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ABSTRACT

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S
LAW: AN EXEGETICAL, INTERTEXTUAL, AND
THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF EZEKIEL 36:27

by

James Waita Mutua

Adviser: Jiří Moskala

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW: AN
EXEGETICAL, INTERTEXTUAL, AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF
EZEKIEL 36:27

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Date completed: October 2014

Problem

In Ezek 36:27, God foretells that he will put his Spirit within his people and he will “do” so that Israel will obey his laws. Ezekiel 36:27 indicates a close relationship between the Spirit of God and Israel in observing the statutes and judgments of God in the Babylonian exile among the nations and after the exile.

In this text, every major phrase and clause has varied interpretations or calls for further investigation. Not only do scholars have different interpretations of the verse, but also the English Bible versions vary in their translations. This leads to the following questions: What is the identity of the Spirit of God? What is the nature of the statutes and judgments of God? What is the precise relationship between the Spirit of the Lord and

the people in observing the divine laws? When is the bestowal of the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God realized by Israel?

The purpose of this research was to conduct an exegetical, intratextual, intertextual, and theological study in order to investigate further the Spirit of God in relationship to Israel in keeping the laws of God in the context of restoration in Ezek 36.

Methodology

This study uses the final form and close reading of the MT in its canonical text. The method entails analytical, inductive, synchronic, and diachronic approaches to v. 27, involving OT canonical and extra-canonical Hebrew selected texts.

In chapter 1, various interpretive views by scholars regarding v. 27 are presented. The views differ concerning the identity of the Spirit of God, the precise relationship between the Spirit of God and Israel in obeying the laws of God, the concept of “within,” what God “does,” the nature of the statutes and judgments of God, and the role of Israel as God puts his Spirit within them.

In chapter 2, an exegetical investigation is undertaken for the purpose of examining the identity of the Spirit of God and the nature of the statutes and judgments of God and their relationship. The structure of v. 27 is studied in order to analyze the logical progression of the thought and intent of the author. A semantic study of the meaning of words and phrases as well as the syntax of the text is examined to explore their relationship and how their significance and implication affect the translation and interpretation of the text.

Chapter 3 deals with the intratextual analysis in order to examine the connection between Ezek 36:27 and selected texts with similar vocabulary within the book of

Ezekiel. In chapter 4, an intertextual study is undertaken to compare v. 27 with other selected texts in the OT with similar vocabulary for the purpose of exploring how the OT texts highlight Ezek 36:27.

Chapter 5 deals with the intertextuality of Ezek 36:27 in selected extra-canonical Qumran Hebrew texts to investigate how the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God inform the concept of the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God in Ezek 36:27. In chapter 6, a theology of Ezek 36:27 is constructed based on the exegetical analysis and intratextual and intertextual investigation stated above.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached by exegeting Ezek 36:27 are that:

1. The Spirit of God is God's Holy Spirit, a personal being, whom God gives to the Israelites so that they can have abundant life, for they lament that they have no life. The Spirit of God empowers or strengthens Israel to obey the laws of God of life and maintain the life they have received from the Spirit of God.
2. The statutes and judgments of God are the praxis or practical aspects of the principles of the ten words or commandments of God through which God made a covenant with Israel. As Israel obeys the laws of God, they fulfill the principle of the ten commandments of love to God and humanity.
3. God influences the mind and motivation of his people by his Spirit through the word of God as proclaimed by the prophet Ezekiel. By his Spirit, God wants to renew and soften their stony heart to be a heart of flesh in order for them to have new desires, motives, and purposes of observing his divine laws.

4. God “does” or acts through his Spirit for the sake of his holy name, characterized by grace, mercy, forbearance, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness, in renewing the mind of Israel and giving back their land in the process of restoration.

5. Israel plays an active role in the process of responding to the grace, mercy, forbearance, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness of God and their willingness to obey the word of God to return to their land.

6. The bestowal of the Spirit of God is realized by Israel while in exile among the nations but particularly when they are restored to their land.

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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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LAW: AN EXEGETICAL, INTERTEXTUAL, AND
THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF EZEKIEL 36:27

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
James Waita Mutua

October 2014

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	12
Statement of the Purpose	13
Methodology	13
Delimitation	14
2. AN EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION OF EZEKIEL 36:27	15
The Literary Structure	15
The Larger Context	15
The Immediate Context	16
Textual Analysis	19
Morphology	23
The Identity and Significance of רוחי	23
The Concept of אתן	28
The Meaning of בקרבכם	32
The Identity of כם-	40
The Concept of ועשיתי	42
The Grammatical and Syntactical Use of את אשר	60
The Clause בתקו' תלכו ומשפטי תשמרו	61
The Phrase ועשיתם	71
Summary	73
Conclusion	74
3. INTRATEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27	76
Ezekiel 11:19-20	76
Ezekiel 18:9	80
Ezekiel 18:31	81

Ezekiel 20:21	86
Ezekiel 36:26	88
Ezekiel 37:14, 24	96
Summary	104
4. INTERTEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27 IN OT SELECTED TEXTS	105
Torah	107
Genesis 6:3	107
Genesis 41:28, 38-40, 55	116
Exodus 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6	123
Numbers 27:18-22; Deuteronomy 34:9; Joshua 24:25, 31	128
Prophets	134
Isaiah 42:1-4	134
Isaiah 63:10-11, 14	138
Micah 2:7; 3:8	142
Haggai 2:4, 5	147
Zechariah 4:6; 7:9, 12	151
Malachi 2:15, 17	154
Writings	158
Psalms 51:6, 12-14 (Eng 4, 10-12)	158
Job 32:8, 9	164
Nehemiah 9:13, 20, 30	166
Evaluation of the Texts	169
Conclusion	170
5. EXTRA-CANONICAL INTERTEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27 IN THE QUMRAN TEXTS	171
The Rule of the Community	172
1QRule of the Community (1QS)	172
The Damascus Document	178
The Damascus Document (CD)	178
Liturgical Texts	182
Words of the Luminaries (4Q504)	182
Poetic Texts	187
The Hymns (1QHymns)	187
Liturgical Texts	192
1QRule of the Blessings	192
Liturgical Texts	196
4QFestival Prayers (4Q509)	196
Wisdom Poems	199
4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521)	199

Wisdom Poems	201
4QInstruction (4Q416 4Q417 4Q418 4Q419)	201
Summary	205
Conclusion	205
6. THE THEOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S LAW IN EZEKIEL 36:27	207
The Initiative of God	210
The Empowerment of the Spirit of God	222
The Response of Israel to the Initiative of God	228
The Statutes and Judgments of God and the Covenant Theology	232
Summary and Conclusion	240
BIBLIOGRAPHY	256

LIST OF TABLES

1. The Spirit of God and Human Spirit in Ezekiel	24
2. רוּחִי “My Spirit” in the Old Testament	24
3. Comparison between Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:27	77
4. Comparison between Ezekiel 18:9 and 36:27	80
5. Comparison between Ezekiel 18:31 and 36:27	82
6. Comparison between Ezekiel 20:21 and 36:27	87
7. Comparison between Ezekiel 36:26 and 36:27	89
8. Comparison between Ezekiel 37:14, 24 and 36:27	98
9. Comparison between Genesis 6:3 and Ezekiel 36:27	107
10. Comparison between Genesis 41:28, 34, 38-40, 55 and Ezekiel 36:27	118
11. Comparison between Exodus 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6 and Ezekiel 36:27	125
12. Comparison between Numbers 27:18, 22; Deuteronomy 34:9; Joshua 24:25, 31 and Ezekiel 36:27	130
13. Comparison between Isaiah 42:1-4 and Ezekiel 36:27	136
14. Comparison between Isaiah 63:10-11, 14 and Ezekiel 36:27	140
15. Comparison between Micah 2:7; 3:8; 6:8, and Ezekiel 36:27	143
16. Comparison between Haggai 2:4, 5 and Ezekiel 36:27	148
17. Comparison between Zechariah 4:6; 7:9, 12 and Ezekiel 36:27	152

18. Comparison between Malachi 2:15, 17 and Ezekiel 36:27	156
19. Comparison between Psalms 51:6, 12-14 (Eng 4, 10-12) and Ezekiel 36:27	159
20. Comparison between Job 32:8, 9 and Ezekiel 36:27	164
21. Comparison between Nehemiah 9:13, 20, 30 and Ezekiel 36:27	167
22. Comparison between The Rule of the Community (1QS), and Ezekiel 36:27	175
23. Comparison between Damascus Document (CD), and Ezekiel 36:27	180
24. Comparison between The Words of the Luminaries (4Q504) and Ezekiel 36:27	185
25. Comparison between The Hymns (1QHymns) and Ezekiel 36:27	190
26. Comparison between 1QRule of the Blessings and Ezekiel 36:27	194
27. Comparison between 4QFestival Prayers (4Q509) and Ezekiel 36:27	198
28. Comparison between 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) and Ezekiel 36:27	200
29. Comparison between 4QInstruction (4Q416 417 418 419) and Ezekiel 36:27	204
30. Summary of the Comparison between the Vocabulary Used in Qumran Hebrew Texts and Ezekiel 36:27	206

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	Asbury Bible Commentary
AJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Commentary Studies</i>
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BKC	Bible Knowledge Commentary
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentaries
CD	Cairo Damascus
CoC	Concordia Commentary
CPNIVC	College Press New International Version Commentary
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EvJ	<i>Evangelical Journal</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies

ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
<i>JANESCU</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JATS</i>	<i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JOTT</i>	<i>Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
NAC	New American Commentary
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
<i>TTJ</i>	<i>Trinity Theological Journal</i>

<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

In Ezek 36:27, God foretells that he will put his Spirit within his people, Israel, and he will “do” so that Israel will obey his laws. This statement is made in the context of the restoration of the house of Israel from the Babylonian captivity in Ezek 36.¹ The text reads,

וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחַקֵּי תִלְכוּ
וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם:

“And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations” (NLT).

