventional prophetic formulas: the initial term is the word event formula in v. 14, and the extreme term is the formula אֲדַבֵּר יְהוָה in v. 21.

² The methodology for this exegetical tool was developed by Roland Meynet. Cf. R. Meynet, *Treatise on Biblical Rhetoric* (International Studies in the History of Rhetoric 3; Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2012).

³ The imperative form רָחֲקוּ in the Masoretic text is taken up by the Targum and the Vulgate. The Septuagint translation ἀπέχεσθαι is not so unambiguous, since the form can be translated both as indicative and imperative. Most commentators favour the indicative translation, taking into account the above-mentioned context as well (Zimmerli, Eichrodt, Allen, Block, Pohlmann, Joyce, Pettigiani among others).

1.1.1. Structure of the Oracle

The following translation of Ezek 11:14–21 highlights elements that are significant to the rhetoric of the text. The analysed oracle consists of four parts: v. 15, v. 16, vv. 17–20, and v. 21. Apart from the third rhetorical unit, the others correspond to the piece in size, therefore in further rhetorical analysis we will go straight to the discussion of the relationship between individual parts of the oracle.

The division into four parts stems from the expressions used in Ezek 11:14–21, that function as initial terms. The first part opens with a description of a prophet as ‘son of man’, the one who God speaks to (v. 15), which is typical for the Book of Ezekiel. The beginning of the second (v. 16) and third part (v. 17) is marked by the command formula (‘therefore say’), followed by the messenger formula. The end term of the third part is expressed in the Covenant formula of mutuality (v. 20). The recognition of v. 21 as a separate rhetorical unit is supported by a noun phrase **וְאֵלֶיךָ לֵב** (‘and as for the heart’). It remains related to the sentence that follows it, however, as a *casus pendens* it is independent of it and pre-empt the subject of the statement that follows.⁴

¹⁴And there was a word of Yahweh to me saying:

¹⁵Son of man: your brothers, your brothers, your kindred, the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say, “They ARE FAR AWAY from Yahweh, to us the **land** is **GIVEN** for a possession”.

¹⁶Therefore say: Thus said the Lord Yahweh: Though I SENT them FAR AWAY among the nations, and though I SCATTERED them among the **lands**, I have been a sanctuary to them for a little while in the **lands where they have gone to**.

¹⁷Therefore say: Thus said the Lord Yahweh: I will gather you from the peoples, and I will assemble you from the **lands** where you have been SCATTERED, and I will **GIVE** you the soil of Israel. ¹⁸ And **they will go there** and remove all its detestable things and all its **abominations** from it. ¹⁹ And I will **GIVE** them one heart, and a new spirit I will **GIVE** within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh, and **GIVE** them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ so that they may **walk** in my statutes, and keep my laws, and do them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

²¹ And as for the heart – after their detestable things and their **abominations** their heart **walked**, their ways on their heads I will **GIVE**,

the declaration of the Lord Yahweh.

⁴ Cf. A. Niccacci, *Sintassi del verbo ebraico nella prosa biblica classica. Seconda edizione riveduta e ampliata a cura di Gregor Geiger* (SBFA 88; Milano: Terra Santa 2021) § 119.

1.1.2. The Dynamics of the Oracle of Ezek 11:14–21

The oracle structure in Ezek 11:14–21 is largely determined by its literary genre. Adrian Graffy points out elements typical for disputation speech: the initial thesis of people of Jerusalem about exiles expressed as quotation in v. 15, which is then refuted by Yahweh in two statements, one addressed to the people of Jerusalem (v. 16) and the other to the exiles to Babylonia (v. 17).⁵ Rhetorically, the oracle ends in v. 21, which is why the above structure requires correction that will consider, first and foremost, the position of v. 21 in relation to the initial thesis quoted in v. 15. The distinguished four parts of the oracle form a chiasmic structure of ABB'A', in which parts A (v. 15) and A' (v. 21) concern a relation of the people of Jerusalem to Yahweh, and parts B (v. 16) and B' (vv. 17–20) – a relation of the exiles to Yahweh.

1.1.2.1. The Relationship between Parts A (v. 15) and B (v. 16)

The two parts are connected by the verb רָחַק: Jerusalemites express the conviction that the exiles 'are far away' from Yahweh (v. 15), which is confirmed by God who admits that he has 'scattered' them into exile (v. 16). That scattering has a geographical dimension expressed by the word אֶרֶץ ('land, country'). In part A, the people of Jerusalem are convinced that it was to them that Yahweh gave ownership of הָאָרֶץ – the land of Israel (v. 15), which is confirmed by Yahweh's statement in part B that he scattered the exiles בְּאֶרְצוֹת – 'among the lands' (v. 16). At the same time, God refutes the idea that the banishing would break off his relationship with the 'scattered among the lands', for it was the 'lands where they went' that Yahweh would be 'a sanctuary to them for a little while' (מִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט, v. 16).⁶

1.1.2.2. The Relation between Parts A (v. 15) and B' (v. 17–20)

These two parts are connected by the verb נָתַן, which is complemented by a noun describing the land of Israel: the conviction of people of Jerusalem that it was to them that 'the land (הָאָרֶץ) was given' (v. 15) is refuted by Yahweh's announcement that he will give 'the soil of Israel (אֲדָמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל)' to the exiles (v. 17). At the same time, the scope of God's gift declared by the verb נָתַן in part B' is expanded: in addition to the gift of land, there is also a promise of the gift of new heart (defined as 'one heart', 'a heart of flesh') and a 'new spirit' (v. 19).

⁵ A. Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People* (AnBib 104; Rome: Biblical Institute Press 1984) 49–52.

⁶ The term מְעַט, which specifies the nature of the divine 'sanctuary', does not seem to detract from the importance of this form of God's availability in Babylonia. Exegetes arguing for a depreciating value cite Dan 11:34 with the phrase עֵשֶׂר מְעַט, which would suggest a translation of the Ezekiel syntagma as 'a little sanctuary' (meaning 'a shadow of that which was before'), or to 2 Kgs 10:18 and Zech 1:15, in which מְעַט functions as an adverb 'to a limited extent, to some extent; a little'. The immediate context of v. 16, however, argues for the temporal meaning of מְעַט: 'for a brief while, temporarily', as suggested by v. 17, in which God announces new exodus to end the Babylonian exile. Cf. a discussion of the meaning of expression מְעַט מְעַט in W. Pikor, *The Land of Israel in the Book of Ezekiel* (LHBOTS 667; New York – London: Clark 2018) 98–99.

1.1.2.3. Relationship between Parts B (v. 16) and B' (vv. 17–20)

These two parts form a chronological sequence noting the displacement of the exiles,⁷ which is indicated in both units by the verb פוץ ('to scatter', vv. 16, 17). Their situation changes dramatically: the 'lands' are no longer places of dispersion, but of assembling and gathering (קבץ and אסף in v. 17). The repetitive phrase 'they went there' (verb בוא + adverb שם) has a different purpose: in part B it is the land of exile (v. 16), in part B' it is the land of Israel (v. 18). The return from exile will bring about change in the exiles' relation to Yahweh, expressed by the verb היה with two objects introduced by the prepositions ל: in the land of exile, Yahweh 'was a sanctuary to them for a little while' (וַיֵּאֱהִי לָהֶם לְמִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט, v. 16), in the land of Israel 'he will be God to them' (וַיֵּאֱהִיָּה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים, v. 20).

