THE DAVIDIC COVENANT IN EZEKIEL 34:23–31: INFLUENCE OF 2 SAMUEL 7:1–16[i]

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Abstract:

Davidic Covenant is an important theme in the Old Testament. The first occurrence of this theme is in 2 Samuel 7:1–16. Since "*no text is an island*", David appears again in the text of Ezekiel 34:23–31 as the promised ruler in a restored Israel. The divine restoration that God promises to his people putting the Davidic King at the center of God's plan suggests the dependency of the text of Ezekiel on that of Samuel. The influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 cannot be established based on isolated single or individual elements. However, the discussion in this paper shows that the two texts have numerous affinities, including literary, theological, and conceptual aspects. The text of Ezekiel emphasizes that the promise of restoration will come to realization under the leadership of the future ruler, David. The connections between Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 2 Samuel 7:1–16 are clear to the point that we might suggest that the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 had influence on the text of Ezekiel 34:23–31.

Keywords: Davidic Covenant, Ezekiel, Samuel, influence, king

Résumé :

L'Alliance Davidique est un thème important de l'Ancien Testament. La première occurrence de ce thème se trouve dans 2 Samuel 7:1–16. Comme « aucun texte n'est une île », David apparaît à nouveau dans le texte d'Ézéchiel 34:23–31 en tant que souverain promis dans un Israël restauré. La restauration divine que Dieu promet à son peuple en plaçant le Roi Davidique au centre du plan de Dieu suggère la dépendance du texte d'Ézéchiel sur celui de Samuel. L'influence du texte de 2 Samuel 7 sur celui d'Ézéchiel 34 ne peut être établie sur la base d'éléments isolés ou individuels. Cependant, la discussion dans cet article montre en suffisance que les deux textes ont de nombreuses affinités, y compris les aspects littéraires, théologiques et conceptuels. Le texte d'Ézéchiel met l'accent sur le fait que la promesse de restauration se réalisera sous la direction du futur roi, David. Les liens entre Ézéchiel 34:23–31 et 2 Samuel 7:1–16 sont clairs au point que nous suggérons que le texte de 2 Samuel 7:1–16 a eu une influence sur le texte d'Ézéchiel 34:23–31.

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Mots-clés : Alliance davidique, Ézéchiel, Samuel, influence, roi

1. Introduction

This paper looks at the text of Ezekiel 34 with specific consideration of the positive trait of the promise (Ezek 34:23–31), incorporating possible areas of influence from the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16. The promise comes after YHWH has rebuked the leaders of Israel and is the climax of the oracle in Ezekiel 34. Besides being the climax of the oracle, the promise is reinforced by mentioning David as the future ruler of the Jewish people. The appearance of David in the text of Ezekiel has literary, theological, as well as historical importance. The occurrence of David in the text of Ezekiel propels the idea that the text of Samuel might have influenced that of Ezekiel. The interest in this article is on the literary aspect, and specifically to connect the promise of David as the coming ruler to the Davidic Covenant as found in 2 Samuel 7. The study will extend to consider the theological and the conceptual influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34.

2. Literature Review

While scholars have not considered in depth the influence of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 on the text of Ezekiel 34, it is significant in that it provides a clue to how, in general, the promise in Ezekiel 34 depends on the Davidic Covenant. There are important indications that we need to consider as we try to understand the background of the Davidic covenant.

Zimmerli links the Davidic Covenant to the scope of the history of the people of God, mainly to their election (Zimmerli 1983:218). Scholars have connected Ezekiel 34:23–31 to 2 Samuel 7:1–16 in one way or another. For example, Obinwa states that David is "*the king, the royal permanence of whose house was foretold by YHWH through Prophet Nathan (cf. 2 Sam 7:1-18)*" (Obinwa 2012:355). Still in reference to the mention of David in the text of Ezekiel, he adds, "*Hence Ezekiel followed a long standing tradition in his oracle about David*" (Obinwa 2012:355). Biwul has the same opinion as he considers David in Ezekiel 34 as "*a recall of the Davidic dynasty*" (Biwul 2013:221). According to Brad E. Kelle, reference to David in Ezekiel is a representation of the Davidic dynasty (Kelle 2013:287). One has to remember that the Davidic dynasty is an important component in the covenant that YHWH made with David. Duguid attributes the promise of David as the future ruler for the Jewish people to "*the fulfillment of the covenant with David*" (Duguid 1994:396).

In his comment, Blenkinsopp indirectly connects the promise of David in Ezekiel to the Davidic Covenant. He observes that "*After more than four centuries the Davidic dynasty was extinguished, with the exile first of Jehoiachin and then of his uncle Mattaniah (Zedekiah). The hope of its eventual restoration was, however, kept alive in the homeland and during the diaspora, and attempts were actually made to restore it*" (Blenkinsopp 1990:160). He suggests that the effort of the Jewish people attempting to restore the Davidic dynasty came from the knowledge of the covenant that YHWH made with his servant. In addition, from a messianic perspective, Fohn W. Wevers connects the promise of the future ruler David to the Davidic Covenant. According to him, "*the Messiah must*

be of the royal house, since Yahweh had promised David that his throne would be established for ever,[iii] *2 Sam. 7.16"* (Wevers 1982:184). Reflecting on Ezekiel 34:23 and 37:22–26, Cooper sees the promise of David as the future ruler as **"***a fulfillment of the promise made in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam 7:16"* (Cooper 1994:302).

From the few examples above, there is a clear indication that appointing David as the future ruler of the people of YHWH intrinsically derives from the Davidic Covenant. Therefore, there is reason to believe that the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 where the Davidic Covenant appears for the first time might have a certain influence on the text of Ezekiel 34:23–31. The point that is missing in the Ezekelian scholarship is a detailed study on the possible influence. It is worth doing an intertextual study since it helps to determine the connections between these texts and the possible influence of the former text on the latter. This approach helps to understand the biblical texts of study from a literary point of view and can shed light on Ezekiel's understanding of the crucial role of the Davidic King in God's plans.

3. Methodology

Intertextuality is an appropriate methodology when it comes to establishing relationships among texts. Using an intertextual approach, the purpose of this study is to explore how the context and the text of 2 Samuel 7 might have influenced the text of Ezekiel 34 in relation to the promised ruler. It also seeks to understand, from the text of 2 Samuel 7, the function of the promised leader—insofar as it sheds light on that ruler in Ezekiel. The choice of the approach in this research is informed by the fact that (1) in biblical studies it is unavoidable to overlook connections and relationships that a given biblical text has with other texts. As observed by Geoffrey D. Miller, "*In the past thirty years, biblical studies have witnessed a rapidly growing interest in the study of intertextuality, with focus on the connections and relationships that exist between biblical texts*" (Miller 2011:284); (2) Intertextuality is an appropriate approach helping to understand a text as it relates the text under study to other texts. It is a useful tool to read the story of the Bible as a unity. Establishing interrelationships between biblical texts will help to understand the development and the fulfilment of the salvation story; (3) the exilic context of the text of Ezekiel and the promise that God made to David in 2 Samuel 7, give ground for an intertextual approach. The text of Ezekiel 34 addresses the failure of the leaders of the people of Judah and the promise that YHWH makes to his people. The fact that this text has some common aspects, mainly to the Davidic Covenant, directed the choice of intertextuality as the approach for this study.

Miller (Miller 2011:284) points out two basic approaches to intertextuality in biblical studies: synchronic and diachronic approaches. He explains that the "*purely synchronic*" approach is "*indebted to postmodern thought*" and "*focuses solely on the reader and the connections she draws between two or more texts. A text has meaning only when it is read in conjunction with other texts, and it is irrelevant whether these texts were intentionally alluded to by the original author, or even available to the author.*" The synchronic approach is advocated by Evans, Jong, as well as by Leene (he uses both synchronic and diachronic). The focus of the "diachronic approach," on the other hand, resides in "*identifying the specific connections that the author wants the reader to perceive, as well*

[iii] The form 'for ever' will appear as it is in any quotation and biblical verses to respect the authors' choice. I will use 'forever' in my own sentences.

as determining which texts predate the others, and consequently, have influenced the others" (Miller 2011:284). This approach helps to identify the repetition that occurs in a latter text from a former one or "*from a discourse distant in time*" (Tannen 2007:102).