In this passage, every major phrase and clause has varied interpretations or calls for further investigation. Not only do scholars have different interpretations of the verse, but also the English Bible versions vary in their translations. Scholars have expressed different opinions regarding the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in relation to obedience to the

¹ This promise is made in the context of the restoration of the people of God to their own land in Ezek 36 (cf. Ezek 11:14-21). God had banished his people from his land and scattered them among the nations, because they had shed blood upon the land and their idols had made it unclean (Ezek 36:2-3). However, for the sake of his holy name, God intends to repossess the land from the surrounding nations, restore its productivity, restore Israel to his land, and multiply them upon it (Ezek 36:6-16).

The restoration of Israel to their land underscores the importance of the covenant between God and his people and the land he gave to their fathers. This covenant relationship between God and his people, Israel, is signified by the covenant formula, “and you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:28).

laws of God in Ezek 36:27. Their arguments can be generally grouped into six categories:

1. The Spirit is seen as a power or force that God puts within his people in order for them to keep his laws. According to Firth and Wegner, “in the OT, the “spirit of the LORD” was considered more as a force emanating from God.”² This category has a number of proponents, including Block, Biggs, Zimmerli, Joyce, and Lemke.³ Block notes that the Spirit “is the power of God at work among humankind. It is his creating, animating, energizing force.”⁴

Biggs sees the Spirit as a “motive force for the people to respond to God’s action with the obedience God required.”⁵ Zimmerli comments: “For ‘spirit’ in the OT is never simply an ‘insight, understanding,’ but a power which gives a man strength to do new

² David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, introduction to *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 17.

³ For additional supporters of this view, see Baruch J. Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View of Israel’s View of Restoration,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 47; where he interprets רִּחַם as causative (and I will cause or make) in the context of giving of the Spirit; Hendrik Leene, “Ezekiel and Jeremiah: Promises of Inner Renewal in Diachronic Perspective,” in *Past, Present, Future: Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (ed. Johannes C. De Moore and Harry F. van Rooy; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 153; Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 163; he notes that the role of the Spirit is to energize and renew the minds and hearts of the people; G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1951), 392; he cites here that the Spirit is “the divine energy which acts on human lives”; Bruce Vawter and Leslie J. Hoppe, *A New Heart: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ITC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 163; where they point out that God’s Spirit is “God’s movement in Israel’s life”; James Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel* (New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2006), 249; he mentions that the house of Israel needs a dynamic, potentiating, and revivifying Spirit of God.

⁴ Daniel I. Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit: Use of רִּחַם in the Book of Ezekiel,” *JETS* 32 (1989): 49.

⁵ Charles R. Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel* (London: Epworth, 1996), 116.

things (1 Sam10:6f).”⁶ For Joyce, the Spirit is the ‘dynamic power of Yahweh’ to renew the moral will of the house of Israel.⁷ Lemke concludes, “Thus what Ezekiel in effect is promising is that God will affect a profound renewal and reorientation in the hearts and minds of his people so that they will want to, and be empowered to, walk in God’s ways.”⁸

In summary, the Spirit is viewed as a power or force that God will put within the people in order to guarantee their obedience to his laws. The preceding opinions raise the following question: What is the nature of the power or force that God puts within them?

2. The Spirit is interpreted as an extension of the personality or presence of God. This view is taken by Hildebrandt. He argues that the Spirit is an extension of the personality of God—a divine presence on earth. He says that in the Hebrew conception, where the Spirit is referenced in relation to God is “understood as the extension of God’s personality . . . an extension of the presence of God.”⁹ Block and Hamilton, among others, have the same view.¹⁰ For them, the divine Spirit is not a self-existing agent independent of God, but essentially God himself.

⁶ Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25-48* (ed. Paul D. Hanson with Leonard Jay Greenspoon; trans. James Martin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 2:249.

⁷ Paul Joyce, “Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel” (JSOTSup 51; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 111; see *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 204.

⁸ Werner E. Lemke, “Life in the Present and Hope for the Future,” *Int* 38 (1984): 177.

⁹ Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 89.

¹⁰ Daniel I. Block, *By the River Chebar: Historical, Literary, and Theological Studies in the Book of Ezekiel* (Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade Books, 2013), 167; “The View from the Top: The Holy Spirit in the Prophets,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 206, 207, and “The Prophet of the Spirit,” 39; James M. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments* (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2006), 49, 51, 52, 54.

3. The Spirit is understood as an entity in close relationship with God. The entity refers to a supernatural being in the primary sense, but a reward in a secondary sense.¹¹ This suggestion is posited by Hosch, who, using textlinguistic analysis of the phrase “spirit” in Ezek 36:26-27 based on primary and secondary domains, states that the pronoun “my” in v. 27 (“my Spirit”) indicates an entity in a very close relationship with God, but independent of him.¹² According to Hosch’s explanation, there is no relationship between the supernatural being and obedience to the laws. He also does not identify whether the supernatural being is a divine being or otherwise.

4. The Spirit is translated as the breath of God that God puts within his people to obey. The interpretation is maintained by Woodhouse, who sees a link between Ezek 36:27 and Jer 31:31-33. He writes that “there is little obvious difference between God writing his law on the heart, and placing his (speaking) breath within. Any difference seems to fade when the latter act is seen to be obedience to the law (Ezek 36:27b)!”¹³ The interpretation offered by Woodhouse implies that God will put his Spirit, meaning his breath, within them to effect obedience.

5. The Spirit is perceived as the “mind” of God. Lapsley adopts this view by arguing that “in 36:27 it is *Yahweh*’s spirit (רוּחַי) that will animate and suffuse the people. In a sense, then, the people will receive the ‘mind’ of God, and this will motivate all their

¹¹ The reward here, in the secondary sense, suggests a gift that God would bestow.

¹² Harold E. Hosch, “RŪAH in the Book of Ezekiel: A Textlinguistic Analysis,” *JOTT* 14 (2002): 113.

¹³ John Woodhouse, “The ‘Spirit’ in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *Spirit of the Living God Part One* (ed. B. G. Webb; Sydney: Lancer, 1991), 321, quoted in Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 93; see also Preston Sprinkle, “Law and Life: Leviticus 18:5 in the Literary Framework of Ezekiel,” *JSOT* 31 (2007): 278-79.

subsequent behavior, since they will then be capable of keeping the *torah* (36:27b).”¹⁴

Lapsley further suggests that the “mind” of God is the knowledge of God.¹⁵

6. The Spirit is qualified as Holy Spirit.¹⁶ Cooper, among others, asserts that “God called this new spirit ‘my spirit’ (v. 27), meaning Holy Spirit . . . who would empower them to obey the law of God.”¹⁷ He cautions that the Holy Spirit should not be seen as exclusive to the Christian age.¹⁸ Alexander and Hummel see the Holy Spirit as being given in the New Testament under the new covenant and not in the time of restoration.¹⁹ Here, the qualification of the Spirit as Holy Spirit raises a question: Can וְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ “and a new Spirit/spirit” in v. 26, emphasized as רוּחִי “my Spirit” in v. 27, be the Holy Spirit?²⁰

The views concerning the law of God, consisting of statutes and judgments in the context of Ezek 36:27, are few and scanty. The interpretations can be generally classified into five perspectives:

1. The statutes and judgments are perceived as the covenant of God. This understanding is offered by Sprinkle, who says that the “covenant obligation is marked by

¹⁴ Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* (New York, N.Y.: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 166.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁶ C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel* (vol 2; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), 110.

¹⁷ Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel* (NAC 17; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 317.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ralph H. Alexander, “Ezekiel” (EBC 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1986), 922; Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48* (CoC; Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 2007), 1056.