1.1.2.4. Relationship between Parts B' (vv. 17–20) and A' (v. 21)

Both parts are connected by the verbs הלך ('to walk') and נתן ('to give') and the noun לב ('heart'), but their use indicates opposition of subjects with which these terms should be associated. Part B' refers to the exiles who will return to the land of Israel from Babylonia: they will 'walk' according to the statutes of Yahweh (v. 20), who will 'give them' 'one heart', 'a heart of flesh' (v. 19). In part A', the subject is not explicitly named, but his 'heart walks' after the 'detestable things' and 'abominations' (v. 21) of which the land of Israel will be cleansed, as foretold in v. 18. This allows us to assume that part A' refers to the people of Jerusalem. To them too, Yahweh will make a gift ('giving'), yet, it will be not a new heart, but a punishment because of the ways their heart 'walks'.

1.1.2.5. Relationship between Parts A (v. 15) and A' (v. 21)

The parallelism between parts A and A' assumes that in v. 21 God addresses the people of Jerusalem, whose utterance was quoted earlier in v. 15. In both parts there is the verb נתן and the verbs of movement: רחק ('to move far away', v. 15) and הלך ('to walk', v. 21), which build the opposition between these parts. The truth that the dwellers of Jerusalem expressed in v. 15 about their relationship to Yahweh is finally called into question in v. 21. They are convinced that it is the exiles who 'are far away from Yahweh' (v. 15), while they themselves are far from Yahweh, since 'their heart walks after their detestable things and their abominations' (v. 21). Their claim to the gift 'given' to them by Yahweh is also wrong: it is not 'the land' but the punishment that will fall on their heads for their 'ways'.

⁷ Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People*, 52.

The above rhetorical analysis of Ezek 11:14–21 can be rendered in the following scheme:

Word event formula	14
A Conviction of the people of Jerusalem of their exclusive relationship with Yahweh	15
B Yahweh on his relationship with the exiles in Babylonia	16
B' Yahweh on renewing his relationship with the exiles after their return to Israel	17–20
A' Yahweh on his relationship with the people of Jerusalem	21

1.2. Rhetorical Analysis of Ezekiel 36:16–38

As in Ezekiel 11:14–21, the analysis of the parallel oracle in chapter 36 is based on the Masoretic Text. The translation, which is the basis for further analysis, respects the tensions present in the MT.

The delimitation of the oracle is not difficult. It opens with the word event formula in 36:16, which introduces a new prophecy in relation to the earlier one addressed to the mountains of Israel in 36:1–15. Rhetorically, the preceding oracle begins with the command to prophesy to the mountains of Israel (36:1) and is followed by the messenger formula (36:2); the end is marked by double occurrence of the conclusion formula נֶאֱמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (36:14, 15). Although the oracle 36:16–38 is not framed by terms in extreme position, nor does it have a term in conclusive position for the oracle as a whole, its conclusion in 36:38 is obvious because in 37:1 a new rhetorical unit begins: the vision of the dry bones.

1.2.1. Structure of Oracle

The translation of oracle 36:16–38 with its significant rhetorical elements is as follows:

¹⁶ And there was a word of Yahweh saying to me:

¹⁷ Son of man, the **house of Israel**, when it *dwelt* in its land, *defiled* it with its ways and its deeds, as an *impurity* of menstruation were their ways before me. ¹⁸ And I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood they had shed upon the land, and the idols with which they had *defiled* it. ¹⁹ And I *scattered* them among the nations, and they were *dispersed* among the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I have judged them.

²⁰ And they came to the nations *where they came*, and *profaned* **my holy name**, when it was said of them: These are the people of Yahweh, and they had to *leave* his land. ²¹ And I had concern for **my holy name**, which they the **house of Israel** had *profaned* among the nations *where they came*.

²² Therefore say to the **house of Israel**: **THUS SAYS THE LORD YAHWEH: IT IS NOT FOR YOUR SAKE, O house of Israel**, that I am about to act, but for the sake of **my holy name**, which you have *profaned* among the nations, *where you came*. ²³ And I will **sanctify my great name** *profaned* among the nations that you have *profaned* in their midst, and **the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, THE DECLARATION OF THE LORD YAHWEH**, when **I sanctify myself in you** before their eyes.

²⁴ And I will *take* you from the nations, and I will *gather* you from all lands, and *bring* you into your soil. ²⁵ And I will sprinkle you with clean water, and you will be clean from all your *impurities*, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will give within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And my spirit I will give within you, and I will do that in my statutes you will walk, and my laws you will keep and do them. ²⁸ And you shall *dwell* in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your *impurities*, and I will summon the grain, and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. ³⁰ And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine in the nations.

³¹ And you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you shall loathe yourselves on account of your iniquities and your abominations. ³² **IT IS NOT FOR YOUR SAKE** that I do, **THE DECLARATION OF THE LORD YAHWEH, let it be known to you**. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

³³ **THUS SAYS THE LORD YAHWEH**: On that day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be *inhabited* and the ruins will be rebuilt. ³⁴ And the desolate land shall be cultivated, instead of being a desolation in the sight of all passing by. ³⁵ And they will say: "This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden, and the ruined, desolate and destroyed cities are now fortified and *inhabited*". ³⁶ And **the nations** that are left around you **will know**, that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt what was destroyed, and have replanted what was desolate, I, Yahweh, have said, and will do it.

³⁷ **THUS SAYS THE LORD YAHWEH**, This also, I will let the **house of Israel** ask me to do unto them, and I will multiply them like a human flock. ³⁸ Like a **consecrated** flock, like the flock of Jerusalem during her appointed feast, so will the ruined cities be filled with human flocks and **they will know that I am Yahweh**.

Oracle 36:16–38 consists of eight parts (vv. 17–19, vv. 20–21, vv. 22–23, vv. 24–28, vv. 29–30, vv. 31–32, vv. 33–36, vv. 37–38), which in turn form three passages: vv. 17–21, vv. 22–32, and vv. 33–38. The second passage, which is introduced by the command and messenger formula (v. 22), has the clearest rhetorical limits. The extreme term is **לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה** ('it is not for your sake that I do') in vv. 22, 32. A similar inclusive function is expressed by 'house of Israel' (vv. 22, 32) and the formula **נֹאֵם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה** (vv. 23, 32).

Consequently, the first passage is contained in vv. 16–21. In terms of content, this unit is distinguished by the accumulation of verbs describing the exile of the house of Israel: its dispersion (**פּוּץ** and **זָרָה** in v. 19) and its arrival in the land of exile (**בּוֹא** in vv. 20, 21; cf. **יֵצֵא** in v. 20).