For this study, I will use the diachronic approach as explained above by Miller. In other words, I am not using the term as more commonly employed to refer to diachronic critical approaches such as source and form criticism. Rather, I am exploring how Ezekiel the author made use of prior texts. The connections between these texts will consider lexical features, grammatical structure, echo, and allusion. The dynamic of reading one text in conjunction with another enriches the understanding of the reader. As he reads the texts, he asks questions to find out why, for example, the author of the text of Ezekiel referred to David whose reign took place many years before the ministry of Ezekiel. The questions that he asks lead to a deeper understanding, creating a dialogue between the texts (Tannen 2007:102). This focus does not undermine the possibility that one source might have altered another source (Evans, Talmon, and Sanders 1997:57). For the case of the text of Ezekiel, it means that the author might not have used every word as it is in the text of 2 Samuel 7. In the exegetical process, attention will be paid to historical, grammatical, lexical, and textual criticism. The text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16, which contains the "original" Davidic Covenant, will help shed light on the significance of the covenant and the role it could play in the promise.

3.1 Setting/Context/Background

The primary audience of Ezekiel was the Jewish community in the Babylonian exile. With the exile, the Jewish people experienced many changes in their daily life. Their social, political, and religious life had changed, and they had to face many other challenges. One of the outcomes of the exile is that it added to the trauma of the Judeans who had suffered greatly and devasted (Mein 2001:1). Jill Middlemas shares the same understanding, describing the sixth century as a breaking point in the historical, social, and religious life of Judah (Middlemas 2007:26).[iv]

The devastation of Judah did not affect only their political and religious life, but also their psychological life, which needed healing. Even though Judah ceased to exist as an independent entity, the Jewish people were not exterminated and Judah, as a country, did not cease to exist (Soggin 1999:267). Still, the deportation to Babylon was a disappointing event. The exile was "*one of the great fundamental breaks in the long history of the people, one of the worst catastrophes: not only was it the end of political independence, but the dynasty which divine oracles had once said would last forever had collapsed, and with the underlying ideology of the people of Judah*"[v] Considering the reality of the exile and its impact, John Evans goes further and qualifies the situation of Judah as "*twin traumas of forced deportation and surviving–hardly living – in exile*" (Evans 2006:230). The

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[iv] The fact that the Babylonian exile was a crisis for the Jewish people is supported by other scholars like S. Anthonioz, "Crise et théologie de l'exil chez les trois grands prophètes," in *Actes Du VIIIe Colloque international: La transeuphratène à l'époque perse: Crises et autres difficultés*, Transeuphrtène 1. 1 (Paris: Gabalda, 2010), 21. Daniel L. Smith in his book *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (New York: Meyer Stone Book, 1989), 50-55. Rainer Albertz qualifies the Babylonian exile as political, psychological, and religious tribulations (Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.*, trans. David Green, SBL 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 102).

culmination of the effect of the deportation of the Jewish community to Babylon is the theological aspect of the "twin traumas" that the people greatly suffered from (Joyce 2009:3–4).

3.2 Shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel 34

The prophet's message in Ezekiel 34 is addressed to the רוֹעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (the shepherds of Israel). The text does not specify who those shepherds are. The term is here used metaphorically for leaders. There is not a specific category of leaders for whom this metaphor was used. It appears that "*like the other Ancient Near Eastern peoples, the Israelites employed the shepherd metaphor for their leaders (the judges and the kings)*" (Obinwa 2012:244). The leaders of Israel were not only the judges and the kings, but also the elders. The elders were "*a prominent group carrying out leadership roles at various sub-tribal, tribal, territorial, and settlement levels*" (Reviv 1989:8). While in exile, the Jewish people did not have a ruling king in Babylon. As a deportee, King Jehoachin who was among the exiles, did not have his dignity and power as a king, but was under the control of the Babylonian authorities. In the absence of a king, the elders probably were the direct leaders to the exiles (Shanks 1988:158) .

As mentioned, the text of Ezekiel does not refer to a ruling king during the Babylonian exile. The kings mentioned in the book are from Babylon (17:12; 19:9; 21:24; 21:26; 24:2; 26:7; 29:18, 19; 30:10, 22, 24, 25; 32:11), Tyre (28:12), and Egypt (29:2, 3; 30:21; 31:22; 32:2). Since the text of Ezekiel 34 refers to the exiles in Babylon, the leaders who are summoned, in addition to the former leaders who might have caused the exile, are undoubtedly those who are with the deportees in Babylon. For Block, the prophecy concerns the former leaders constituted with the whole ruling class (Block 1997:282). Duguid shares the same point of view; he mentions Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (Duguid 1999:39). According to Zimmerli, identifying the leaders of Israel in the text should not be of concern (Zimmerli 1983:214). Based on the history of Israel, even though scholars do not specify the identity of the bad shepherds, the bad shepherds are both the former Jewish leaders as well as those who are with the exiles in Babylon.

3.3 YHWH's Promises and Judgment

The text of Ezekiel presents in detail what the leaders did to the people. The mistreatment that the leaders imposed on their subjects attracted God's punishment on them (Ezek 34:1–21). There is progression in YHWH's plan to rescue his people. The removal of the leaders and the judgment of the strong among the people were just part of the salvation process; it was not yet the final stage of the restoration. In the plan of restoration, Israel needed to have a leader to experience safety, a leader who would be able to take care of them and give them complete restoration.

3.4 Ezekiel 34:22–24: One Shepherd and Servant/Davidic Prince

The climax of the oracles is 'one shepherd' in Israel. According to Block, the mention of 'one shepherd' brings a break between human and divine leadership (Block 1997:296). While the idea of divine leadership appears in the oracle, it does not mean that YHWH has nothing to do with a human leader or does not need one of that kind anymore. This is explained by the fact that the removal of depraved leaders leads to the appointment or establishment of a new one by YHWH in the person of David, described as YHWH's servant and prince.

The text does not explicitly provide the reason why God decided to appoint a descendant of David as king rather than someone else. This raises the following questions: did not God find suitable leaders for replacement among the exiles or among the remnant in Jerusalem? Were they all corrupt or under-qualified for leadership? Did he try to shield his people from poor leadership in not appointing one of them? Despite the theocentric aspect of the book of Ezekiel, the text does not suggest that YHWH has the intention to assume himself the leadership of his people alone. It clearly comes out that another human leader in the person of David will replace failed human leaders. The difference between David and the bad leaders resides in the aspect that David is described as servant and prince of YHWH. The reason for a Davidic king is based on God's prior promises to David and does not have anything to do with the character of other individuals in the community.

3.4.1 One Shepherd

Verse 23 declares that YHWH will provide for one shepherd to his people. While the indictment concerns "shepherds" of Israel, the plan of restoration suggests one shepherd will take care of the people. The precision of one shepherd —רֹעֶה אֶחָד—for Israel implies the unification of the Northern and the Southern kingdoms under one leader to suppress the division that ruined Israel. Block asserts that under the promise of one leader "*Yahweh seeks a reversal of the division of Israel into northern and southern kingdoms that occurred after the death of Solomon (1 K. 11–12), as well as an end to the inconsistency of standards by which the last kings of Israel, from Josiah onward, had ruled*" (Block 1997:297). The expression also implies unity among the Jewish people, who, because of bad leadership, were divided among themselves; the strong mistreating the weak (Ezek 34:17–19). Under the direction of YHWH, the רֹעֶה אֶחָד will be able to restore order among the people. As we read Ezekiel 34:23 the understanding is that there will not be a vacuum of leadership once YHWH removes the bad leaders.

3.5 Servant David

The promised ruler is identified as David, a servant of YHWH and prince. Jeremiah 23:5 speaks about YHWH acting for the sake of David—וַהֲקִמֹתִי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צַדִּיק (I will raise up for David a righteous Branch). A quick remembrance about David is that he was the second king of Israel during whose reign the country was united, and that David was declared a man after God's heart (cf. 1 Sam 13:14). The promise that YHWH will raise a righteous Branch for David gives clue that someone will lead the people of God as David did. The action of YHWH includes the complete restoration plan of his people who, after the suffering of exile, will experience unity and peace. It means that the leader that YHWH will raise will revive the Davidic leadership and will be of Davidic descent.