²⁰ The Targum has רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ “my Holy Spirit.”

the statutes and judgments formula and the life therein.”²¹ For him, the life therein is brought about by God breathing life or putting his Spirit within his people. If the statutes and judgments are a covenant, as Sprinkle claims, what covenant is in view in this text?

2. The statutes and judgments are seen as the word of God. This approach is taken by Robson and Mowinkel. Robson argues that the word of God is “expressed in Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes.”²² Mowinkel notes: “But Yahweh’s word is also a command.”²³ The idea alluded to by Robson and Mowinkel suggests that God specifically employs the terms עֲוֹנוֹת “my statutes” and מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments.”

3. The statutes and judgments are interpreted as cultic and civil laws. Scholars such as Ringgren and Hentschke regard these laws as cultic laws, governing the regulations of worship, and civil laws, maintaining civil aspects of the Israelites. In his summary, Ringgren concludes, “we can say that Ezekiel uses ḥuqqâ and tôrâ for cultic regulations and mišpât for the legal norms governing life in society.”²⁴ If the laws are cultic and civil, as these scholars propose, then it implies that the promise of the Spirit is specific only to the cultic and civil aspects of the Israelites. In other words, the Spirit of God will be given to the Israelites for the purpose of observing their cultic and civil regulations and not obeying the ten words or commandments which constitute the moral law.

²¹ Sprinkle, “Law and Life,” 279.

²² Robson, *Word*, 185.

²³ Sigmund Mowinkel, *The Spirit and the Word: Prophecy and Tradition in Ancient Israel* (ed. K. C. Hanson; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2002), 90.

²⁴ Ringgren, “קקן,” *TDOT* 5:139-47; see also R. Hentschke, *Satzung und Setzend: Ein Beitrage zur israelitischen Rechtsterminologie* (BWANT 83; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1963), 88.

4. The statutes and judgments are identified as apodictic laws and casuistic laws respectively. Alt relates that the laws are specifically those dealing with case situations and outright commands.²⁵

5. The judgments are viewed as the entire law of God. This view is suggested by Johnson when he indicates that the judgments “are the individual commandments as well as the summary of the entire law.”²⁶ This proposition assumes the entire Torah.

The views expressed by scholars above lead to the following question: What syntactical and theological relationship exists between the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God in Ezek 36:27? With the exception of Hosch, Hummel, and Robson, scholars like Zimmerli, Greenberg, Duguid, Block, and Cooke have hardly addressed the syntactical issue of the text.²⁷

There are two dependent clauses subordinated to the main clause introduced by two *vavs*, namely: (1) *וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחַקִּי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ* “and I will ‘do’ that you will walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments”; and (2) *וְעָשִׂיתֶם* “and you will do (them).” The *vav* *וְ* prefixed to *עָשִׂיתִי* and *עָשִׂיתֶם* is a conjunction *vav*, linking the verbs *אָתָּן* and *עָשִׂיתִי* in a coordinate relationship. This relationship needs to be studied further

²⁵ Albrecht Alt, “The Origins of the Israelite Law,” in *Essays on OT History and Religion* (Oxford: 1966), 79-132.

²⁶ B. Johnson, “משפט,” *TDOT* 9:86-98.

²⁷ See Hosch, “RŪAH in the Book of Ezekiel,” 113. However, Hosch only analyzes the grammatical structure of the main clause *וְאָתַרְוּחִי אֵתָּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם* “and I will put my Spirit within you” by identifying its subject, object, verb, and prepositional phrase. He does not examine the grammatical structure of the remaining two dependent clauses or state the relationship between the Spirit and obedience in the text; Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1035; Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 249.

for clarification.²⁸ The majority of English versions introduce a causative meaning in translating וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will cause.”²⁹ For the translators, the statement “and I will do (make)” amounts to “and I will cause,” as though a hiphil is used. This important feature calls for a deeper investigation, because וְעָשִׂיתִי, grammatically, is a qal form.³⁰

Although scholars vary in their opinions concerning the nature of the Spirit of God, they do not differ substantially in their theological views regarding the Spirit of God in relationship to obedience to the laws of God. Irrespective of its identity, the Spirit is seen as strengthening, animating, motivating, and empowering the people for obedience. Zimmerli states that the Spirit “gives a man strength to do new things (1 Sam 10:6). The new thing here is obedience.”³¹ Block writes that the Spirit “animates and vivifies the recipients.”³² Hildebrandt points out that God will enable “them to live in accordance

²⁸ See Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 519-21; Joüon, 389, 396; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew in Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993), 180-81.

Also, the ו “and” prefixed to מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments” in the first dependent clause points to phrasal *vav* and will be examined in detail to ascertain its function in the clause. For different functions of *vav* see Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 647-54.

²⁹ See the following including, but not limited to: KJV, ASV, NAS, RSV, BBE, ESV, NKJV, DBY, NAB, NIV, NET, RWB, TNK, WEB, GNV, NJB, NRS, GWN, and NIB. The YLT translates וְעָשִׂיתִי as completed action “and I have done this.” LXX gives a literal rendering καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ποιήσω ἵνα ἐν τοῖς δικαιομασίαι μου πορεύσθε καὶ τὰ κρίματά μου φυλάξησθε καὶ ποιήσητε “and I will put my Spirit within you and I will do that you will walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments and you will do (them).” Translation mine.

³⁰ וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” is an inverted qal perfect first-person common singular. The hiphil form of עָשָׂה is nowhere attested in the OT text; see BDB 793-95; William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988). The theoretical form of the hiphil perfect first-person common singular of עָשָׂה should be הִעָשִׂיתִי “and I will cause (you).” See, however, Ezek 37:12, where the hiphil form הִעָלִיתִי (inverted hiphil perfect first-person common singular of עָלָה) “and I will cause (you) to go up” is attested; and Ezek 36:12, where הִוָּלַכְתִּי (inverted hiphil perfect first-person common singular of עָלָה “and I will cause [you] to walk”) is used.

³¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 249; see others with similar views in category 1, pp. 2-3.

³² Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 356.

with the covenant obligation through the power of the *rûah*.³³ Lapsley proposes that the “mind” of God “will motivate all their subsequent behavior, since they will then be capable of keeping *torah* (36:27b).³⁴ Cooper and Alexander argue that the Spirit will empower and strengthen the people to obey respectively.³⁵ Greenberg posits that God “will replace Israel’s hopelessly corrupted spirit with his own impulsion to goodness and righteousness.”³⁶ Duguid remarks that the Spirit will “create in them both the will and the ability to follow God’s decrees and laws (36:27).”³⁷

In summary, the scholars suggest that the Spirit will enable the people to obey. A theological question here is raised: Can the Spirit, identified variously by scholars, bring about the same result of obedience?

Not only do scholars differ in their explanations concerning the nature of the Spirit of God, they also disagree in their opinions relative to the time of the bestowal of the Spirit and the likely recipients or beneficiaries.³⁸ Regarding the fulfillment of the prediction, four positions are advanced:

³³ Hildebrandt, *The Theology*, 95.

³⁴ Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?* 166.

³⁵ Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 317; Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 922.

³⁶ Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 730.

³⁷ Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999), 415.

³⁸ In the interpretation of Ezek 36:27, dispensationalism differentiates between seven dispensations in the history of the Bible: (1) Innocence (before the fall); (2) Conscience (from the fall to Noah); (3) Human government (from Noah to Abraham); (4) Promise (from Abraham to Moses); (5) Law (from Moses to Jesus); (6) Grace (church age); (7) the Kingdom (the millennium). For complete presentation of the various interpretations, see Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992); Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2003).

1. The promise was attained by the spiritual New Testament Christian church. Writing about this fulfillment, Merrill maintains that “the only way to harmonize the prophecies with the historical event is to find their fulfilment through the church—the new Israel.”³⁹ Merrill’s option does not address the issue of the covenant of the land and sacrifices in the context of Ezek 36.

2. The prophecy will be fulfilled in the future eschatology by the literal nation of Israel. In addition to saying that the promise will be attained through the church as the new Israel, Merrill also thinks that the promises should be synchronized with the historical event. This is done by positing “an eschatological in which a literal, physical Israel will be gathered to the land and assume her role as a redemptive community functioning cultically and politically in a manner akin to that of the ancient covenant nation.”⁴⁰

Contributing to the above discussion, McConville rationalizes that the prophecy was not fulfilled for the exiles in Ezra-Nehemiah, because: “such fulfilment can occur only when the throwing off of the imperial yoke demonstrates the reality of the exiles’ abandonment of sin.”⁴¹ As far as he is concerned, the imperial enslavement was not over, because the Israelites continued in sin. He argues that intermarriage is a sign of sin, and Ezra-Nehemiah deal with this issue, and that is why the Jews are still under the Persians. Therefore, Israel could not have enjoyed the blessings while in exile.

³⁹ Eugene H. Merrill, “Pilgrimage and Procession: Motifs of Israel’s Return,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (ed. Avraham Gileadi; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 262.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ J. G. McConville, “Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfilment of Prophecy,” *VT* 36 (1986): 223-34.