As for the last two parts, which form the final passage, their beginnings are indicated by the messenger formula (v. 33 and v. 37). The divine recognition formula (extended in v. 36 and in the basic form in v. 38) occurs as the end term in both units. The conclusive function in v. 36 should also be attributed to the identification formula **אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי** ('I, Yahweh, have said and will do it').⁸

1.2.1.1. Structure of Passage A (vv. 16–21)

The first passage consists of two parts: vv. 17–19 and vv. 20–21. In the first part, the pair of nouns **דֶּרֶךְ** ('way') and **עֲלִילוֹת** ('deeds') takes the extreme position, indicating the conduct of the house of Israel. It is defined by the root **טמא** used in the verb **טָמֵא** ('to defile') in vv. 17, 18 and the noun **טְמָאָה** ('impurity', v. 17). In the second part, the phrase **אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ שָׁם** ('where they came there') serves as an extreme term (vv. 20, 21). The coherence of the second part is also affirmed by the repetition in vv. 20, 21 of the verb **חָלַל** ('to profane') with the direct object **שֵׁם קָדְשִׁי** ('my holy name').

The first passage brings a double accusation against Israel. In the first part (vv. 17–19) it refers to the deeds with which they defiled their land where they dwelt. The object of accusation in the second part (vv. 20–21) is profanation of Yahweh's holy name committed by the house of Israel when he was sent to the land of exile as punishment (cf. v. 19).

1.2.1.2. Structure of Passage B (vv. 22–32)

It is difficult to determine the parts that make up passage B due to the limited presence of rhetorical signs (formal criteria). These are clearly noticeable in the first part of vv. 22–23: in the initial term there is the command formula⁹ ('therefore say to the house of Israel') and the messenger formula in v. 22, while the end term in v. 23 is marked by the formula **נֹאֵם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה** and the extended divine recognition formula.

The limits of the next unit, describing God's action toward the house of Israel, is a disputable matter. The only formal rhetorical element is the covenant formula of mutuality

⁸ This formulation is found also in Ezek 17:24; 22:14; 37:14. On the conclusive function of this formula see, cf. S. Bretón, *Vocación y misión. Formulario profético* (AnBib 111; Roma: PIB 1987) 230–232.

⁹ This is how Bretón (*Vocación y misión*, 116) identifies it.

in v. 28b. In the Book of Ezekiel, it occurs elsewhere in 11:20; 37:23, 27. In all of these occurrences, it takes a conclusive position¹⁰ regarding the previously described God's action toward Israel in pursuit of the restoration of the covenant. The rhetorical significance of this formula in 36:28 also stems from the fact that it is the only place in the Book of Ezekiel where the long form of the pronoun 1sg אֲנִי is used. The short form of this pronoun אֲנִי appears 169 times in the book, including other occurrences of the covenant formula. The attribution of a similar function to the conclusive covenant formula in 36:28 is supported by the occurrence of motion verbs in v. 24 and v. 28, which rhetorically take the extreme position as terms describing, on the one hand, the beginning of new exodus of Israel, whom God will 'assembly', 'gather' and 'bring' to their land (the verbs לָקַח, קָבַץ, and בּוֹא in v. 24), and on the other, indicating the finale of this exodus in the form of 'dwelling' in the land given to the fathers (the verb יָשַׁב in v. 28a).

Delimitation of the second part within vv. 24–28 raises a question of the rhetorical position of v. 29, especially its first member that continues describing God's action toward his people: 'and I will deliver you from all your impurities' (v. 29a), followed by the rhetorically coherent description of God's action toward the land of Israel (vv. 29b–30). The verb יָשַׁע in *hiphil* ('to save, to deliver'), which is complemented by the noun טְמֵאוֹת ('impurity'), plays the key role. It is not a duplication of the acts of God mentioned in v. 25, when God announced the 'cleansing' (verb טָהַר) of Israel from their 'impurity'. Two different actions are indicated by the occurrence of both verbs in 37:23: the verb יָשַׁע in *hiphil* is used to announce liberating Israel from 'all the places where they had sinned', i.e. from places of idolatry worship, while the verb טָהַר indicates necessary cleansing of the people so that they can be pure and ready to worship Yahweh. Thus, in 36:29–30, God foretells a double act towards the land where his covenant people shall dwell: first, to deliver it from idolatrous places of worship (v. 29a), and then to renew it, which the two parallel segments v. 29b and v. 30 comprise. This parallelism of segments is demonstrated by the repetition of the verb רָבָה ('to multiply'), complemented by products of fertile soil ('grain', 'fruit of the tree', 'produce of the fields'), and the noun רָעָב ('famine').

The final part of the oracle's second passage is vv. 31–32. Despite the absence of initial terms in v. 31, the subject changes in this verse: in the previous part, the subject was Yahweh, now it is the house of Israel. Although v. 32 speaks of God's actions ('it is not for your sake that I am about to act'), it then returns to Israel as the subject. The part is coherent also because of the nature of Israel's deeds: their previous conduct (the verb זָכַר in v. 31) would make them ashamed of what they had done (the verbs בּוֹשׁ and כָּלַם in *niphal* in v. 32). The term דְּרֹכֵיכֶם ('your ways') takes an inclusive position as the object of these verbs (vv. 31, 32).

¹⁰ Cf. F.-L. Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie des Ezechielbuches* (FB 20; Würzburg: Echter 1977) 298.

1.2.1.3. Structure of Passage C (vv. 33–38)

As mentioned earlier, the first part of this passage (vv. 33–36) is delimited by conventional prophetic formulas: the messenger formula (v. 33) as initial term, and the divine recognition formula combined with identification formula (v. 36) – both functioning as the final term. The verb **יָשַׁב** ('to dwell') should also be considered an extreme term, with which God announces the dwelling of Israel in his cities (v. 33), which is then verified by eyewitnesses of these events ('dwelt' in v. 35). The rhetorical coherence of this part is also evident with verbs referring to construction and cultivation, respectively – **בָּנָה** ('to build' in vv. 33, 36) and **עָבַד** ('to cultivate', v. 34) and **נָטַע** ('to plant', v. 36). They are complemented by terms built on the roots: **הָרַב** ('to ruin', vv. 33, 35), **הָרַס** ('to destroy', v. 35) and **שָׁמַם** ('to desolate', vv. 34[x2], 35[x2]).

The last part of the oracle (vv. 37–38) is rhetorically determined by the messenger formula as the initial term (v. 38) and by the divine recognition formula (v. 37). With regard to the content, the coherence of this unit is supported by four comparisons of the house of Israel to **צֹאן**, including twice to the 'human flock' (**צֹאן אָדָם** as extreme term in vv. 37, 38) and the 'consecrated flock' (**צֹאן קֹדֶשִׁים**, v. 38) and the 'flock of Jerusalem' (**צֹאן יְרוּשָׁלַם**, v. 38).

1.2.2. The Dynamics of the Oracle of Ezek 36:16–38

The analysed text is the oracle of salvation, which begins in the first passage (vv. 16–21) by presenting the profanation of the land and God's name by the house of Israel. Then there is the announcement of the future salvific intervention of Yahweh on two temporal planes: the near and the more distant future. The nearer temporal perspective, corresponding to the present, is in the second passage (vv. 22–32), in which God will bring about the rebirth of Israel as the covenant people. A further temporal perspective is introduced in the third passage (vv. 33–38) by the adverbial clause of time: 'on the day that I cleanse' (v. 33). Considering the chronology of events presented in the oracle, it forms the ABC figure, in which passage A (vv. 16–21) presents the history of Israel, passage B (vv. 22–32) describes God's present action toward Israel, and passage C (vv. 33–38) foretells God's further intervention in the future.