Nevertheless, there has been debate about the person of David in scholarship. Biblical scholars have developed two versions that characterize David: (1) The traditional version which characterizes David as a pious shepherd—a man after God's heart—and (2) the critical version presenting David as a cunning usurper (Bosworth 2006:67–68). In reference to the moral lifestyle of David (murder, adultery) the question is to know if Davidic leadership can be really taken as a prototype of a good leadership.

In the biblical accounts referring to the kings of Judah in the Davidic dynasty, David appears as the "*yardstick*" for all later rulers.[vi] David remained a great figure in the kingship of Israel because he was elected by God. It is right that from his moral behavior he did not deserve the identification of "*a man after God's heart*". The reason for identifying David as a man after God's heart resides in the free election of YHWH which became a basis for the continuity of the Davidic dynasty as "*the exemplum of covenant fidelity*" (Joseph 2015:23). Apart from his immoral behavior, David pleased YHWH in that he did not participate in or condone worshiping idols, a fact that can be considered as a strength in his relationship with God. There is no doubt that "*King David is a very significant figure in the history of Israel. Not only that he is a great ancestor of the royal house in Israel, he is also the most significant symbol of unity for the house of Israel because Israel was a united nation throughout his regime*" (Obinwa 2012:354–55).

The assumption that one has is that if David were still alive, YHWH would bring him back to lead his people. However, "*Although it appears that YHWH has revoked his covenant by allowing the Davidic house to collapse in 586 B.C., Ezekiel hereby announces that the ancient promise has not been forgotten. YHWH will still place his servant David over his people*" (Obinwa 2012:355). The promise is based on the covenant that YHWH made with David concerning an everlasting Davidic dynasty. In addition, due to the theocentric feature of the book of Ezekiel, the emphasis is not on David or his dynasty, but on YHWH who will appoint a leader when time comes, and this, in relation to the covenant he made with David.

The coming leader is identified as the servant of YHWH. What becomes clear in the text of Ezekiel is that the promised leader will not be an independent leader; he will lead under the direction of YHWH (34:24) expressed with וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד (and my servant David), a phrase that appears twice in the book of Ezekiel (34:24 and 37:24) while וְדָוִד עַבְדִּי (and David my servant) is used only once in Ezekiel 37:25. The construction "*my servant David*" also appears in 1 Samuel 25:10; 2 Samuel 2:13, 17, 31; 10:2, 4; 12:18; 18:7, 9; 1 Kings 11:32. In Ezekiel 34:24 the word עַבְדִּי plays an emphatic role. The emphasis is on the position that David occupies as the servant of YHWH more than on the person of David. This construction דָוִד עַבְדִּי (David my servant) occurs as well as in 2 Samuel 3:18; 1 Kings 11:13, 34, 38; 2 Kings 19:34; 20:6; Psalm 89:21; Isaiah 37:35; Jeremiah 33:21, 22, 26.

The designation of David as servant of YHWH gives a clue to the function of the promised leader, whose function is to serve. It is critical here to understand what "*servant of YHWH*" means. Scholars have mainly seen the idea of relationship in the word "*servant*". To Dexter E. Callender, Jr. it is about relationships between a king and his subjects and his officers, people of Israel and God, and it is used as a title for some individuals who had a close relationship with God (Callender 1998:73). To mention just a few, this is the case with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Exod 32:13); Moses (Exod 14:31; Num 12:7; Josh 1:12; Neh 9:14; 10:29); Joshua (Judg 2:8); Job (Job 1:8; 2:3); Jacob (Jer 30:10); Eliakim (Isa 22:20); Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3:26).

[vi]Among the 19 kings after Solomon, Abijam was not faithful as his ancestor David (1 Kgs 15:3) and for the sake of David the dynasty continued (1 Kgs 15:4); Asa pleased God as his ancestor David did (1 Kgsb15:11); Amaziah pleased God, but not fully as David, his ancestor (2 Kgs 14:3); Ahaz did not please God as David did (2 Kgs 16:2); Hezekiah pleased God as David did (2 Kgs 18:3); Josiah, like David, pleased God (2 Kgs 22:2). Among those kings, none of them is directly compared to David because of their wrong deeds. Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:31) and Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 23:37) are compared to their ancestors who did evil (idolatry which was not associated with David).

Benjamin G. III Wright explains that "*in its basic biblical meaning someone is called 'ebed who is in a subservient relationship to another. This relationship does not have to be one of ownership, but can apply to a king and his subjects, a god and those who serve him/her, a social superior and inferior*" (Wright 1998:85–86). According to Eugene Carpenter, being a servant of YHWH is an honour (Carpenter, "עבד," *NIDOTTE* 3:307). The Hebrew construction עַבְדִּי (my servant) is a possessive genitive (Williams 2007:39) or a genitive of inalienable possession focusing on relationship (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:9). The designation of David as servant of YHWH underscores that David belonged to YHWH. Therefore, as a possession of YHWH his concern should be to do what the will of YHWH was.

In relation to the promised leader, the vibrant suggestion is that he will be the agent of YHWH and will have a strong relationship with YHWH. The implication is that he will do what YHWH has planned to do for his people (cf. 34:11–16); he will depend upon YHWH. The agenda of the human leader will not be different from that of YHWH; as a submissive servant, he will not even think about another plan since YHWH would have given him what to do and how to do it. The role of the promised leader will consist in serving the people of God. As a faithful servant, his concern will be the people, but not himself as it was with the cruel leaders. He will make a difference in his leadership in that he will depend on YHWH, leading under the direction of his Master, because he "*is someone who belongs entirely to his master and is committed to obedience, but who, within that, is nevertheless entrusted with great freedom in the fulfilment of his office*" (Zimmerli 1983:219). The relationship with YHWH will bring success and blessing.

3.6 Davidic Prince

The promised leader is also designated as prince. Ezekiel does not use the term מֶלֶךְ (king) for the leaders of Israel and instead prefers נָשִׂיא (prince). Scholars such as Duguid (1994, pp. 10–51), John Douglas Levenson (Levenson 1976:57–69), and Tuell (1992, pp. 103–112) are not unanimous about the title נָשִׂיא (Speiser 1963:111), particularly in reference to Ezekiel 1–39 and 40–48. Duguid asserts that the OT נָשִׂיא refers to the pre-monarchical figure who acted on behalf of his people (Duguid 1994:14). He summarizes the views of scholars regarding the usage of נָשִׂיא in three points: 1) the term expresses the vassal state of the Judean Kings in contrast to the great kings of Babylon and Egypt; 2) it designates apolitical sacral Jewish leaders; 3) it comes from the influence of post-exilic realities (Duguid 1994:31–32) (he does not agree with the third alternative though). He states,

> "*Certainly, the term nāśî' when used to describe the kings of Judah of the immediate past was an accurate representation of their status in the world. Zedekiah was a vassal king under the king of Babylon, dependent upon him for his throne, a statute that is suitably underlined by the term nāśî'. Elsewhere, Ezekiel is eager to emphasize the fate that befalls such a ruler when he rebels against his overlord. The idea of the future ruler as a dependent of Yahweh would also not have been foreign to Ezekiel. It is surely contained in his description of the future ruler as Yahweh's "servant" (Ezek. 34:23f; 37:24f.)*" (Duguid 1994:32).

I agree with Duguid who does not see נָשִׂיא as indicative of a diminished ruler. Instead, he sees נָשִׂיא as a leader who works under the supervision of another powerful leader. Unlike kings

of Judah who were subjected to those of Babylon and Egypt, the future נָשִׂיא will be a dependent of YHWH. Levenson indicates that the designation of נָשִׂיא does not mean a low estimation of human kingship (Levenson 1976:67). The term נָשִׂיא, associated with David, depicts the kind of future leader who will be dependent on YHWH. In all, YHWH is the patron of his people, and David is his deputy and representative (Tooman and Lyons 2010:236).