3. The time for the realization of the prediction will be during the millenium by the literal Israel. Rooker takes this stance by arguing that the time to achieve the promise is in the future during the one thousand years, according to Rev 20:1-6.⁴² He argues, “Thus the promises made to Israel in the book of Ezekiel will find their fulfilment in the thousand-year millenium age (Rev 20:1-6). It will be during the millenium that Israel will be regathered in her land and given a new heart and a new spirit and thus be predisposed to obeying God.”⁴³ Rooker maintains that the Israelite exiles did not obey the law of God fully, as portrayed by the messages of Nehemiah and Malachi. He concludes that the promises of God, which included the promise of the Spirit, were never realized when Cyrus, king of Persia, freed the Israelites from Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C. (Ezra 1, 2; 2 Chr 36:22; cf. Neh 1, 2; Jer 25:12; Lev 26:42).⁴⁴ He asserts that the gift of the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of sin received in the new covenant does not mean the church has replaced Israel; rather, the gift is a benefit which the church (comprising both Jews and Gentiles) enjoys.⁴⁵

4. The restoration occurs for literal Israel during the time of the prophet Ezekiel in Ezek 37. This treatment is entertained by Fredenburg and Wright. Fredenburg finds lack of evidence in the book of Ezekiel supporting the notion that the Israelites repented,

⁴² Mark F. Rooker, “Evidence from Exile,” in *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 134; see also J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (1958; repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1972), 477.

⁴³ Rooker cites immoral priests, unfruitful land, sins such as intermarriage, non-prescribed offering, withholding tithes and offerings, and negligence (“Evidence from Exile,” p. 127). He also contends that today (at the time of his writing) Israel was not gathered, not experiencing spiritual regeneration, and the land of Palestine was not characterized by the supernatural productivity described in Ezek 36:22-28.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

and, therefore, their return to their land was not realized as a result.⁴⁶ He denies that the Spirit promised in Ezek 36:27 refers to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. He comments:

The promised new spirit does not refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the Christians. . . . Instead Ezekiel explains his reference to the renewing spirit in 37:1-14. The giving of the new spirit refers to renewed Israel's coming to enjoy fully Yahweh's attitude of reconciliation and the actions his new disposition causes. These hope-filled promises speak precisely and directly to Ezekiel's brokenhearted, dispirited companions in exile.⁴⁷

Writing on Israel's transformation for obedience, Wright explains that in ch. 37, "Ezekiel will describe some remarkable effects of this infusion of God's own Spirit, but at this point he is concerned primarily with its effects upon Israel's behaviour in relation to God's law. And that effect will be that Israel will at last be obedient."⁴⁸ However, the question still remains: When does the fulfillment take place in the context of the restoration in Ezek 36?

Statement of the Problem

Ezekiel 36:27 indicates a relationship between the Spirit of God and Israel in obeying the statutes and judgments of God. What is the identity of the Spirit and the nature of the statutes and judgments of God? What is the precise relationship between the Spirit of God and the people in observing the divine laws? Why does God put his

⁴⁶ Brandon L. Fredenburg, *Ezekiel* (CPNIVC; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 2002), 300.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 320. Fredenburg introduces the idea of human spirit—that the exiles are dispirited.

⁴⁸ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 297.

Spirit within his people? What does God “do”? Does Israel play any role or are they passive? When is the bestowal of the Spirit of God and obedience realized by Israel?

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this research is to conduct an exegetical, intratextual, intertextual, and theological study in order to investigate further the Spirit of God in relationship to Israel in observing the laws of God in the context of restoration in Ezek 36.

Methodology

This study uses the final form and close reading of the MT in its canonical context.⁴⁹ The method entails analytical, inductive, synchronic, and diachronic approaches to v. 27, involving OT canonical and extra-canonical Hebrew selected texts.⁵⁰ In chapter 1, various interpretive views by scholars of Ezek 36:27 are presented. In chapter 2, an exegetical investigation is undertaken in order to examine the identity of the

⁴⁹ For discussions on the importance of the canonical final form for doing exegesis, see Brevard S. Childs, “The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature,” in *Interpreting the Prophets* (ed. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 41-49; Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Rolf Rendtorff, “What We Miss by Taking the Bible Apart,” *BR* 14 (1998): 42-44; Elmer Dyck, “Canon as Context for Interpretation,” in *The Act of Bible Reading: A Multi-disciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Elmer Dyck; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996): 33-65; Mark G. Brett, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?: The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁵⁰ As used in this study, the synchronic (together in time) approach exegetically focuses on the Ezek 36:27 text itself as part of a larger unit of Ezek 36:22-32; whereas the diachronic (through time) approach compares Ezek 36:27 with selected texts with a similar concept of the Spirit of the Lord and obedience to God’s law within the book of Ezekiel, in the OT canon, and extra-canonical Qumran Hebrew texts. My search leans more to the diachronic because the treatment of the texts is based on their arrangement in the final form of the MT canon and the historical nature of the extra-canonical Qumran Hebrew texts. Issues of unity, authorship, date, and transmission of the texts under discussion, however, are not addressed in this approach because they are beyond the scope of the study. For the latest discussion on synchronic and diachronic intertextuality, see Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2012), 355-63.

Spirit of God, the nature of the statutes and judgments of God, and their relationship. The structure of v. 27 is examined for the purpose of analyzing the logical progression of the thought and intent of the author. A semantic study of the meaning of words and phrases and the syntax of the text is determined to explore their relationship and how their significance and implication affects the translation and theological meaning and interpretation of the text. Chapter 3 deals with the intratextual analysis for the purpose of investigating the connection between Ezek 36:27 and selected texts within the book of Ezekiel. In chapter 4, an intertextual study is undertaken to compare v. 27 with selected texts in the OT. Chapter 5 deals with the extra-canonical intertextuality of Ezek 36:27 in the selected Qumran Hebrew texts to explore how the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God highlight Ezek 36:27. In chapter 6, a theology of Ezek 36:27 is constructed based on the exegetical analysis and intratextual and intertextual investigation stated above. A summary and conclusion are drawn, including suggested further study.

Delimitation

This research does not deal with the issue of authorship, date, unity, or transmission of Ezekiel's book, for these concerns are beyond the scope of this thesis.⁵¹ It also does not address directly the issues of millennialism or concern itself with the intertextuality of Ezek 36:27 in the NT.

⁵¹ Commentators of Ezekiel are not in agreement as to the authorship, date, and unity of the book of Ezekiel. Some regard Ezekiel as the author who wrote the whole book in the sixth century B.C. while in Babylon. Others attribute the book to the work of a redactor who compiled different documents in the first century B.C. in Palestine. For different arguments on authorship, date, and unity, see for example: William H. Brown Lee, *Ezekiel 1-19* (WBC 28; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1986), ix-xlii; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 1-24* (ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer with the Assistance of Leonard Jay Greenspoon; trans. Ronald E. Clements; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 1-77; Ralph H. Alexander, "Ezekiel," 737-46; Fredenburg, "Ezekiel," 15-28.

CHAPTER 2

AN EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION OF EZEKIEL 36:27

The Literary Structure

The Larger Context

Scholars vary in grouping the forty-eight chapters of the book of Ezekiel.

Davidson observes: “The three generally acknowledged sections of the book are chapters 1-24 (prophecies of judgment), 25-32 (oracles against the nations), and 33-48 (prophecies of hope and restoration).”¹ However, not all scholars agree on a tripartite division of the book. Others see a bipartite, fourfold, fivefold, sevenfold, or ninefold arrangement.²

Despite their variation in dividing the forty-eight chapters of the book, scholars generally recognize a trend depicting the judgment (1-32) and restoration (33-48) of Israel by God.

¹ Richard M. Davidson, “The Chiastic Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel,” in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea* (ed. David Merling; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute of Archaeology Siegfried H. Horn Museum, 1997), 72; see also Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 277; David Dorsey, “Can These Bones Live? Investigating Literary Structure in the Bible,” *EvJ* 9 (1991): 13; John N. Day, “Ezekiel and the Heart of Idolatry,” *BSac* 164 (2007): 22; Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 11.

² For the different divisions of the book, see the following, but not limited to: Davidson, “The Chiastic Structure,” 72, 75; Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2007), 42; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1990), 7; Steven Tuell, *Ezekiel* (NIBC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 2; H. L. Ellison, *Ezekiel: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), 13; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel* (WBC 29; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1990), xxii-xxiv; Charles R. Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel* (London: Epworth Press, 1996), xiv; Jiří Moskala, “Toward the Fulfillment of God and Magog: Prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39,” *JATS* 18 (2007): 245.