1.2.2.1. Relationship between Passage A (vv. 16–21) and B (vv. 22–32)

The relationship between these two passages is built by the motif of God's 'holy name': in view of Israel's 'profanation' of it (vv. 20, 21), God desires to 'sanctify' it (v. 23) by 'sanctifying himself in you', that is, in Israel (v. 23). For the house of Israel, this means a transformation that will occur on several levels, identified by terms that connect the two passages.

Firstly, Israel contributed to defiling the land by its actions (noun **טְמֵאָה** in v. 17), including idols (noun **גִּלּוּל** in v. 18), and God intends to deliver Israel from its uncleanness (**טְמֵאָה** in vv. 25, 29), idols included (**גִּלּוּל** in v. 25). Secondly, Israel, having been banished, had to leave 'the land' in which they 'dwelt' (**אֶדְמָתָם** and **יָשַׁב** in v. 17). God will bring the house of Israel back to 'their land' (**אֶדְמָתָם** in v. 24), where they will 'dwell' (**יָשַׁב** in v. 28). Thirdly, if Yahweh judges his people according to their 'ways' and 'deeds' with which they

have ‘defiled’ their land (עֲלִילוֹת וְדֶרֶךְ in vv. 17, 19), then as a result of God’s inner transformation, Israel will agree to God’s evaluation of their conduct: it will remember their evil ‘ways’ and ‘deeds’ (דֶּרֶךְ וְמַעַלְלֵי in v. 31) and feel shame about their ‘ways’ (דֶּרֶךְ in v. 32).

Also, if Israel’s actions have led to a misperception of Yahweh by foreign nations (as expressed in v. 20), then it is through God’s sanctification in their people that foreign nations will ‘know’ Yahweh (יָדַע in v. 23). Finally, Israel will contribute to this change of perception; they will ‘know’ the real motive of Yahweh’s action (יָדַע in v. 32).

1.2.2.2. The Relationship between Part B (vv. 22–32) and C (vv. 33–38)

These two passages are connected by the verbs יָשַׁב (‘to dwell’) and טָהַר (‘to cleanse’). The purification of the people announced in part B (v. 25) is assumed in part C to have been done (‘on the day that I cleanse you,’ v. 33). The final act of new exodus in passage B was the ‘dwelling’ of covenant people in the promised land (v. 28). Passage C describes the situation after the restored Israel had ‘inhabited’ it (vv. 33, 35), foretelling the restoration of both cultivated and urbanised land.

The description of restored Israel in passage C is not reduced to a quantitative category only, but has its qualitative transformation in mind, thus deepening the characteristics of the house of Israel in passage B. Restored Israel is presented in passage B as the people of Yahweh – the covenant people (the covenant formula of mutuality in v. 28). The inner change of heart and spirit results in a new memory for Israel (v. 31), who is ashamed of their past deeds (v. 32). In passage C, repentance turns into an act of petition addressed to Yahweh (v. 37). The petition is not only to increase the numbers of men in the house of Israel, but also to make it like a ‘consecrated flock’ (v. 38). The term used in this phrase evokes the ‘holy name’ of Yahweh in v. 22, whose holiness was the motive for God’s action toward Israel in passage B. Yahweh announced that he would ‘sanctify himself in them’ (v. 23), bringing holiness to Israel, at least in the cultic dimension, as suggested by the expression ‘consecrated flock’ (v. 38). In both passages, the divine recognition formula occurs but its subject changes. In passage B, it is the foreign nations through the ‘sanctification’ of Yahweh in his people who are to come to know Yahweh (v. 23), then in passage C the subject that is sanctified remains implied. It is the house of Israel, which, as a ‘consecrated flock,’ will come to know Yahweh (v. 38).

1.2.2.3. The Relationship between Part A (vv. 16–21) and C (vv. 33–38)

Passage C reverses the initial situation outlined in passage A. The house of Israel is back in its land (v. 17 contrasted with vv. 33, 35), which is cleansed from iniquities previously committed by the people (vv. 17, 18 versus v. 31). In both passages, external observers are quoted. They are identified with foreign nations directly in passage A and indirectly in passage C, and they change their opinion of Yahweh as the patron of the land of Israel: according to them, the exile was to prove that Yahweh could not protect the land of Israel (v. 20), but the return from exile is possible thanks to creating the land of Israel anew, and making it like the garden of Eden (v. 35).

Passage C also describes how the house of Israel has changed compared to the initial situation in passage A. It is not only about the material dimension of Israel that returns after being dispersed among nations (vv. 19–20) and is ‘multiplied’ in numbers by God (v. 37). What is more important is the change in the quality of their relationship to Yahweh. The exile resulted from being ‘judged’ by God (v. 19) who distanced himself from his people as from ‘menstrual impurity’ (v. 17). This distance is bridged upon Israel’s return from exile, and Yahweh looks favourably upon the requests of his people (v. 37), who are now allowed into God’s holy space as the ‘consecrated flock’ received by God with gladness in the Jerusalem cult (v. 38).

The analysis of rhetorical dynamics of Ezek 36:16–38 allows us to schematically render its structure as follows:

Word event formula	16
A Past relationship between Yahweh and Israel – the exile	17–21
Israel’s land defiled	17–19
Israel’s desecration of Yahweh’s name	20–21
B Announcing a new relationship between Yahweh and Israel – the new exodus	22–32
Announcing sanctification of Yahweh in his people	22–23
Rebirth of the people	24–28
Rebirth of the soil	29–30
The people’s response to the action of Yahweh	31–32
C God’s future action towards Israel	33–38
Final rebirth of the soil	33–36
Final rebirth of the people	37–38

1.2.3. The Changing Context of the New Covenant

The promise of covenant renewal in the analysed oracles occurs in two different contexts that influence the understanding of the new covenant dynamics.

Firstly, the promise of the new covenant is addressed to various subjects. In chapter 11, the promise is made to the Judeans deported to Babylonia after 597 BCE. They are juxtaposed to the dwellers of Jerusalem, who deny the exiles the title to the land of the covenant because the latter distanced themselves from Yahweh. However, it is this group of exiles that remains in God’s eyes ‘the whole house of Israel, all of them’ (11:15).¹¹ The oracle in

11 Some commentators believe that the three designations of the oracle in 11:15 are inclusive, gradually widening the circle of exiles, including those deported from the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians in the second half of the eighth century BCE, as well as those from Judah deported by the Babylonians. Cf. Graffy, *A Prophet*

chapter 36 refers to the period after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, when at least some of the people of Jerusalem mentioned in 11:15 were deported. The ‘dwellers of ruined’ Jerusalem (cf. 33:34) are no longer adversaries of the exiles recalled in 36:20, but foreign nations; they are both Babylonians and Assyrians, amongst whom the Israelites were deported over the centuries.