As a dependent of YHWH, the leader is expected to be obedient to YHWH and fair to his subjects. David becoming the deputy of YHWH means that YHWH is the king, which always was the case in the OT. There are many passages in the OT that assert the kingship of YHWH. Marc Zvi Brettler recognizes that "*the substantive* מלך, '*king' is used of God forty-seven times in the Bible.*" (Brettler 1989:31). Some of the passages that Brettler mentions are Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; 1 Samuel 12:12; Isaiah 6:5; 19:4; 33:17 22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jeremiah 8:19; 10:7, 10; 46:18; 48:15; 51:57; Micah 2:13; Zephaniah 1:5; 3:15; Zechariah 14:9, 16, 17; Malachi 1:14; Psalm 5:3; 10:16; 20:10; 24:7 (Brettler 1989:172). However, YHWH being king of Israel did not stop him from appointing a human king to rule his people. Appointing David as king does not mean that YHWH ceased to be in control of the nation. The appointed king will forever be accountable to YHWH.

In addition, the fact that the future leader will be דָּוִד נָשִׂיא (*nāśî'* David) recalls the reign of David. The strength of this statement could serve to raise hope in the people, despite the situation in which they were. Appointing a new David served to instill hope into the exiles (Brettler 1989:236–37).

YHWH's promises do not equate with a new David but equate with a new hope in relation to the exilic experience. It may seem that the promise is indicative of a shift from human leadership to the divine. But in reality, YHWH is not taking out the leadership from the human. If this were the case, he would not promise a ruler in the person of David. Designating David as the future leader proves that YHWH can entrust another person to lead his people.

The initiative to restore Israel comes from him; David serves as an important figure in the plan of restoration. Kenneth E. Pomykala maintains, "*Ezekiel's vision of an ideal future for Israel … emphasis is on the Lord's relationship with his people and the presence of his sanctuary among them. To be sure, within this theocratic ideal the new David is given a role, but any specification of his activity is absent*" (Pomykala 1995:29). If there is no specification of the activity of the נָשִׂיא, it is because he is just a representative of YHWH; he is the symbol of the presence of YHWH in the midst of his people (Satterthwaite et al. 1995:177). According to Obinwa, that "*David will be "prince in their midst" (נשׂיא בתוכם) and not "prince over them" indicates that this shepherd-prince will not only feed the sheep (v 23), but that he will also identify himself with the people. Therefore, despite his authority as the prince and the shepherd, he is going to act as primus inter pares rather than as a despot*" (Obinwa 2012:358).[vii] It means that the function of David as prince will be to lead and to serve the people among whom he will be. What will differentiate him from others, his equals, resides in his function as prince.

Acting as YHWH's deputy and under his direction does not diminish David or make him a symbolic leader. In fact, he is the divine agent through whom YHWH will fulfill his plan for

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[vii] *primus inter pares* means 'first among equals'.

his people. Under the direction of YHWH, there is certainty that the future leader will succeed in the task given to him and will fulfill his function as expected by God.

The function of a king in ancient Israel resided in being a leader in war, being responsible for administration, and in maintaining relation with Yahweh as national God (A. R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship", in (Hooke 1958:205–7). Besides his military and political role, the last aspect of the function of a king is indicative that he was in charge of religious affairs in that his relationship with God would have an impact on the spiritual behavior and life of the people. Considering this threefold function, "*the king is ipso facto a savior. It is a common idea among primitive peoples that the king embodies the good estate of his subjects: the country's prosperity depends on him, and he ensures the welfare of his people*" (Vaux 1961:110). K. W. Whitelam adds, "*it is made explicitly clear that society cannot function, or even continue to exist, without the rule of the king. The king's role in the protection of society as warrior, the guarantor of justice as judge and the right ordering of worship as priest are the fundamental roles which cover all aspects of the well-being of society*" (Clements 1995:130).

Focusing on the welfare of the people points to the function of the king in executing justice and righteousness. In 1 Kings 3:16–28 we have the judicial example of the function of the king. To seek a solution for their conflict, the two women went to King Solomon. Executing justice as the main function of the king appears in the prayer of (cf. 1 Kgs 3:7–9). The text of Deuteronomy 17 serves as a code of conduct for a king. As he is expected to practice justice, he should also be morally upright (cf. Deut 17:16–18).

It is established that "*Judging his subjects was an important function of the king, and "righteousness" in executing this responsibility was a desideratum often mentioned*" (Isa 9:6 [Engl. 7]; Ps 72:1-2; Prov 29:14) (Ramsey 1977:48). To summarize, the function of the king is threefold: leader in war, administration of justice, and religious (Hooke 1958:205–7). Hence, to achieve this task, the relationship between the king and God was crucial. The indicted leaders failed because they did not develop their relationship with YHWH. Now that God promises another ruler for his people, the expectation is that he reverses what the previous leaders did not do and what they did wrong. However, for the promised ruler to succeed, he "*must be the faithful steward of the true king of Israel and, therefore, must be fully versed in Yahweh's expectations (the law)*" (Richter 2008:195).

The fact that YHWH entrusted some people to rule over the rest encompasses the idea of dependence and accountability to YHWH, a fact that was well known. Dale Launderville explains that:

"*The traditional pattern for legitimating royal authority promoted a dynamic of accountability: the heavenly king appointed the earthly king to shepherd his people. The metaphor of the shepherd would have communicated clearly to an agricultural people the responsibility that the king had towards the community. The sheep belonged to the divine ruler; the king was the earthly caretaker. If the king forgot the divine ownership of the sheep, he would most likely have fleeced them or used them for his own purposes.*" (Launderville 2003:43).

This citation suggests one of the reasons why the former leaders failed and the secret for the success of the promised leader. It is clear that, as a caretaker, a leader should be more

concerned about the interests of the people than his selfish interests. The former leaders failed because they did not recognize who was the owner of the people. Hence, because they forgot the divine ownership of the people, they misled and mistreated the people, a fact that contributed to their removal.

The promise of God starts with what he will do to his people and climaxes with the appointment of a human leader. There is no doubt concerning God's ability to accomplish what he has promised. However, the pertinent question that comes to mind is why a human leader? Does God need someone to help him to fulfill what he has promised? Is it impossible for the promises made by YHWH to be fulfilled without the involvement of a human leader? I suggest three aspects to consider in the attempt to answer to these questions. First, in reference to the oracle in the text of Ezekiel, the cruel leaders were human. The theory here is that what human leaders failed to do can be rectified by a human leader. In addition, it is through a human leader that God will fulfill his promise. As an example, in Genesis 12:2, God promised to bless nations through Abram. The fall that destroyed the relationship with God was through a human (Gen 3), and, in the same way, salvation was through a human (Rom 5:12–21). Second, by appointing a human leader, YHWH shows that a person can do what some failed to do as long as he is under God's direction. The appointment also points out that failure is not always the portion of humans. This raises hope that it is possible to get good leadership from a human being. Third, the appointment of a human leader is suggestive of God's faithfulness to work with him. It reminds us about the creation of man in the image of God and the mandate given to him to rule over the rest of the creation (cf. Gen 2:26–31). Above all, the promise of a future ruler is connected to the covenant that God made with King David as found in 2 Samuel 7.

3.7 Ezekiel 34:25–31: Covenant of Peace

The statement וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם (And I will make a covenant of peace with them) is a direct announcement from YHWH. The assertion raises a number of questions: Was YHWH in conflict with his people? Did enmity exist between YHWH and Israel? If antagonism did not exist between YHWH and his people, why did he promise a covenant of peace with them? Referring to the ANE and the older biblical motif of the covenant of peace, the function of this covenant was "*to signify a cessation of hostility toward humankind by the gods after the former revolted against the gods at creation*" (Batto 1987:187).