Chapter 36, which contains v. 27, is designated among the chapters which deal with the restoration of Israel. It comprises two sections: (1) 36:1-15, and (2) 36:16-38.³

According to the above literary divisions, Ezek 36:27 is situated within the subsection of Ezek 36:22-32, beginning with the messenger formula in v. 22 *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַבְּרֵנּי יְהוָה* “Thus says the Lord God” and ending with the declaration formula *נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֲדַבְּרֵנּי יְהוָה* “declares the Lord God” in v. 32. The following analysis regarding literary structure focuses on Ezek 36:22-32 to determine the immediate context of v. 27.

The Immediate Context

The immediate context of Ezek 36:27 is marked by vv. 22 and 32, which present an inclusion.⁴ The section forms a subsection of the larger literary unit (36:16-38) by opening and concluding the subsection. The clause *לֹא לַמַּעֲנֵכֶם אֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה* “I am not doing for your sake,” found in both v. 22 and v. 32, forms an inclusion with the phrases *וְעָשִׂיתִי*

³ G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh, London: T&T Clark, 1951), 385. Scholars see the first section as part of a larger literary unit beginning in Ezek 35:1, signified by the message reception formula *וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר* “and the word of the Lord came to me saying” (see for example, Nancy R. Bowen, *Ezekiel* [AOTC; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2010], 217, 221). The literary unit is composed of two major subunits marked by the address to the prophet Ezekiel *בְּן־אָדָם* “son of man” and the command to prophesy *וְהִנְבֵּא* “and prophesy.” The prophecy to the mountains of Israel in Ezek 36:1-15 is a continuation of the prophecy to the mountains of Seir in Ezek 35:1-15, but on a restorative note, unlike the judgment pronounced on the mountains of Seir. God announces how he will restore the mountains and his land for his people, Israel. The second section literary unit also begins with the prophetic word formula *וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר* “and the word of the Lord came to me saying,” but concludes with the recognition formula *וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה* “and they will know that I am the Lord God.” The section is comprised of four subsections: (1) 36:16-21; (2) 36:22-32; (3) 36:33-36; (4) 36:37-38. Whereas the first subsection is introduced by the message reception formula that introduces the whole section, the three subsections (22-32, 33-36, 37-38) are indicated by the messenger formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַבְּרֵנּי יְהוָה* “Thus says the Lord God” (see Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel Interpretation*, 164).

⁴ See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 245; Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 176-77; Mary H. Schertz and Perry B. Yoder, *Seeing the Text: Exegesis for Students of Greek and Hebrew* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2001), 54; Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *A Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (3d ed., rev. and expanded; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 2001), 85; Douglass Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 2001), 18.

“and I will do” and וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in the center (v. 27).⁵ The messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר “Thus says the Lord God,” signaling the beginning of the subsection in v. 22, is matched by the declaration formula נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר “declares the Lord God” in v. 32. The בַּיַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל “house of Israel” appears in both verses (twice in v. 22).

Dorsey notes, “Analyzing the structure of a text from literary tradition should result in the identification of its climax or point of prominence, which in turn should help ascertain the central theme or purpose of the author.”⁶ Below is the thematic chiasm.

A. God “does” for the sake of his holy name and not for Israel לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה (22)

B. Israel profanes the holy name of God among the nations חִלְלִיתֶם בְּתוֹכָם (23)

C. God gathers Israel from the nations וְלִקְחֹתִי אֹתְכֶם מִן־הַגּוֹיִם (24)

D. God cleanses Israel from their uncleanness טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם (25)

E. God gives Israel a new heart of flesh וְנָתַתִּי (26)

F. God puts רֹחִי within his people to obey (27)

E’. God gave the land to the fathers of his people נָתַתִּי (28)

D’. God saves Israel from their uncleanness טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם (29)

C’. God adds the yield for Israel, famished among the nations בְּגוֹיִם (30)

B’. Israel remembers and loathes its ways וַיִּזְכְּרוּ אֶת־הַדְּרָכֵיכֶם הָרָעִים וַיִּמְעַלְלִיכֶם (31)

A’. God “does” for the sake of his holy name and not for Israel לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי־עֹשֶׂה (32)

⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 245.

⁶ Dorsey, “Can These Bones Live?,” 19.

The literary structure portrayed in vv. 22-32 displays a thematic chiasm of a reverse order AB:B'A', with its emphasis on v. 27.⁷ According to the chiasmic structure, v. 22 is echoed by v. 32, stating that God does not “do” for the sake of the house of Israel, but on the account of his holy name. Israel has profaned the name of God among the nations and is ashamed and confounded. Verse 23 corresponds to v. 31 by highlighting how God vindicates his holy name through Israel, although his people have profaned his name among the nations. Verse 31 recounts how Israel remembers their evil ways and their deeds that are not good and loathes their iniquity and abomination that have contributed to the profanation of the name of God stated in v. 23.

Verse 24 pairs with v. 30 and mentions the gathering of the house of Israel from among the nations, whereby God brings them to their land. Verse 30 underscores the fact that God multiplies the fruit of the tree and produce of the field in the restored land in order that his people may not face hunger anymore among the nations. Verse 25 couples with v. 29 and depicts God cleansing Israel with clean water from their uncleanness and idols. Verse 29 mirrors v. 25 by stating that God saves Israel from their uncleanness and increases the grain so that they will not face hunger anymore. According to v. 26, God gives Israel a new heart of flesh and puts a new Spirit within them. In v. 28, God restores his covenant relationship with Israel, and they dwell in his land that he gave them. Israel are the people of God and Yahweh is their God—a covenant formula (cf. Jer 31:1-3).⁸

⁷ For climax of a chiasm, see Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008), 54, 55.

⁸ Sabine van den Eynde, “Covenant Formula and ברית: The Links between a Hebrew and a Biblical Concept,” *OTE* 12 (1999): 122.

Verse 27 is the high point of the chiasmic structure. God puts his Spirit within his people, enabling them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments. The new Spirit mentioned in v. 26 is emphasized in v. 27. The covenant formula stated in v. 28 is emphasized in v. 27, whereby God “does” for the sake of his holy name so that Israel “does” by walking in his statutes and keeping his judgments.⁹ In order for God to vindicate his great holy name through Israel by restoring the covenant relationship between him and his people, he puts his Spirit within his people to obey his laws.

The conclusion drawn from analyzing the literary structure of Ezek 36:22-32 is that the subsection displays a chiasm of reverse order AB:B'A', with its climax on v. 27, whereby God puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his laws.

Textual Analysis

Under this section, a textual analysis of Ezek 36:27 is conducted to examine its syntax. The aim of adopting such an approach is to determine the logical progression of the thought process of the author.¹⁰ For convenience, pointed Hebrew words are used for quotation and reference.

Ezekiel 36:27 reads: וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחַקִּי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם: “And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations” (NLT). The text consists of the main or independent clause and two dependent clauses. The main clause וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם contains the

⁹ Cf. Lev 26.

¹⁰ Odil Hannes Steck, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to Methodology* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 58, 97.

direct object רֹחִי, verb אָתַן, and prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם.¹¹ The direct object is placed before the verb for emphasis.¹²

A *vav* conjunction is prefixed to the object marker אֵת, which is joined to the phrase רֹחִי by *Maqqef*. The noun רֹחַ is modified by the possessive adjective first-person common singular י “my.” By emphasizing the direct object, the author indicates that it is very significant.¹³ Kinlaw argues that the identification of Spirit as God’s Spirit is an emphasis placed on רֹחַ.¹⁴ As an imperfect, the verb אָתַן “I will put” implies an uncompleted action. From the perspective of the author, the act of God of bestowing his Spirit is yet to occur. The prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם is made up of the preposition בְּ, noun קִרְבַּ, and possessive adjective second masculine plural כֶּם. The phrase also serves as an indirect object of the main verb אָתַן. God puts his Spirit within his people.

The first dependent clause וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחָקִי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ contains three verbal phrases וְעָשִׂיתִי, תֵלְכוּ, תִשְׁמְרוּ, two construct phrases בְּחָקִי, וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי, the sign of the direct object אֵת, and the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר. The first *vav* prefixed to עָשִׂיתִי relatively serves to coordinate the relationship between the governing verb אָתַן “I will put” and עָשִׂיתִי “I will do” in the sequence: imperfect + perfect. Not only does it serve to convert עָשִׂיתִי into uncompleted action, but it also emphasizes the main verb אָתַן as a

¹¹ Bill T. Arnold and H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 170. The accent *Athnah* under בְּקִרְבְּכֶם marks the first half of the most important part of the verse.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 178, 186.