Secondly, there are specific reasons why Yahweh wants to renew the covenant. This is indicated by two different statements by the adversaries of the exiles quoted in these oracles. At first glance, it might seem that God is reacting to the situation of the exiles negatively; the people of Jerusalem are convinced that the exiles have lost their relationship with Yahweh and therefore the land belongs to those who remained in Jerusalem (11:15); foreign nations question the status of the exiles as Yahweh’s people because of their loss of land (36:20). The second oracle, however, is not primarily concerned with the status of the exiles, but with the honour of Yahweh, whose holy name was profaned by Israel in the eyes of the nations because his people were exiled. The oracle of chapter 11 answers the question about the identity of the people of the covenant, while the oracle in chapter 36 provides the answer to the question about the character of Yahweh as the God of the covenant.

Thirdly, the promise of the new covenant in chapter 11 combines the salvation oracle (for the exiles: vv. 16–20) with the judgement oracle (for the dwellers of Jerusalem: v. 21). No such differentiation is present in the second prophecy, in which the announcement of the new covenant (36:22–28) is fully positive and addresses the entire house of Israel. Divisions within Israel will eventually be overcome by Yahweh in the new covenant.

Additionally, the two oracles foretell two different types of covenant. The prospect of salvation and punishment in the prophecy of chapter 11 assumes the conditional nature of the covenant, the fulfilment of which depends on the right response of the people. In the oracle of chapter 36, the covenant appears as a unilateral, unconditional action of God on behalf of Israel.

Furthermore, parallel announcements of Israel’s inner transformation hold a different rhetorical position in the analysed oracles. The first prophecy of the new covenant is essentially limited to the promise of Israel’s restoration (11:17–20). In the second oracle, the promised renewal of the people (36:24–28) is the first thing in renewing the covenant, followed by other acts of God that change the status of the covenant people and the land. Thus, in the light of the second prophecy, the inner transformation of the covenant people, albeit based on Israel’s new relationship with Yahweh, is not exhaustive to what the new covenant is and how it is fulfilled.

Moreover, the oracles present a different view of the land of Israel. They are united by the motif of a new exodus so that the exiles can reinhabit their country. If the first oracle voices concern of the exiles for the purity of the land of Israel (11:18), then in chapter 36 the land is God’s own concern, and he will not only purify it (see 36:29) but will restore

and rebuild it (see 36:29–30, 33–35). First, however, God must cleanse his people (36:25), which only confirms that the land bore the brunt of Israel's iniquities (see 36:17). Still, in the second oracle, the land of Israel transcends ethnic categories, for its restoration is an act of new creation that will make it like the garden of Eden (36:35).

Another point is that, in the first oracle, the covenant is a purely national issue, a matter of dispute between the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the exiles. The presence of foreign nations in the second oracle makes the promise of the new covenant in chapter 36 universalistic. Although the covenant is further defined by the covenant formula of mutuality, it has theophanic value leading foreign nations to recognise the truth about Yahweh (cf. 36:23, 36).

Finally, these two announcements of the new covenant present the temple in Jerusalem differently. The first promise of the covenant renewal occurs in the narrative of the vision of Yahweh's glory, which ends with Yahweh leaving the temple in Jerusalem (cf. 10:18–22; 11:22–23). In this context, God makes a promise to the exiles that he will 'be a sanctuary for a while' in the land of exile (11:16). In this way, one of the pillars of Israel's faith, the temple of Jerusalem as a visible sign of God's presence with his people, is called into question. The situation of exile is temporary, as affirmed by the second oracle. It is not just a matter of returning to the land of Israel, but to Jerusalem, which we can deduct from the promise to multiply the covenant people in 36:38. Comparing the restored covenant people to 'the flock of Jerusalem during her appointed feast' indirectly points to the restoration of Jerusalem as a religious and cultic centre that once again becomes pleasing to God, his 'holy mountain' (20:40). It is here that the new covenant people will become like a 'consecrated flock' (36:38), a 'sweet fragrance' (20:41) to God, who will 'sanctify himself in them' in the eyes of the nations (20:41; 36:23).

2. What Kind of New Covenant?

The changing context of the new covenant announcement in the Book of Ezekiel raises the question to what extent the promises of covenant renewal in 11:17–20 and 36:24–28 have the same meaning.

2.1. Rhetorical Analysis of Ezek 11:17–20

As part of Yahweh's disputation with Jerusalem dwellers in 11:14–21, the second response brings the promise of the new covenant (vv. 17–20). The basis for further delimitation of this rhetorical unit is the change of subject in subsequent verses and the repetition of synonymous terms. The repetitions are parallelisms that make the four pieces coherent in the second part of the oracle: v. 17, v. 18, v. 19, and v. 20a–c. In the conclusion, the covenant formula is present (v. 20d–e) and functions as the conclusive formula for the entire announcement.

17 I will <i>gather</i> and I will <i>assemble</i> and I will GIVE	you you you	from the peoples , from the lands the soil of Israel.	where you have been scattered,
18 And they will go and remove and all its abominations	there all its detestable things, from it.		
19 And I will GIVE and a <i>spirit</i> and I will remove and GIVE	them a new one the heart them	a heart I will GIVE of stone a heart	a new one, within you, from their flesh, of flesh,
20 so that and keep and do	in my <i>statutes</i> my <i>laws</i> , <i>them</i> .	they may <i>walk</i> ,	
And they shall be and I	for me will be	people , form the	God.

The subject of actions foretold in the first piece (v. 17) is Yahweh speaking in the 1st person singular. Parallelism of the first two members (v. 17a, b) is evident; there are synonymous verbs describing the gathering of exiles by Yahweh (קָבַץ and אָסַף) completed with an object indicating the place of dispersion (הָעַמִּים and הָאָרְצוֹת, respectively). The third member (v. 17c) has an identical syntactic structure (verb + object concerning a specific place), which makes it parallel to the previous two. It proclaims the granting of the land of Israel to those gathered from exile, so one can say that all terms appearing in the parallel members of v. 17 belong to the semantic field of exodus.

In v. 18 there is a change of subject: the exiles, referred to in the 3rd person plural, are active. Chronologically, the promise refers to the exiles setting forth to the land of Israel, as indicated by a combination of the verb בָּאוּ ('they will go') with the adverb indicating the direction of שָׁמָּה ('to that place') in v. 18a, and then it continues to describe the exiles' activity after their return to the land of Israel. Their act of cleansing the land is expressed in two members, and this parallelism is evident from the synonymous, metaphorical designations of clearing it of idolatrous worship: שְׁקִינֵיהֶם ('their detestable things', v. 18b) and תּוֹעֲבוֹתֵיהֶם ('their abominations', v. 18c).