The understanding is that the covenant of peace was needed where there was a conflict and that a supreme being had to intervene to end the conflict. For the case of the exiles, it is clear that the disobedience of the leaders of Judah—and the people at large—created a disharmony between them and YHWH. The way to reestablish harmony, as Batto indicates, was to have a covenant of peace. For a further understanding, a definition of בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם (covenant of peace) is necessary.[viii]

The expression בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם occurs twice in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 34:25 and 37:26).[ix] This is a unilateral and unconditional covenant initiated by YHWH where "*God alone grants the covenant and that covenant is essentially his grace*" (McCarthy 1972:3). One should look for the role of Judah in the covenant. Instead of two active partners in the covenant, we have a unilateral

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[viii] I limit the scope of this study to the verses under consideration and not to the whole OT.

[ix] This phrase appears also in Isa 54:10— וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי (my covenant of peace).

commitment of YHWH. A similar covenant also appears in Ezekiel 16:60 where it reads וַהֲקִמוֹתִי לָךְ בְּרִית עוֹלָם (And I will establish an everlasting covenant). In his covenant with Jerusalem, the partner in covenant, the focus is on YHWH as the covenant initiator. The outcomes of the presence of YHWH in the covenant underline that "*When Yahweh is the covenant partner, this well-being will extend over the whole sphere of life of the nation and will bring about peace there*" (Zimmerli 1983:220). This implies the sufficiency of YHWH for Israel's welfare. The guarantee of the covenant resides in the fact that the Jewish people will live in "*their own land*" (Ezek 34:26). It is worth mentioning that the two places this phrase is used in Ezekiel are also the two places David is mentioned. This is not a mere coincidence. Instead, it denotes that there is a strong link between the covenant of peace and a Davidic ruler. Thus, the Davidic ruler is the agent through whom the בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם will be fulfilled.

The promise of God to his people is בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם which "*is a promise of security and prosperity or of friendship and harmony*" (Greenberg 1997:702) as observed in Ezekiel 34:26–30. In the Golden Age, Israel will experience prosperity, friendship and harmony with God because of the covenant of peace. This covenant focuses on the security of Israel. Block points out that "*the description of the effects of Yahweh's covenant of peace is intentionally repetitious. Security is purposely highlighted as the central issue by the key word lābeṭaḥ, "in safety, securely" (vv. 25c, 27c, 28c), an ambiguous expression that may denote both freedom from fear and casual smugness*" (Block 1997:305).

The Hebrew word בֶּטַח refers to the fact that YHWH will deliver his people and will make them stay securely (Harris, Archer, and Waltke, "בֶּטַח," *TWOT*, p. 234). The Jewish people will live in a restored, pacified, and secured land. The impact of this covenant of peace will be known; it will be "*an everlasting covenant*" which will enable people to experience blessing and stability (vv. 26–29).

One key benefit of the covenant results in the blessings of the Jewish people who will experience blessing in the production of their restored land (Ezek 34:26–29). Thus, they will have their own land, and will no longer be destitute, displaced or homesick. The restored land will be without any hostility, represented by the figure of the wild animal (Cook and Patton 2004:93). The blessing of the land in fruit production as well as the growth of its cities stands for the welfare of the land (Cook and Patton 2004:93).

The covenant of peace with Israel resides in God's plan of restoration. In Ezekiel 34, unlike in Isaiah 54, there is no mention of God's anger towards his people. On the one hand, the exile itself, with all its outcomes, was the expression of God's anger and on the other hand, YHWH's promise of a covenant of peace represents the expression of his pure grace and love for his people. The welfare gained from the covenant will lead to further glorification of God and knowledge of two things: (1) וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה (They will know that I am YHWH, 34:27) and (2) וְיָדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אִתָּם וְהֵמָּה עַמִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, 34:30). The phrase וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה occurs 72 times in Ezekiel (Evans 2006:17) and once in Exodus (29:46). The number of occurrences of this phrase suggests that the knowledge of YHWH is a significant focus in the book of Ezekiel. The pinnacle of the restoration plan propels Israel to know YHWH and to realize his presence in their midst. The Hebrew root for the word "know" is ידע. In this text, it does not concern a general knowledge about God. Instead, its objective is the honour, the glory, and the recognition of the Lord. This is a recognition formula which,

"… is usually preceded by a statement about what God has done or will do … often with a following echo … These actions, whether in judgment … or salvation …, confirm the identity of God; God thereby demonstrates before Israel and the nations that God is God and what kind of God he is. This is for the purpose of recognition by those who observe or participate in the event" (Terrence E. Fretheim, "ידע," *NIDOTTE* 2:409-14).

The covenant of peace that God will make with his people will facilitate a better perspective of history, God's leadership, direction, and grace amongst the people. The Jewish people will understand that the promised restoration will be the result of God's grace and not their merit.

Essentially, the covenant of peace will give a new perspective and hope to the people, which will help the deportees to confront the realities of their exilic life with courage. The relationship that exists between them and God depends on the declaration וְאַתֵּן צֹאנִי צֹאן מַרְעִיתִי אָדָם אַתֶּם אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God) that appears in v. 31. Ezekiel 34:25-30 displays the complete description of the covenant of peace; it is a reversal of the judgment oracles that appear in the first part of the book (Batto 1987:188–89).

The closing statement in Ezekiel 34:31 (cf. 37:27) is the signature of the oracle. It reveals the identity of the Jewish people. Despite the experience of the exile, they belong to God. Thus, YHWH's actions towards Israel find basis in the existing relationship with his people. Unlike the promise of hope for a brilliant future, the relationship is present. Because of that relationship, there is no doubt in trusting in the fulfillment of YHWH's promise. The Lord's declaration is affirmative, for "the signatory formula guarantees the veracity of the divine word" (Block 1997:308). The signatory formula נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (The Lord Yahweh declares) serves as an indicator to the healing and subsequent positive change of God's people.

4. David in the Vision of the Covenant of Peace

The discussion in the preceding section leads us to consider how David fits into this larger vision of the covenant of peace. In the plan of restoration for the Judeans as it appears in Ezekiel 34:25–30, David is the main human player. This is supported by the arrangement in the text. It is after the appointment of David as the future leader (Ezek 34:23–24) that the promise of the covenant of peace is mentioned. In addition, reading the text of Ezekiel 34 clearly indicates that peace for the people of YHWH was his utmost desire. After going through mistreatment from the bad leaders, what people needed was a real peace. To affirm the divine intention and the durability of the state of peace, YHWH promises to make a covenant of peace with his people under the leadership of the promised ruler, David.

Considering that in the book of Ezekiel בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם is connected to David (cf. Ezek 34:25 and 37:26), this brings to mind the Davidic Covenant. The comprehension is that peace is one of the crucial components in the fulfilment of the covenant. Hence, the implication is that the Davidic covenant is inclusive, serving for the complete restoration of the Jewish people.

4.1 Affinities

The existence of affinities among biblical texts is a well-established fact in scholarship. While there are similarities that may suggest dependence, each text has its focus and always has its own message. Therefore, relations between biblical texts appeal to a thoughtful study, when necessary such as "*the result is a sort of resonant harmony, the conclusion being that although the work in question was influenced by earlier writings, that influence generated new ideas and interpretations*" (Kasher 2009:556).

The use of other biblical and extrabiblical texts in the book of Ezekiel is not a point of discussion. Scholars have established the presence of materials from other texts in the text of Ezekiel. Anja Klein, referring to Wellhausen, affirms, "*the Book of Ezekiel's apparent knowledge of prophetic traditions has long attracted attention. It was Julius Wellhausen who came to the conclusion that the prophet of the book had to be seen as an epigone, who only reflected on the words of his venerable predecessors*" (Klein 2010:572). Nevertheless, the fact that the text of Ezekiel has elements from other sources does not make it completely a compilation of what has been written somewhere else. Dependence does not imply lack of originality. Hence, by recognizing that Ezekiel depends, at some point, on other earlier texts, the possibility that 2 Samuel 7 influenced its chapters 34 is enhanced.

Considering that the book of Ezekiel contains material from other sources does not exclude its originality. It is true that the presence of some deuteronomistic elements in the book of Ezekiel is undeniable (Joyce 2009:10). Joyce refers to S. Herman who "*noted the Deuteronomistic colouring of chs. 34–37 in particular, pointing, for example, to the recurrent formula, "You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (36:28; 37:27; cf. 34:30–31) and also to the use of the word lēḇ ("heart") in 36:26*" (Joyce 2009:10).