¹⁴ Pamela E. Kinlaw, “From Death to Life: The Expanding רֹחַ in Ezekiel,” *PRSt* 30 (2003): 170.

clausal *vav*.¹⁵ It subordinates the first dependent clause to the main clause by joining them.¹⁶

The phrase *וְעָשִׂיתִי* “and I will do” has *תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם* “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do” as its object. The object is signified by the sign of the accusative *אֵת* used with the relative pronoun *אֲשֶׁר* “that.”¹⁷ The relative pronoun *אֲשֶׁר* introduces a final clause with the meaning “so that.”¹⁸ Hummel observes that “*אֲשֶׁר* introduces a relative clause that is the direct object of the verb *וְעָשִׂיתִי*.”¹⁹ The construct phrases *בְּחֻקֵי* and *וּמִשְׁפָּטַי* are placed before the verbal phrases *תִּלְכוּ* and *תִּשְׁמְרוּ*, respectively, for emphasis. The *vav* prefixed to the construct *וּמִשְׁפָּטַי* acts as a coordinate conjunction, connecting *תִּלְכוּ בְּחֻקֵי* and *וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ*. God “does,” and his people walk in his statutes and keep his judgments.

The second dependent clause is represented by the verbal phrase *וְעָשִׂיתֶם*. The *vav* prefixed to the phrase is epexegetical, introducing a clause restating or paraphrasing the previous clause, whereby God “does” so that the people can observe his statutes and judgments by “doing” (them).²⁰ The *vav* relatively coordinates the relationship between *תִּלְכוּ* and *תִּשְׁמְרוּ* and *וְעָשִׂיתֶם* in the sequence imperfect + perfect. The phrase *וְעָשִׂיתֶם* lacks

¹⁵ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 649.

¹⁶ Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 180.

¹⁷ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 180.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 638-39; see also Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 635.

¹⁹ Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1035.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 653.

an object, but the object is implied as the statutes and judgments of God in the previous dependent clause (cf. Ezek 11:20; 37:24; Lev 25:18; 26:3).

The phrases **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** and **וְעָשִׂיתִי** present a wordplay and form an inclusion (I will do . . . and you will do).²¹ The stress on “I” (**אֲנִי** “I will put,” **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do,” and **רוּחִי** “my Spirit”) emphasizes the action of God, which has the object of walking in his statutes and keeping his judgments. The action of God, which has the object of obedience to his laws, is echoed by the action of the people indicated by the stress “you” (**תֵּלְכוּ** “you will walk,” **תִּשְׁמְרוּ** “you will keep,” and **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do”). Robson argues, “The syntax at the start of v. 27b, of **עֲשֵׂה** followed by **אֵת אֲשֶׁר** usually entails a description of the subject ‘doing that which’ had been said. **אֵת אֲשֶׁר** introduces a noun clause which serves as the object of the verb **עֲשֵׂה**.”²²

In conclusion, the textual analysis undertaken above indicates that the direct objects **רוּחִי** “my Spirit,” **בְּחֻקֵי** “my statutes,” and **מִשְׁפָּטַי** “my judgments” are emphasized by being placed before their verbs, and, therefore, are significant. The author uses a stylistic feature of wordplay **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do” . . . **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do” to emphasize the initiative act of God and the response of his people, Israel. The fact that God “does” so that his people “do” implies that he enables them to obey his laws. He “does” by putting his Spirit within his people to strengthen them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments. His people respond to the empowerment of the Spirit of God by

²¹ Robert B. Chisholm, “Word Play in Eighth-Century Prophets,” *BSac* 144 (1987): 45; see also Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 238.

²² Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 249.

observing the statutes and judgments of God. Obedience to the laws of God indicates a covenant relationship between God and his people, alluded to by the covenant formula—“you will be my people and I will be your God” (36:28). Therefore, through his Spirit, God enables his people, Israel, to observe his statutes and judgments and restores his covenant relationship with them.

Morphology

The following textual analysis attempts to examine the morphology of Ezek 36:27 in order to evaluate the meaning of the words and phrases used. The discussion follows the arrangement of the words and phrases as they appear in the MT.

The Identity and Significance of רוּחִי

In the book of Ezekiel, רוּחַ occurs 52 times out of 389 occurrences in the OT.²³ The phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” is used 33 times in the OT. In reference to God, it occurs 13 times, of which three are found in the book of Ezekiel (36:27; 37:14; 39:29).²⁴ The phrase is attested once in Ezekiel in reference to the spirit of the prophet Ezekiel (3:14) and 19 times in the OT as human spirit. The three constructs רוּחַ יְהוָה “Spirit of God” (11:5), בְּרוּחַ יְהוָה “by the Spirit of God” (37:1), and בְּרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים “in the Spirit of God” (11:24) are each used once in Ezekiel. As human spirit, רוּחְכֶם “your spirit” occurs twice (11:5; 20:32), and רוּחָם “their spirit” is attested to once in the book (13:3). The phrase

²³ Heinz-Joseph Fabry, “רוּחַ,” *TDOT* 13:365-402.

²⁴ Cf. בְּרוּחְךָ “by your Spirit” (Neh 9:30; cf. 20; Exod 15:10).

רוח חדשה “new Spirit/spirit” occurs three times in Ezekiel (11:19; 18:31; 36:26).

According to the two texts (11:19; 36:26), God puts רוח חדשה within his people, but in 18:31, he commands them to do for themselves a רוח חדשה “new Spirit/spirit.” The above data regarding the Spirit of God and human spirit in Ezekiel are summarized in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. The Spirit of God and human spirit in Ezekiel

God’s Spirit	Human Spirit	God’s/Human Spirit
רוחי “my Spirit” 36:27; 37:14; 39:29	רוחי “my spirit” 3:14	רוח חדשה “new Spirit/spirit” 11:19; 18:31; 36:26
רוח יהוה “the Spirit of God” 11:5	רוחכם “your spirit” 11:5; 20:32	
ברוח יהוה “by God’s Spirit” 37:1	רוחם “their spirit” 13:3	
ברוח אלהים “by God’s Spirit” 11:24		

Table 2. רוחי “my Spirit” in the Old Testament

God’s Spirit	Human Spirit
רוחי “my Spirit” Gen 6:3; Isa 30:1; 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; Ezek 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 3:1, 2; Hag 2:5; Zech 4:6; 6:8	רוחי “my spirit” Job 6:4; 7:11; 9:18; 10:12; 17:1; 19:17; 21:4; Pss 31:6; 77:4, 7; 142:4; 143:4, 7; Prov 1:23; Isa 26:9; 38:16; Ezek 3:14; Dan 2:3; 7:15

The noun רוּחַ is modified by the possessive adjective common singular י “my” to form the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit.” The modification indicates, according to the messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר “thus says the Lord God” (v. 22) and the declaration formula נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר “declares the Lord God” (v. 32), that it is a direct discourse from God. God is the one speaking, promising his people that he will put his Spirit within them so that they will be able to obey his laws. Elsewhere, the phrase occurs in the context where God is speaking (Ezek 37:14; 39:29; cf. Gen 6:3; Isa 30:1; 44:3; 59:21; Zech 4:6).²⁵

Although the second and third pronominal suffixes attached to רוּחַ are not attested in Ezekiel, they are used elsewhere, signifying that the Spirit of God is in view in the indirect discourse (Exod 15:10; Num 11:29; Pss 51:13 [Eng 11]; 104:30; 106:33; 143:10; 147:18; Isa 63:10, 11; 34:16). The Spirit of God is qualified specifically as הַטוֹבָה “the good” (Neh 9:20) and as טוֹבָה “good” (Ps 143:10).²⁶ In Ps 51:13 (Eng 11) and Isa 63:10, 11, רוּחַ is modified as קִדְשׁוֹ “your Holy” Spirit and קִדְשׁוֹ “his Holy” Spirit respectively.²⁷

Apart from being modified by the possessive adjectives, רוּחַ occurs in construct relationship with the name of God in Ezek 11:5, 24; 37:1 and elsewhere in the OT.²⁸ In Mic 3:8, רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” has כֹּחַ “power” that fills the prophet Micah to

²⁵ Where the context does not clearly indicate who is speaking (Isa 42:1; Zech 6:8), the use of רוּחִי indicates that God is speaking.

²⁶ רוּחַ־רָעָה “evil spirit” from God is attested (1 Sam 16:14) in contrast with the good Spirit of God.

²⁷ The attributive genitive shows that the Spirit of holiness of God is his Holy Spirit—having the quality of the holiness of God; see Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Syntax*, 149, 150.