In v. 19 Yahweh returns as a subject in the 1st person singular and promises inner renewal of the returning exiles. The first two members form a chiasmic arrangement in which the gift of 'one heart' (v. 19a) is parallel to the gift of 'new spirit' (v. 19b). In the last two members, however, antithetical parallelism occurs: the act of 'removing' (v. 19c) is the opposite to the act of 'giving' (v. 19d), whereas the 'heart of stone' (v. 19c) is opposed to the 'heart of flesh' (v. 19d). The promise of the heart in the first member (v. 19a) is repeated in

the fourth one (v. 19d), so that the noun ‘heart’ serves as extreme term to the third piece. The coherence of v. 19 is thus reinforced rhetorically by the occurring parallelisms.¹²

Syntactically, v. 20 is introduced by a conjunction לְמַעַן (‘so that’) indicating purpose. It is composed of three parallel members announcing the future observance of laws by the restored Israel: it is the subject in 3rd person plural of the parallel verbs שָׁמַר, הִלֵּךְ and עָשָׂה, which are complemented by the synonymous terms of law as מִשְׁפָּטִים and חֻקֹּת (in the third member rendered by the particle of the accusative אֹתָם). Apart from the syntactic construction of the sentence of purpose, the last part of v. 20 remains within the covenant formula of mutuality. Rhetorically, v. 20d–e should be considered a separate literary unit.

Oracle 11:17–20 form a parallel structure of ABA'B'C, which can be rendered schematically as follows:

A	God: initiative for new exodus	17
B	Exiles: new entry into the land of Israel and its cleansing	18
A'	God: Inner renewal of the exiles on their return	19
B'	Restored exiles: keeping the laws	20a–c
C	Covenant formula	20d–e

The initiative to renew the covenant comes from God, to which the exiles respond. God initiates a new exodus, gathering the scattered exiles (A), but what he needs is the exiles responding and taking a path to the land of Israel that is given to them (B). God also desires to bring about the inner rebirth of his people (A'), but this transformation of the exiles means guiding them to keep the laws (B'). The covenant formula, which assumes mutuality of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel (C), can only happen if the people respond properly to God. The exiles are therefore beneficiaries of God's action, but at the same time, God expects their adequate response to his initiative.

The presence of the verb נָתַן in the parallel pieces A and A' accentuates that the gift of the covenant happens on two levels: externally, as the gift of the land of Israel (v. 17c), and internally as the gift of the new heart and new spirit (v. 19a, b, d). Consequently, the exiles' response in the parallel pieces B and B' is two-dimensional: external, by removing all signs

12 Finally, one can argue that the four members of v. 19 form the chiasm of abb'a'. The parallelism of the extreme terms a and a' – noted above – raises no doubts. The relationship between b (the gift of the new spirit) and b' (removing of the stone heart) can be discussed. Assuming the parallelism between them (a consequence of the abb'a' type chiasm), the 'new spirit' remains in relation to the 'heart of stone', which metaphorically records a heart devoid of רוּחַ – vitality, energy, strength, will, and constancy, which are metaphorically rendered by the term רוּחַ. Unlike the parallel prophecy of Ezek 36:26–27a, the gift of the 'new spirit' in chapter 11 would not be associated with the spirit of Yahweh, but would be related to the 'new heart', bringing new vitality into it.

of idolatrous worship from the land of Israel (v. 18b–c), and internal, by observing the laws (v. 20). The execution of the law is manifested by specific actions, but these depend on the obedience of the heart to God's laws.

At the same time, what the exiles do with regard to the land (B) is correlated with what God does with regard to the inner self (A'). In both cases, the same verb סֹר (vv. 18b, 19c): the mere removal of idolatrous installations from the land of Israel by the exiles is insufficient if God does not 'remove' the heart of stone out of them first (v. 19c).

Outside the parallel arrangement of the oracle, there remains the last single segment piece, which is the covenant formula (v. 20d–e). The essence of the covenant is the formula of mutuality between Yahweh and his people. The formula affirms the need for God and the exiles to cooperate in the process of renewing the covenant, which in fact concludes the entire oracle and not just the segment that precedes it (that fulfilment of the covenant depends only on the people keeping God's law).

2.2. Rhetorical Analysis of Ezek 36:24–28

In chapter 36, a parallel text to the new covenant prophecy in chapter 11 is the part 36:24–28. It consists of five pieces: v. 24, v. 25, vv. 26–27a, v. 27b–c, and v. 28. Their delimitation is based on the repetition of synonymous terms and is characteristic for the unit's semantic field, which is marked graphically in the translation of the analysed fragment given below.

24 And I will TAKE and I will GATHER and BRING	you you you	from the NATIONS, from all LANDS, into your SOIL.	
25 And I will sprinkle and you will be clean and from all	you from all your idols	with clean your impurities, I will cleanse	water, you.
26 And I will give and a SPIRIT and I will remove	you a new one the heart	a heart I will give of stone	a new one within you, from your flesh,
and I will give 27 And my SPIRIT	you I will give	a heart within you,	of flesh.
and I will DO and my laws	that you will <u>keep</u>	in my statutes and DO them.	you will <u>walk</u> ,
28 And you shall DWELL which	in the LAND, I gave	<i>to your fathers,</i>	
and you shall be and I	for me shall be	the people, for you	<i>God.</i>

The first piece (v. 24) consists of three parallel members in which there are verbs from the semantic field of translocation (בוא, קבץ, לקח) in combination with the same direct object אַתְּכֶם ('you') and with the indirect object indicating the direction of translocation (אֶדְמַתְכֶם, הָאֲרָצוֹת, הַגּוֹיִם). The coherence of the second piece is determined by the repetition of terms built on the root טהר in three consecutive members (the verb 'to cleanse' in v. 25b, c; the adjective 'clean' in v. 25a). In the third piece (vv. 26–27a) there is a parallelism between the members using the verb נתן ('to give') and terms לֵב ('heart') and רוּחַ ('spirit'). The unity of this piece is strengthened by the presence of the noun לֵב in the central member. The position of the extreme term in the fourth piece (v. 27b–c) is occupied by the verb עשה ('to do'). The coherence of this piece is also provided by the parallelism between the synonymous expressions 'to walk in my statutes' and 'to keep my laws'. The delimitation of the fifth piece (v. 28) is a consequence of delimitations of the previous units. It consists of two segments in which the terms determining Israel's identity as a covenant people appear: 'fathers' as ancestors of Israel, and 'God' as partner in the covenant.

The five pieces of the analysed oracle form a concentric structure, which can be schematically rendered as follows:

A Exodus and return to the land of Israel	24
B Cleansing Israel of uncleanness	25
C Gift of new heart and new spirit	26–27a
B' Israel's ability to obey the laws	27b–c
A' Dwelling in the land of the covenant people	28

In the light of the above, the external transformation that will come about through the gift of new heart and new spirit announced in the central piece C is the foundation of the new covenant. The outermost pieces A and A' remove the external cause of desecration of Yahweh's name – Yahweh's people in exile. Exodus (A) alone is not enough; they need to 'dwell' in the land promised to the fathers (A'). The new exodus is not just a change in Israel's dwelling place; it needs the very fabric of Israel to be transformed from within. Pieces B and B' frame this transformation in juridical terms: God will cleanse Israel of its impurities (B) and will then enable it to keep the statutes (B'), which also include Israel's previously violated worship laws. This obedience will result from the new inner disposition of the house of Israel (C). The very centre of piece C, and thus the centre of the analysed oracle, announces the 'removing of heart of stone' (v. 26c.). It will be replaced by the 'heart of flesh', which symbolises Israel's new rational, volitional, and emotional centre. It needs the 'new spirit', the spirit of Yahweh himself that will guarantee the constant and faithful

relationship of the restored Israel with Yahweh in his covenant. The gift of a new heart and new spirit is the essence of the new covenant.