4.2 Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34:23–31

When it comes to look at the Davidic Covenant, Ezekiel employs certain words, expressions, phrases, and ideas found in 2 Samuel 7:1–16. Specifically, at some extend, Ezekiel relies on Leviticus. One of the examples is from Ezekiel 34:25–28 where Ezekiel uses the covenant language of Leviticus 26 and omits the covenant punishments (Lev 26:14–39). Being a former member of the priestly class explains Ezekiel's familiarity with the Priestly literature and its terminology (cf. Deut 1–4) (Tooman and Lyons 2010:2). From this perspective, the reader could expect the presence of David in Ezekiel as having a background in Leviticus. Why then does Ezekiel rely on 2 Samuel 7:1–16 instead of Leviticus 26? The book of Leviticus does not deal with kings or kingship in Israel as the books of Samuel do. Since Leviticus does not mention David, it is appropriate that Ezekiel does not use Leviticus for the presence of David in this text. Hence, the text of 2 Samuel 7 fits well for this study. Before focusing on specific connections, there is need to look at some affinities between the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34. Here, I will consider the Hebrew words that appear both in 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and in Ezekiel 34.[x]

Block gives a hint about the presence of material from 2 Samuel 7 (Tooman and Lyons 2010:235) in Ezekiel 34, but does not give detail on how Ezekiel 34 may have depended on 2 Samuel 7. There are three important areas in which the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that

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[x] I will not refer to common words, but to those that are identical and connected in one way or another (form, meaning, and playing the same function).

of Ezekiel 34 and 37 needs to be considered: (1) the literary influence, (2) the theological influence, and (3) the conceptual influence.

4.3 Literary Influence

In 2 Samuel 7:4 and Ezekiel 34:1 it is the word of YHWH—דְּבַר־יְהֹוָה— that came to Samuel and Ezekiel. The same verb וַיְהִי (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהֹוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר׃ **and** וַיְהִי בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהֹוָה אֶל־נָתָן לֵאמֹר׃) is used in the two sentences and both Nathan and Ezekiel are messengers of YHWH. It is important to note that these phrases—וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהֹוָה אֵל לֵאמֹר׃ —are very common, and thus this is not to suggest that in this instance Ezekiel depends on Samuel, but this commonality establishes that the general context for both texts is similar.

In the two texts the word עַבְדִּי is used to portray דָוִד (2 Sam 7:5; Ezek 34:23, 24). The word יִשְׂרָאֵל appears in 2 Samuel 7:6,7, 8, 11, 24, 26, 27 to indicate the people of Israel, the leaders of Israel, and the God of Israel and in Ezekiel it is used to describe the shepherds of Israel, its mountains, and its people (Ezek 34:2, 13, 14, 30). In both texts the word עַמִּי is used for Israel as the people of YHWH (2 Sam 7:7; Ezek 34:30). Hence, it is clear that the subject matter is the same in both texts.

The word בֵּית, which is a critical element of consideration in the Davidic Covenant, occurs in the two texts (cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 7, 11, 13, 19, 27, 29; Ezek 34:30). In the text of Samuel, it is about the house that David wanted to build for YHWH—בֵּית אֲרָזִים —and the house that YHWH will build for David—כִּי־בַיִת יַעֲשֶׂה־לְּךָ יְהֹוָה. In the text of Ezekiel it refers to the people of Israel which is 'YHWH's people' and also 'the house of Israel'—עַמִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל . In the two texts, בֵּית conveys different meaning. While the house that YHWH will build for David in the text of Samuel concerns dynasty and kingship, the house of Israel refers to the people of Israel.

The pronoun אֲנִי is used in 2 Samuel 7:8, 14 for YHWH. It is in the same way used for YHWH in Ezekiel 34:8, 11, 15, 20, 24, 27, 30, and 31. In the two texts, the pronoun is used for YHWH: It is YHWH who took David from shepherding the flock and who will be the father to David's descendent. In the text of Ezekiel the pronoun plays an emphatic role (cf. Ezek 34:11, 15, 20—Translated "I myself"). The emphasis is on YHWH who will execute the action of searching for his sheep (v. 11), tending his sheep (v. 15), and judging among the sheep (20). Interestingly, the beneficiaries of the actions of YHWH in Ezekiel 34, emphasized or not by אֲנִי, are the people, and not an individual as it is in 2 Samuel 7:8, 14. This underlines the focus of the text on the restoration plan that YHWH has for his people.

4.4 2 Samuel 7:7-8 and Ezekiel 34:23

2 Sam 7:7-8	Ezek 34:23
בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲדָבָר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶת־אַחַד שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לִרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בֵּית אֲרָזִים׃ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"	וַהֲקִמֹתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעֶה אֶחָד וְרָעָה אֶתְהֶן אֵת עַבְדִּי דָוִיד הוּא יִרְעֶה אֹתָם וְהוּא־יִהְיֶה לָהֶן לְרֹעֶה׃ I will place over them one **shepherd**, my **servant David**, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.
וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי לְדָוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהֹוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲנִי לְקַחְתִּיךָ מִן־הַנָּוֶה מֵאַחַר הַצֹּאן לִהְיוֹת נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	

| Now then, tell my **servant David**, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the **pasture**, from **tending the flock**, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel | |

In 2 Samuel 7:7, 8 and Ezekiel 34:23 we find words that relate to David's function before becoming king and his function in connection to the covenant that God made with him. The Qal infinitive construct לִרְעוֹת from the root רעה (to shepherd) is used metaphorically for the activity of those YHWH chose to lead his people. Throughout Ezekiel 34 the root is used with the same meaning. In Ezekiel 34:23 the root occurs four times: רֹעֶה ,וְרָעָה ,יִרְעֶה, and לִרְעֹה. The first and the fourth (with prefix לְ) are in Qal participle masculine singular and describe David. The second and the third forms are respectively in Qal perfect (with *waw* consecutive) and imperfect indicating the activity that David will do as a shepherd. Both in 2 Samuel 7:7 and Ezekiel 34:23, the root רעה is used metaphorically and refers to the activity of leaders (in 2 Samuel) and specifically of David (in Ezekiel). Contrary to the text of 2 Samuel, in the text of Ezekiel the occurrences of the root רעה in just one verse emphasize the person of David and his function as ruler.

In connection to the function of leaders as shepherds, in 7:8 the text reminds us about the setting from which David was brought to the throne. In his normal activity as shepherd—not metaphorically—YHWH took David מִן־הַנָּוֶה (from the pasture). The word נָוֶה, "abode of shepherd, or flocks" (BDB, "נָוֶה," 627) appears twice in Ezekiel 34:14 in the phrases נְוֵהֶם שָׁם (their grazing or pasturing place) and בְּנָוֶה טּוֹב (good pasture). In the two texts, the word is not connected to David or YHWH, but to the place where the action of shepherding took place and will happen.

Another shared word is הַצֹּאן. In 2 Samuel 7:8 it is used literally and in Ezekiel 34:2, 3 it has a metaphorical use, designating the people of Israel (in 2 Samuel 24:17 it applies metaphorically for the people of Israel as it is in Ezekiel). The discussion around the word "shepherd" and words related to the activities of a shepherd in the two texts indicates that there is commonality between the text of 2 Samuel 7 and that of Ezekiel 34. It is not just about using the same words, but also the literary context in which those words are used.

One of the components of the divine promise to David was to make his name great on the earth (2 Sam 7:9). The word בָּאָרֶץ as part of the promise suggests God's blessing to his servant David. YHWH making someone's name great is certainly a blessing. The great name that David will get will be the same as that of the greatest men in the world. It is a divine blessing in the human world. The same word בָּאָרֶץ in Ezekiel 34:29 indicates the blessing of YHWH to his people as he promises that they will never experience famine in the land. Hence, בָּאָרֶץ serves for the location where the people of Israel will experience their blessings.