²⁸ Examples include, but not limited to Judg 3:10; 2 Sam 23:2; Isa 11:2; Gen 41:38; Exod 31:3; 2 Chr 15:2.

declare to Israel their sin.²⁹ According to Ezek 36:27, the Spirit of God has power to enable the people to obey the laws of God. Elsewhere in the book, the Spirit of God has a variety of abilities: (1) קָיָה “gives” life (37:14; cf. Isa 57:15, 16); note that רוּחַ הַחַיָּה “the Spirit of life” is attested (1:20); (2) בּוֹא “enters” into or נָתַן “be put” within a person by God (36:27; 37:14; 2:2; 3:24; cf. Num 11:17, 25, 29; 28:17; Isa 63:11; 1 Kgs 18:12); (3) shows מַרְאֵה “vision” to a person (11:24; cf. 37:1; 11:5; 8:3; 40:2; Joel 3:1, 2 [Eng 2:28, 29]); (4) נִשָּׂא “lifts” a person and בּוֹא “goes” anywhere (11:24; 43:5; cf. 11:1; 3:12, 14; 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; Ps 139:7); (5) causes a person to נִבֵּא “prophecy” (37:4; cf. 1 Sam 10:6; 19:20, 23; Num 11:25, 26); (6) be שָׁפַךְ “poured” by God like fluid upon people (Ezek 39:29; Joel 3:1, 2 [Eng 2:28, 29] cf. Zech 12:10; Ezek 13:11, 13; Prov 1:23; Isa 44:3; 32:15; 30:28, 33);³⁰ (7) נָפַל “descends” on a person (11:5).

Elsewhere, in the OT, the Spirit of God: (1) can be עָצַב “grieved” and מָרָה “rebelled against” (Isa 63:10; Ps 106:33); (2) can be נִיחַ “quieted or silenced” by a person (Zech 6:8); (3) דִּין “judges” people (Gen 6:3; cf. Judg 3:10);³¹ (4) מָלֵא “fills” a person to do what God has commanded or said (Exod 28:3; 31:3; Deut 34:9); (5) דִּבֶּר “speaks” through or to a person (2 Sam 23:2; 1 Kgs 22:24); (6) the word of God is executed בָּ “through” (Zech 4:6; cf. Jer 4:11, 12; Ps 148:8); (7) נָשַׁב “blows” upon people or things (Ps 147:18; Isa 40:7; Exod 15:10; cf. v. 8; 2 Sam 22:16; Ps 18:16 [Eng 15]); (8)

²⁹ This passage will be discussed further in chapter 4 dealing with intertextuality.

³⁰ Other words besides שָׁפַךְ to denote “pour” in different texts.

³¹ This aspect of the Spirit of God will be dealt with briefly in the chapter dealing with intertextuality, because scholars have different opinions on Gen 6:3.

נְחָה “guides” a person (Ps 143:10); (9) עוֹד “testifies” to a person (Neh 9:30; cf. v. 20); (10) can be תָּוֹךְ “amidst” people when upon a prophet (2 Chr 20:14; cf. Hag 2:5); (11) is שְׁלַח sent” by God (Ps 104:30; Isa 48:16; Zech 7:12); (12) עָשָׂה/בָּרָא “creates/makes” and קָרַשׁ “renews” people and land (Pss 104:30 [cf. Gen 1:2, 3]; 33:6; Job 33:4; cf. Pss 51:12-14 [Eng 10-12]; 148:8; Ezek 26:26-27; cf. Job 26:13); (13) נִיחַ “rests” on a person (Num 11:25, 26; Isa 11:2; cf. 2 Kgs 2:15); (14) מוֹת “slays” the wicked (Isa 11:4); (15) נוֹס “drives” a person (Isa 59:19); (16) causes Israel to נִיחַ “rest” (Isa 63:14); (17) רָחַף “broods” over the face of the water at creation (Gen 1:2); (18) פָּעַם “impels” a person (Judg 13:25); (19) קָבַץ “gathers” according to the command of the word of God (Isa 34:16); (20) comes עָלַי “mightily” עָל “upon” a person to do superhuman works (Judg 14:6, 19; 1 Sam 11:6; 16:13); (21) לָבַשׁ “clothes” a person (Judg 6:34; 1 Chr 12:19; 2 Chr 24:20); (22) causes a person to שָׁכַל “understand” (Neh 9:20); (23) is the רוּחַ יְהוָה “Spirit of God” of חֵכְמָה “wisdom,” בִּינָה “discernment,” עֲצָה “counsel,” יְדַעַת “knowledge,” גְּבוּרָה “strength,” וִירָאָת יְהוָה “fear of the Lord,” and מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” (Isa 11:2; 28:6; cf. 4:4; 29:24; Job 20:3; 32:8).³² The above investigation reveals that:

1. רוּחִי “my Spirit” refers to the Spirit of God, whereby the noun רוּחַ is modified by a possessive adjective י “my” in the context of a direct discourse of God.
2. Elsewhere in Ezekiel, the noun רוּחַ is in construct with the name of God, meaning the Spirit of God.

³² Robbert L. Hubbard, “The Spirit and Creation,” in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 80-81.

3. Outside Ezekiel, רוּחַ is qualified as holy and as good Spirit of God in the second and third possessive adjective masculine singular, implying that רוּחִי in Ezekiel is holy and good.
4. The Spirit of God renews and רוּחַ is qualified as חֲדָשָׁה “new” in Ezekiel.
5. The Spirit of God has power or ability to independently do things and empower people to do things.
6. The Spirit of God and רוּחַ share common action verbs, suggesting that רוּחִי “my Spirit,” the Spirit of God, and רוּחַ are closely related in that they are described with the same verbs as performing certain actions.

The Concept of אָתַן

The qal imperfect first-person common singular אָתַן occupies an important part of Ezek 36:27, because it is the main verb of the main clause. It can be translated “I will give, put or set, and make or constitute.” However, its context determines the meaning. As the main verb of the independent clause, אָתַן relates to the direct object רוּחִי and prepositional object בְּקִרְבְּכֶם. God is the subject of the main verb אָתַן, as well as the possessor associated with the direct object רוּחִי. Thus, God acts relative to רוּחִי.

As a weak verb, the hiphil form of אָתַן would be אֶתֵּן “I will give, put, or make,” suggesting a notion of causation.³³ However, the hiphil form is not attested in the MT. Besides Ezek 36:27, אָתַן occurs twice in Ezekiel in connection with רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה and בְּקִרְבְּכֶם, whereby God is the subject of the verb (11:19; 36:26). The conversive perfect

³³ See Page H. Kelly, *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 414.

וְנָתַתִּי occurs once in the book in association with רוּחִי and בְּכֶם (37:14; cf. v. 6). The prepositional object בְּקִרְבְּכֶם used with אֶתֶּן does not render the translation “I will give within you” grammatically plausible. The prepositional object בְּקִרְבְּכֶם identifies a specific locus where רוּחִי will be set relative to the people of God. In Ezek 36:26 (cf. 11:19), the translation of the clause אֶתֶּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “and I will put a new Spirit within you” is grammatically correct rather than “and I will give a new Spirit within you.”

The clause אֶתֶּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “I will put a new Spirit within you” parallels וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ “and I will give you a new heart.” In the former, אֶתֶּן grammatically translates “I will put,” but in the latter, וְנָתַתִּי renders “and I will give.” The difference in translation can be attributed to the affirmative כֶּם and the prepositions לְ in לָכֶם and בְּ in בְּקִרְבְּכֶם. The preposition לְ is of specification, specifying the object pronoun כֶּם “you,” but the preposition בְּ is locative, identifying the קִרְבַּי “inward part” in relationship to possessive adjective second masculine plural כֶּם “your,” where רוּחִי “my Spirit” will be put. In Ezek 36:27, to translate אֶתֶּן “I will put or set” is grammatically appropriate, because the preposition בְּ in בְּקִרְבְּכֶם is locative and locates the direct object רוּחִי relative to קִרְבְּכֶם. God puts his Spirit within his people in a specific place—their קִרְבַּי (Isa 63:11).³⁴ The specific place is significant, because it is where the Spirit of God resides. Elsewhere, God נָתַן “puts” (Exod 11:29; cf. v. 5); Isa 42:1; cf. 37:7; Neh 9:20; cf. 1 Kgs 22:13; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; 37:14) and שִׁים “sets” (Isa 63:11; cf. Num 11:17) his Spirit.³⁵

³⁴ God is נֹתֵן “about to put” a רוּחַ “spirit” in Sennacherib, King of Assyria, and then the King will hear a report (Isa 37:7; cf. 2 Kgs 19:7).

³⁵ Isaiah 63:11 uses שִׁים, which is synonymous with נָתַן.