2.3. The Changing Rhetoric of the New Covenant

Comparing the two oracles, 11:17–20 and 36:24–28, one notices a similarity between them, although their rhetorical dynamics are different.

First, oracles have a different rhetorical structure: unit 11:17–20 is built on a parallel structure, while unit 36:24–28 presents a concentric structure. Thus, the promise of inner transformation of the people occupies a central place in the oracle in chapter 36 (vv. 26–27a), while in the prophecy in chapter 11 (v. 19) it is only one of God's initiatives.

In literary terms, the Masoretic text 36:24–28 is coherent, its rhetoric composition is more elaborate than that in the text 11:17–20. It is enough to compare concentric structure of the central piece in 36:26–27a with the parallel structure of the analogous announcement in 11:19. That structure is distorted by the lack of direct parallel to the gift of 'new spirit' in 11:19b. In addition, this gift in 11:19b is addressed to the exiles in the 2nd person plural, while the gift of new heart in 11:19a, c–d is addressed to the exiles in the 3rd person plural.

Secondly, the new covenant in 11:17–20 is announced as the result of cooperation between God and the exiles: the initiative comes from God but people need to respond to it appropriately. In contrast, the promise of the covenant in 36:24–28 is the result of God's action entirely. In 11:18, it is the exiles who 'go' to the land of Israel (יָצְאוּ), while in 36:24, it is God who will 'bring' them to the land (יָבִיאָם). In 11:18, the exiles cleanse the land of idolatrous worship, but in 36:25, it is the exiles themselves who are cleansed by God of their impurities. In 11:20, now restored Israel is able to keep the laws, however in 36:27b, an additional divine act is needed ('and I will do that') so the people would act upon the laws.

Thirdly, the interaction between God and the exiles in oracle 11:17–20 presupposes a conditional nature of the covenant. The realisation of its purpose, expressed in the formula of the covenant, requires a proper response on the part of the people to the gift of the new exodus and the gift of regeneration of the heart and spirit. The covenant foretold in 36:24–28 is one-sided: the initiative comes from God, as does the fulfilment of its individual elements. Even if the last act of the covenant, which is to dwell in the land, has the exiles as its subject, it is also emphasised that this is only possible because of Yahweh, who 'gave this land to their fathers' (36:28b).

Furthermore, the inner transformation of Israel that Yahweh will accomplish in the new covenant is much deeper and more radical in 36:24–28 than in 11:17–20. First, it assumes the cleansing of those returning from exile of all their impurities and all their idols. It is not the uncleanness of the land that is an obstacle, needed to be removed from the covenant way, as in 11:18, but the uncleanness of the people. In both oracles, the gift of a new heart is announced, which, despite its different specifications ('one heart' in 11:19a; 'new heart' in 36:26a) involves a kind of transplanting of a 'heart of stone' with a 'heart of flesh'. Behind this metaphor lies the ability of the people to open themselves to a relationship with

Yahweh, above all in terms of obedience to his word, as can be inferred from the following motive of observing the laws. However, the gift of the 'new spirit' is only specified in the second oracle, in which Yahweh identifies it with 'his spirit' (36:27a). In this way, the ambivalence of this gift, which in the first oracle could only refer to the regeneration of the human spirit, is no longer there, whereas the new covenant requires an entirely new spirit, the spirit of Yahweh, which will give the restored Israel a new perseverance and constancy in the covenant relationship.

Finally, the oracles differ as to the role of land in Yahweh's covenant with Israel. In the oracle of chapter 36, the land is shown as constituting the covenant that Yahweh made with the patriarchs (36:28b). The covenant renewal is therefore a result of God's faithfulness to this original gift. In the oracle of chapter 11, the gift of land is made to the exiles (11:17c), without mentioning the origin of the gift. In the rhetorical structure of this oracle, the land appears only in the context of a new exodus (11:17c), while in the second, the land of Israel occupies a strategic position as an extreme term. Thus, the land is not only associated with the exodus (36:24c) but is the foundation of a new covenant that will be finally fulfilled by 'dwelling in the land given to the fathers' (36:28b).

3. The New Covenant in the Book of Ezekiel: From Rhetoric to Theology

Rhetorical analysis of Ezekiel's prophecies of the new covenant in 11:14–21 and 36:16–38 confirms similarities between the two, especially in the context of the promise of Israel's inner renewal in 11:17–20 and 36:24–28. At the same time, the comparative analysis of the rhetorical structure of the two prophecies makes it possible to grasp their different rhetorical dynamics which indicate certain changes in the understanding of this covenant.

Proponents of the diachronic approach see these differences result from the work of different editors creating these oracles. When narrowing the scope only to the announcement of Israel's inner transformation, some scholars believe that verses 11:19–20 were taken from 36:26–27,¹³ or at least that the promise of 'giving a new spirit into you' in 11:19a comes from 36:26a.¹⁴ At the same time, some commentators consider the oracle 36:22–38 to be a kind of anthology or compendium of prophetic teachings of Ezekiel.¹⁵ In their view, this

13 Walther Eichrodt (*Ezekiel. A Commentary*, 5 ed. [OTL; London: Westminster John Knox 1996] 111) speaks of a 'careless and simplified repetition of 36:26f'. See also: Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People*, 48–49; S. Ohnesorge, *Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu. Zur Sicht der Zukunft Israels nach Ez 11,14–21; 20:1–44; 36:16–38; 37:1–14.15–28* (FB 64; Würzburg: Echter 1991) 147–148.

14 Cf. D. Baltzer, "Literarkritische und literarhistorische Anmerkungen zur Heilsprophetie im Ezechiel-Buch," *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation* (ed. J. Lust) (BETL 74; Leuven: Peeters 1986) 169; K.-F. Pohlmann, *Der Prophet Hesekiel/Ezechiel. Kapitel 1–19* (ATD 22.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1996) 168.

15 Cf. D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 25–48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1998) 337; T. Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 76; Leiden: Brill 1999) 110.

is true especially when the renewal of Israel is announced in 36:26–27a, which would be taken from 11:19(–20).¹⁶ Others say it refers to Ezek 18:31 and 37:14 and Jer 31:31–34.¹⁷ With such differing opinions, resolving the question of dependence of the analysed oracles on one another using diachronic tools remains hypothetical.

Hebrew rhetoric, although it proposes a synchronic reading of biblical texts, allows us to see how the promises of the new covenant in the Book of Ezekiel are related to one another. One criterion used in textual criticism is the principle of ‘lectio difficilior praestat facili’, according to which a more difficult variant of a text is probably the original one unless it makes no sense. If we apply this principle to a rhetorical analysis of two texts concerning the same subject, similar in form and content, then it can be assumed that the announcement of the new covenant in Ezek 11:14–21 is prior to that in 36:16–38. One only needs to compare the rhetorical figure of speech concerning the promise of Israel’s inner renewal to see that the concentric structure in 36:24–28 is a more thoughtful and rhetorically orderly composition than the parallel structure of the oracle 11:17–20. This is not an isolated case in the Book of Ezekiel, where it is possible to infer from the figure of speech that two similar texts are dependent on each other. This is the case, for example, with the vision of Yahweh’s glory in 1:4–28 and 10:1–17: the second one refers to the first, proposing a more coherent and harmonious picture of Yahweh’s glory.¹⁸

Then, how can we explain the occurrence of ‘twin’ prophecies in the Book of Ezekiel, the second of which appears later in the book and is rhetorically more elaborate? Daniel I. Block, who proposes a synchronic reading of the Book of Ezekiel, sees this phenomenon, after Michael Fishbane,¹⁹ as a kind of inner-biblical exegesis, which he refers to as resumptive exposition.