4.4 Theological Influence

The striking theological element in 2 Samuel 7 is its theocentric concentration. From verse 1 to verse 16 of 2 Samuel 7, the narrative is in the first person. Twice the emphatic pronoun אֲנִי (vv. 8 and 14) is used in 2 Samuel 7 in relation to what YHWH did and what he will do. In the narrative, Nathan speaks from YHWH to David. While David seems to be in the center of the message, in reality it is all about YHWH. In his explanation of the theology in the books of Samuel, B. T. Arnold correctly indicates, "*the books of Samuel address questions of the nature and purpose of Israel's*

monarchy, and they offer the reader explanations of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh as king. By presenting the first human kings, these books serve a programmatic function of Israel's future perceptions of monarchs, as well as for individuals in God's kingdom" (Arnold and Williamson 2005:872).

In regard to the connection between the texts of Samuel and Ezekiel, as in 2 Samuel 7, in Ezekiel 34 the focus is also on YHWH. A remarkable feature in the two texts is the origin of the message that is delivered. In 2 Samuel 7:8 the task of Nathan is to communicate to David what YHWH says: וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי לְדָוִד (Now then, tell my servant David). The same formulation appears in Ezekiel 34:24 where Ezekiel receives the message from YHWH: אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי (I the LORD have spoken). The injunction given to Nathan and the signatory formulae in Ezekiel serve as a strong indication to affirm the theocentric aspect of the two chapters. In addition, in the text of 2 Samuel 7, the emphatic first person pronoun אֲנִי plays the same role. The same pronoun occurs in Ezekiel 34:11, 15, 20, 24, 27, 30, and 31. Once again, it is God who declares, promises, and who will make things to happen.

Reading the text of Samuel, the climax of YHWH's message is what we know as the Davidic Covenant. The focal element in the covenant is the building of a house for YHWH by David's descendants and the perpetuity of David's throne in Israel. The covenant, with its two main components—David's offspring building the temple and establishment of a permanent dynasty—is critical to the programmatic plan mentioned above (Arnold and Williamson 2005:274).

While David is mentioned as the future ruler in the text of Ezekiel, the restoration that the Jewish people will experience will be the doing of YHWH and not David. This is a very strong theological link to the Davidic Covenant in the text of 2 Samuel 7 which places YHWH in the front line and not David.

Promising a future ruler referred to as David, the servant of YHWH, is in line with the Davidic Covenant that appears in 2 Samuel 7. Despite the fact that the name דָּוִד is used only twice in the book of Ezekiel (34:24; 37:24), the promise in Ezekiel 34:24 is a clear reflection of the covenant that YHWH made with David in 2 Samuel 7:12–16. The incoming leader portrays the faithfulness of YHWH who made an everlasting covenant with David. As indicated by Block, "*YHWH will restore the dynasty of his servant David*" (Block 2013:38). A reader of Ezek 34:24 can easily connect the promise to the Davidic Covenant—assuming that he is a good reader of the Bible. To refer to the coming ruler as David in the Ezekelian text is an indication of the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34. The dependence of Ezekiel 34 on 2 Samuel 7 is then theologically understandable since "*there is no reason to believe that Ezekiel himself would have been immune to the influence of deuteronomistic theology and style either in his native Jerusalem or in Babylonian exile*" (Joyce 2009:10).

Reflecting on David as the future ruler, a critical question comes to mind: If there were no influence from at least the concept of the Davidic Covenant, why would Ezekiel anticipate a future "David"? Why would Ezekiel not forestall a future great king or why should not he expect Saul, the first king of Israel or a future Solomon or Hezekiah? This question is important since David was not the unique king or the only important figure in the history of the Judeans. In light of the covenant, there are good reasons why David was referred to as the future ruler and not as any other Judean king.

Firstly, it concerns the relationship between YHWH and David. God describes David as "*a man after his own heart*" (1 Sam 13:14). Not one of the other Judean kings was identified in these specific terms. This declaration displays the relationship that David had with YHWH—a declaration that was fully realized after Saul was rejected as King of Israel, and David was chosen as King in his place (cf. 1 Sam 16). Secondly, David was anointed by Samuel to become king of Israel—as was Saul. Dumbrell comments that

> "*Both Saul and David are anointed by Samuel. In each case the act is private, not public, and performed by the prophet who has been directly commissioned for this service. The private nature of the act seems to indicate that it has something to say to both David and Saul, rather that to Israel as a whole. One therefore imagines that anointing has served to give an assurance of the election which has already been conferred. It does not therefore seem to establish a relationship between king and people, but to confirm a relationship, which already exists by election, between king and God*" (Dumbrell 1984:139).

Even though Samuel also anointed Saul, he was no longer suitable to lead in a restored nation because God rejected him. The other kings who ruled over Judah did not come to power in the same way as David did. Samuel anointed David under YHWH's direction. Those who came after him, including Solomon, were not. They inherited the throne because of David. So, it was right for Ezekiel to anticipate a future "David".

4.5 Conceptual Influence

There are ideas or concepts from 2 Samuel 7 that occur in Ezekiel 34 as well. While in 2 Samuel 7 the indication that YHWH made a covenant with David resides in what David's descendants will do and become, in Ezekiel 34 it is summarized in mentioning the future ruler, what he will do, and what the people will experience. Under this section, I will look at the concepts of covenant, territory, rest and peace, leadership, and possession.

4.5.1 The Concept of Covenant

The word בְּרִית does not appear in 2 Samuel 7. The promises made to David in this text are known as YHWH's covenant to his servant—Davidic Covenant. Later in the book, David refers to the promise as an "*everlasting covenant*" (2 Sam 23:5). The promise is also identified as 'covenant' in the OT (cf. 2 Chron 7:17–18; Psa 89:3–4, 28–29). While the term בְּרִית does not occur in 2 Samuel 7, it is obvious that the concept of covenant is present in the text. This concept also appears in the text of Ezekiel 34. The divine promise to the people placing David as the future ruler includes an important element where YHWH will make a covenant of peace with them (Ezek 34:25). The text then gives details of the outcome of such a covenant (Ezek 34:26–31). A close reading of the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and that of Ezekiel 34 shows that the promises that YHWH made are indeed a covenant and that the outcomes of the covenant are the same. In sum, because of YHWH's covenant with David, his people will experience blessings.

In 2 Samuel 7, the blessing of the covenant consists in YHWH giving a permanent place, freedom, and peace to his people (2 Sam 7:10). The same blessings appear in Ezekiel 34:26–31 once YHWH will make the covenant of peace with his people.

4.5.2 The Concept of Territory

Ezekiel 34:25–29 encompasses the results of the covenant that YHWH made with David. The outcomes are the following: sustainability, because the people will have a place to live; stability — nationhood —no more oppression—rest. YHWH will give a place for his people. The Hebrew word מָקוֹם (v. 10) used here refers to the nation that YHWH will give to the Jewish people. It is a place that will be enough to contain them, a country in which they will be stable. Their stability in the country, which is expressed by the root נטע (to plant), suggests that the people will not be removed from the country that YHWH will give them; they will have their root in their country; they will have a home. The stability that YHWH will give to his people will bring to an end any kind of trouble. A complete absence of oppression from the enemies of YHWH's people will characterize their stability. The text confirms that the action of YHWH under the covenant will be completely different from what he has done under other leaders. As a result, the people will experience rest.

The study of Ezekiel 34:25–29 reveals that there are connections with 2 Samuel 7:10–11 when it comes to territory. In their territory, the Judeans will experience a true peace. The metaphorical figure of ridding the land of savage beasts describes the situation: the people will have safety. It means that there will be no one to harm the people (34:25). It is in their territory that YHWH (34:26) will bless them. Ezekiel 34:28 expresses the same idea with 2 Samuel 7:11. The rest promised in the text of Samuel is rendered by the fact that the people will no longer be disturbed by the nations. It suggests that those who were the enemies of the Jewish people will not subject them anymore. They will be out of danger (cf. wild animals). As a result, the people will live in safety and will not be afraid. What appears in the text of Ezekiel is exactly what a nation experiences when it has no enemies; and where there are no enemies, there is rest and peace.

In summary, it is in their territory that the people will live securely (v. 25); they will receive their blessings: the rain will fall at the right time (v. 26); the trees will yield their fruits (v. 27); the land will yield its crop (v. 27); YHWH will break the bars of their yoke—no more oppression (v. 27); there will be safety in the land (v. 28).

4.5.3 The Concept of Rest and Peace

The concept of rest appears in 2 Samuel 7:1, 11. It is after David obtained rest from all his enemies that he decided to build a house for YHWH. One can see a connection between אֹיְבָיו (his enemies) and וְחַיַּת הָאָרֶץ(wild animals) in Ezekiel 34:28. These two words both belong to the category of destroyers. In the context of 2 Samuel 7:1, the rest that David experienced "*is security from his enemies and peace from war*" (Anderson 1989:116). This concept of security, rest, and peace occurs as well as in Ezekiel 34:25, 28. The security and the peace that the Jewish people will experience is described in Ezekiel 34:11–16 and constitutes a reflection of the promise in the Davidic Covenant.

In 2 Samuel 7, peace is a key theme both in terms of what God has already done for David (2 Sam 7:1) and what he will do for all the people (2 Sam 7:11). It also appears that "*peace*" is the one qualifier for the covenant in Ezekiel 34:25, thus arguably the most important concept tied to the whole covenant. The understanding of YHWH's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 suggests that YHWH was concerned with peace for his people. It is because of the covenant that the nation

will experience a true peace. It is because of the covenant that YHWH will free the nation of its enemies. When the text of Ezekiel states that YHWH will make "*a covenant of peace*" it does not mean that YHWH was in conflict with his people. The "*covenant of peace*" in Ezekiel 34:25, as well as in Isaiah 54:7–10, concerns the ending of divine wrath towards the people of God who were abandoned by YHWH (Block 1997:302). The understanding is that YHWH abandoned his people for some time and gave them over into the hand of bad leadership. By promising a "*covenant of peace*", he would bring that period of suffering and mistreatment to an end and give his people complete peace. Block indicates that "*the description offers one of the fullest explications of the Hebrew notion of šālôm. The term obviously signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, humans at peace with their environment and with God*" (Block 1997:303). The notion of a complete peace is developed in the rest of the section (34:25–31).

However, the covenant is called a "*covenant of peace*" precisely because it recaptures what God promised to David in 2 Samuel 7. The text of Ezekiel explains what will happen to the people under the new leadership. This is also the case for the Sinai covenant, but given the David connection I argue that the "*covenant of peace*" in Ezekiel 34:25 specifically recalls the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7.

The notion of peace also occurs in 2 Samuel 7:10. The people of Israel will no longer be disturbed—וְלֹא יִרְגַּז (2 Sam 7:10). The idea in the text of Ezekiel is almost the same as that in the text of Samuel. In Ezekiel 34:22, 28 they will not be plundered—וְלֹא־תִהְיֶינָה עוֹד לָבַז. In Ezekiel 34:29, the Jewish people will not experience famine in the land—וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ עוֹד אֲסֻפֵי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ. A close look at the different verbs used with לֹא in the texts of Samuel and Ezekiel as shown above supports the idea that the people of Israel will not experience that continuous—עוֹד—suffering they were exposed to.

4.5.4 Concept of Leadership

Even though in the text of Samuel as well as in the text of Ezekiel, there is not a Hebrew word for leadership, the notion of leadership is well identified and connected in the two texts. In the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11 and 12 the aspect of leadership is expressed in appointment and succession. YHWH starts by reminding David that he has been in charge of appointing leaders for Israel (2 Sam 7:11) and promises to give a dynasty—succession—for David (2 Sam 7:12). The effect of appointment and succession appearing in 2 Samuel 7 is seen in Ezekiel 34. The reading of this text indicates that it is YHWH who appointed shepherds over his people, Israel. Since he appointed them, he also has the prerogative to dismiss them. A close reading suggests that the idea of succession in Ezekiel is presented by that of replacement. Another leader in the person of David (Ezek 34:23–24) will replace the failed leadership.

Considering the larger context of the two texts, in 2 Samuel 7 David is replacing Saul, while in Ezekiel 34 the future David replaces the bad shepherds. Since David is replacing Saul, this is the main reason why the covenant is not with Saul, but with David. In the same way, the future ruler is not from the corrupt leadership, but it is David, the servant of YHWH. The idea of leadership comes from YHWH's declaration in 2 Samuel 7:11 stating וּלְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי שֹׁפְטִים עַל־ עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל (and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel). The Hebrew verb for the English version "*appointed*" comes from the root צָוָה which, used in Piel,

means to "*give charge over, appoint*" BDB, "צָוָה," 845). The idea of appointing a leader is expressed in Ezekiel 34:23 as וַהֲקִמֹתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעֶה אֶחָד (I will place over them one shepherd).

4.5.5 The Concept of Possession

In 2 Samuel 7:14 YHWH declares that he will be a father to the offspring of David who will build him a house. There is a relationship of possession here in that the offspring belongs to YHWH. In the same way, in Ezekiel 34:30–31 YHWH declares that the Jewish people will come to know that YHWH is their God—God that belongs to them—and the people are the possession of God—וְהֵמָּה עַמִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. YHWH who identifies the people as his sheep and him as their God further stresses the idea of belonging and possession. It is even stronger, on an individual note, when David is identified as YHWH's servant both in 2 Samuel 7:5 and Ezekiel 34:23.

Even though the words used in the text of Ezekiel are not the same as in the text of Samuel, it appears that the text of Ezekiel contains traces of the text of Samuel. This is possible since Ezekiel was almost certainly familiar with the text of Samuel. Moreover, the concept of possession is connected to David. In 2 Samuel 7:14 it appears in YHWH's covenant with David, and in Ezekiel 34:30–31 it is also connected to David, the promised ruler. It is under the leadership of David that the Jewish people will experience the reality that they are the possession of YHWH. It is important to indicate here that the restoration that the Jewish people will experience is none other than a fulfillment of the covenant between YHWH and David. There are marks of the covenant to David in 2 Samuel 7 and blessings for Israel with the future ruler, David. The covenant of peace (Ezek 34:25) that YHWH will make with his people is inevitably linked to the covenant with David. The description of what will happen in the land is a complete shalom which correctly labels the faithfulness of YHWH to David. It is not only about YHWH's faithfulness, but also a proof of the affinities between the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and that of Ezekiel 34. The covenant of peace in Ezekiel 34:25 is also here a renewal of the Sinai covenant. We find the Sinai covenant in Exodus 19–24 and it is mainly for the benefit of the people of Israel. Gentry and Wellum summarize its outcomes in these words: "*This covenant will show them how to be his true humanity. It will direct, guide, and lead them to have a right relationship with God and a right relationship with everyone else in the covenant community. It will also teach them how to have a right relation to all the creation, to be good stewards of the earth's resources*" (Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum 2018:342).

While the Davidic Covenant was with David as an individual, the Sinai covenant was with the whole people, not just with a single person. The various connections of the text of Ezekiel 34 to that of 2 Samuel 7 ascertains that the covenant with David was in the mind of the author of the text of Ezekiel.

5. Conclusion: Is there Influence?

The task in this study was to establish any influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 on that of Ezekiel 34:23–31. The influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 cannot be established based on isolated single or individual elements. However, from the discussion in this paper, it is clear that the two texts have numerous affinities, including literary, theological, and conceptual aspects. The text of Ezekiel emphasizes that the promise of restoration will come to

realization under the leadership of the future ruler, David. The connections between Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 2 Samuel 7:1–16 are clear to the point that we might suggest that the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 had influence on the text of Ezekiel 34:23–31.

Conflict of Interest Statement

As the author of this article, I declare that I have no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced me in my writing.

About the Author

From the Democratic Republic of Congo, he has completed his PhD studies in Theology Biblical Studies at Africa International University in Nairobi, Kenya. The topic of his dissertation was: An Intertextual Study of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:1–16//Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28). My interest is in the Old Testament (he can also handle New Testament). He is affiliated to the Institute for Biblical Scholarship in Africa (IBSA), which is member of the Society of New Testament Studies (SNTS) – Africa Liaison.

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