The present canonical book displays a remarkable tendency to reuse in later contexts motifs that had been introduced in early chapters. [...] A variation of the pattern involves the early brief introduction of a theme, which is then dropped immediately, without further development, and often without full integration into the context.²⁰

16 Cf. Pohlmann, *Der Prophet Hesekiel/Ezechiel. Kapitel 1–19*, 488–489; A. Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Ezek 34–39* (BZAW 391; Berlin – New York: De Gruyter 2008) 96; J.M. Abrego, *Ezequiel* (Comentarios a la Nueva Biblia de Jerusalén 21; Henao: Desclee De Brouwer 2011) 200.

17 Cf. L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1990) 177–178; F. Markter, *Transformationen. Zur Anthropologie des Propheten Ezechiel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Motivs Herz* (FB 127; Würzburg: Echter 2013) 508; W.A. Tooman, “Covenant and Presence in the Composition and Theology of Ezekiel,” *Divine Presence and Absence in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism. Studies of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Research Group on Early Jewish Monotheism* (eds. N. MacDonald – I.J. Hulster) (FAT 2.61; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013) II, 176–177.

18 Cf. W. Pikor, “Retoryka Chwały Jahwe w Ez 10,” *Więcej szczęścia jest w dawaniu aniżeli w braniu. Księga pamiątkowa dla Księdza Profesora Waldemara Chrostowskiego w 60. rocznicę urodzin* (ed. B. Strzałkowska) (Warszawa: Vocatio 2011) III, 1206–1210.

19 M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon 1985) 10–12.

20 D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1997) 24.

Such a case, according to Block, is the promise of the new covenant in 11:17–20, which is later developed in 36:16–38. The only question is to what extent this phenomenon is the result of the deliberate action of the book's editor. Block does not rule out the possibility that it was Ezekiel himself who edited his oracles, which he integrated into a complete and rhetorically coherent collection by frequently inserting cross-references.²¹

However, an attempt to explain the interdependence between the promises of the new covenant in the Book of Ezekiel through resumptive exposition requires some correction. Rhetorical analysis has shown that, despite the similarities between 11:17–20 and 36:24–28, they do not provide identical promises of the new covenant. The dynamics of the covenant renewal are different, especially when one considers the implicit action of Israel: while in 11:17–20 there is a kind of interaction between God and the exiles who respond with certain actions to God's initiative, in 36:24–28 the renewal depends entirely upon God. These differences become unambiguous when one looks at the entire oracles, of which both texts are an integral part. The prophecies 11:14–21 and 36:16–38 have (1) different addressees (the first prophecy is addressed only to the exiles of 597 BCE seen entirely as the house of Israel, while the second one actually refers to all the exiles from Israel); (2) different motivation for the covenant renewal on God's part (in the first one it is about the situation of the exiles in the land of exile discredited by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in the second it is about the situation of God, whose holy name was profaned in the eyes of foreign nations by the Israelites being exiled); (3) different understanding of the covenant renewal (the first prophecy is about the inner restoration of Israel bringing about the renewal of the covenant relationship with Yahweh, while the second prophecy also assumes the renewal of the land of Israel). Therefore, it is difficult to say that the relationship between these prophecies is reduced to the category of resumptive exposition, since both prophecies contain a different covenant promise addressed to different subjects. Considering the changing literary context of the oracle, with a different historical context in the background, one could rather speak of a rereading of the new covenant prophecy, which is adapted to the new situation of exile. Such a solution, however, does not fully respect the covenant rhetoric in the Book of Ezekiel.

Firstly, in addition to the two oracles examined, the Book of Ezekiel contains other prophecies of the Covenant renewal: 16:59–63, 34:25–30 and 37:26–28. Secondly, although the gift of a 'new heart' and 'new spirit' plays a key role in the covenant renewal, the covenant in the Book of Ezekiel is not exactly termed as new. Instead, other terms for the renewed covenant appear: 'everlasting covenant' (16:60; 37:26) and 'covenant of peace' (34:25; 37:26). Thirdly, the 'everlasting covenant', which will be the renewal of Yahweh's covenant with Jerusalem, is equated in 37:26 to the 'covenant of peace'. However, if we examine the prophecy of the everlasting covenant of 16:59–63 with the later prophecies of the covenant of peace, it is difficult to identify any common elements other than just the comparison of the two covenant names in 37:26.

21 D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 1–24*, 25.

Moreover, respecting the rhetorical structure of the Book of Ezekiel, the last of the covenants foretold in the book will be the covenant of peace (37:26). It is characterised by three elements: removing of wild animals, restoring of soil fertility, and deliverance from enemies.²² The source of peace thus heralded will be the dwelling of Yahweh himself in the renewed land (cf. מְשַׁכְּנִי in 37:27), whose permanent and definitive presence among his people will be the source, essence, and guarantee of the eternal covenant of peace.

Considering these various covenant promises in the Book of Ezekiel, the thesis of resumptive exposition regarding the prophecies of the new covenant in 11:14–21 and 36:18–38 needs to be adjusted. The differences between oracles do not necessarily result from the work of editors but may come from Ezekiel himself, who repeatedly foretold the renewal of the covenant during his prophetic activity. There are many cross-references between these prophecies but each offers a different view of the new covenant. Steven S. Tuell, in his analysis of prophecies of Ezekiel concerning the king of Tyre, refers to the Book of Ezekiel as a work in progress: it collects the prophet's various sayings on the same subject (in this case, Tyre) that were edited after his death.²³ A rhetorical analysis of Ezekiel's prophecies about the restoration of the covenant does not allow us to draw conclusions about redactional criticism, but it allows us to conclude that these oracles subscribe to the work in progress logic. From a rhetorical (and narrative) point of view, it is possible to demonstrate elements of continuity between the two, but the comparing and contrasting them in one book is a testimony to Ezekiel's (and later editors' prophecies) seeking an understanding of what Yahweh's covenant with Israel was. As a result, instead of a single covenant theology, we have different statements about the covenant, which allow us to talk about multiple covenant theologies in the Book of Ezekiel.

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²² Cf. an analysis of the covenant of peace in W. Pikor, "Dynamika «przymierza pokoju» w Księdze Ezechiela," *IV* 30 (2016) 68–73.

²³ Cf. S.S. Tuell, "The Book of Ezekiel as a Work in Progress. Indications from the Lament over the King of Tyre (28.11–19)," *Ezekiel. Current Debates and Future Directions* (eds. W.A. Tooman – P. Barter) (FAT 112; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2017) 67.

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