Translating אֶתֵּן “I will make or constitute” is grammatically possible in this context. The direct object רוּחִי relates to the prepositional object בְּקִרְבְּכֶם by the function of the main verb אֶתֵּן. The existence of רוּחִי in the קִרְבֵּי of the people of God amounts to the formation or establishment of the Spirit of God within them. In Ezek 36:26 (cf. 11:19), רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה, “new Spirit,” which parallels לֵב חָדָשׁ “new mind,” is constituted within the people of God so as to renew the mind of stone of the people into a mind of flesh. The act of removing לֵב הָאֲבָן “the mind of stone” and replacing it with a לֵב בָּשָׂר “mind of flesh” is equivalent to making or creating a new heart or mind. Petersen argues that “when Ezekiel anticipates a better future, humanity will need to be reconstituted, perhaps even re-created.”³⁶

In Ps 51:12 (Eng 10), David pleads with God to בָּרָא “create” a clean mind and חֲדָשׁ “renew” a steadfast Spirit within him, a concept echoed by the act of God of putting a new mind and a new Spirit within the people of God in Ezek 36:26.³⁷ Concerning the heart of flesh in Ezek 36:26, Boyle writes, “A heart of flesh means obedience to the legal statutes and ordinances, which results in the possession of the ancestral land. The oracle culminates in the legal formula of covenant (v. 28). Obduracy is to be supplanted by obedience.”³⁸ The concept of אֶתֵּן in Ezek 36:27 is related to obedience. God puts his

³⁶ David L. Petersen, “Creation and Humanity in Ezekiel: Methodological Perspectives and Theological Prospects,” in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 175.

³⁷ Ezekiel 36:26 and Ps 51:12 will be investigated in detail in comparison with Ezek 36:27 in chs. 3 and 4 respectively.

³⁸ Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, “The Law of the Heart: Death of a Fool (1 Samuel 25),” *JBL* 120 (2001): 426.

Spirit within his people for the purpose of obedience. He gives them a new mind (Ezek 36:26), the mind of flesh, so as to be responsive to his laws.

Regarding his word to the prophet Ezekiel, God commands him to obey what he is telling him and never to be disobedient, like the rebellious people of Israel, but open his mouth and eat what God is נָתַן “giving” him (Ezek 2:8).³⁹ God is giving the prophet Ezekiel his words in order for Ezekiel and the people to obey them. Presenting a scroll to him, God instructs him to eat the scroll and fill his belly with the scroll that he is נָתַן “giving” him (Ezek 2:9-3:4).⁴⁰ Then, God commands him to go and speak to the people בְּדִבְרֵי “through my word” (3:4) in order for them to hear or cease to hear (Ezek 2:5, 7; 3:11).⁴¹ Odell maintains, “The words he speaks are not his own but come to him on the scroll that is bidden to eat.”⁴²

Concerning the reception of the word of God, Renz writes,

The prophet is a model for how to receive the word of God, which is contrasted with his audience’s lack of receptiveness (2:8-3:11). In fact the resistance of Ezekiel’s exilic audience to the prophetic word is a major theme in the book, and 37:1-14 appears to comment on the fact that the prophetic word will accomplish its task only the second time round in its written form. . . . This task is the reconstitution of the people of Israel, which requires a change of allegiance in the part of the exiles.⁴³

³⁹ The words of God were found by the prophet Jeremiah, and he ate, and they were a delight in his mind (Jer 15:16; cf. 1:9 where God is putting his word in the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah).

⁴⁰ Joab put words in the mouth of the woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14:3, 19), and so did Moses to Aaron, his brother (Exod 4:15).

⁴¹ According to Job 34:3, the ear tests words just as the palate tests food.

⁴² Margaret S. Odell, “You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 241.

⁴³ Thomas Renz, “Ezekiel,” in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 226-27.

For Ezekiel to obey, God commands him to receive his word into his heart and hear with his ears (Ezek 3:10). According to Deut 30:10-14, in order for the people to do the statutes and judgments of God, הַדְּבָר “the word” is exceedingly קָרוֹב “near” their mouth and heart.⁴⁴ In Jer 12:2, God is קָרוֹב “near” in the mouth of his people, but far from מַכְלִיֹּתֵיהֶם “their kidneys.”⁴⁵ “*God’s word in the heart* is equivalent to *God’s law* in the heart. The concept of *God’s law in the heart* . . . is highly significant expression used in describing a person who is covenantally righteous,” contends Coxhead.⁴⁶ To conclude, the concept of אָתַן in the context of Ezek 36:27 suggests that God puts, sets, or constitutes רוּחִי in the קָרֵב of his people for the purpose of obedience to his laws.

The Meaning of בְּקִרְבְּכֶם

The phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם occurs three times in Ezekiel (36:26, 27; 11:19); twice in relation to רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “new Spirit” and אָתַן “I will put” and once in association with רוּחִי “my Spirit” and אָתַן “I will put” (36:27). The prepositional object can be translated and understood in at least three ways: (1) in your inward part or within you, (2) in your midst, among you, or within you; and (3) in your entrails.⁴⁷ The context of בְּקִרְבְּכֶם determines its meaning, and, therefore, the main verb אָתַן and the direct object רוּחִי influence the

⁴⁴ The psalmist confesses that in order to guard against sinning against God, it is imperative to keep the word of God in the heart (Ps 119:11).

⁴⁵ God puts his word in the mouth (Jer 1:9; Isa 51:16). The word קָרוֹב in Jer 12:2 and Deut 30:14 and the word קָרֵב in Ezek 36:27 present a word play.

⁴⁶ Steven R. Coxhead, “John Calvin’s Interpretation of Works of Righteousness in Ezekiel 18,” *WTJ* 70 (2008): 309.

⁴⁷ Targumim has בְּמַעֲיֶכֶן “in your intestines” for בְּקִרְבְּכֶם.

meaning and significance of the prepositional object and how it should be interpreted in the context of the main or independent clause.⁴⁸

To translate **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “in your inward part or within you,” one takes into account that the preposition **בְּ** is locative–locating **רוּחִי** in the **קִרְבֵּי** of the people. The phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** is made up of the preposition **בְּ** “in,” the noun common masculine singular **קִרְבֵּי** “inward part,” and the possessive adjective second masculine plural **כֶּם** “your.”

The **קִרְבֵּי אִישׁ** “inward part of man” in parallel with **לֵב** “heart” is attested (Ps 64:7 [Eng 6]; cf. Prov 14:33), and the **קִרְבֵּי לֵב** “inward part of the heart” is attested as well (Ps 36:2; cf. Lam 1:20). The preposition **בְּ** and the feminine and masculine pronominal suffixes are attached to **קִרְבֵּי**, modifying the noun accordingly (**בְּקִרְבִּי** “within me” [Ps 51:12 (Eng 10)]; **בְּקִרְבֶּיהָ** “within her” [Gen 18:12]; **בְּקִרְבּוֹ** “within him” [1 Sam 25:37]; **בְּקִרְבְּךָ** “within you” [Jer 4:14]; **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “within you” [Ezek 36:27]; **קִרְבָּנָהּ** “within them” [Gen 41:21]; **בְּקִרְבָּם** “within them” [Jer 31:33]). In Isa 63:11, the Holy Spirit of God is put **בְּקִרְבּוֹ** “within him (them).” Through the prophet Hosea, God accuses his people of having the **רוּחַ** “spirit” of harlotry **בְּקִרְבָּם** “within them” (Hos 5:4; cf. 4:12). The statement **בְּקִרְבֵּי לִבִּי** “within my heart” by the psalmist (Ps 36:2) associates **קִרְבֵּי** “inward part” with the **לֵב** “heart.” In Ezek 36:26 (cf. 11:19), the prepositional phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** echoes the phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** in Ezek 36:27 and parallels the prepositional phrase **לְכֶם** “to you.” However, the preposition **לְ** is different from its counterpart **בְּ**. The preposition **בְּ** is

⁴⁸ The context is informed by the transplantation of the heart of stone with the heart of flesh introduced in the preceding v. 26. The process indicates how God gives his people a new heart, which is paralleled by the new Spirit, closely related to their physical being.

used with the possessive adjective second masculine plural כֶּם “your.” It identifies specifically the קֶרֶב, where the רוּחַ הַדָּשָׁה “new Spirit” which parallels לֵב הַדָּשׁ “new heart” is put. The preposition לְ takes the object pronoun masculine plural כֶּם, specifying to whom the לֵב הַדָּשׁ “new heart” is given.⁴⁹

The people are given a new heart, but the new Spirit is put within them, equivalent to their קֶרֶב “inward part.” As for Solomon, the wisdom of God is בְּקִרְבוֹ “within him” לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט “to do judgment” (1 Kgs 3:28).⁵⁰ According to Jer 32:40, God says וְאֶת־יְרֵאָתִי אֶתֵּן בְּלִבְכֶם “I will put my fear within their heart.” The Spirit of God that effects the fear of God is attested in Isa 11:2. The psalmist desires that God create a clean לֵב “heart” and renew a steadfast Spirit/spirit בְּקִרְבִי “within me” (Ps 51:12 [Eng 10]). Elsewhere, קֶרֶב is closely associated with לֵב (Jer 4:14; 31:33; Pss 39:4; 55:5 [Eng 4]; 64:7 [Eng 6]; 109:22; Lam 1:20; Prov 14:33).

In Ezek 36:27, God puts his Spirit within the heart of his people in order to strengthen them to have new desires, motives, and purposes to obey his laws. Through the word of God, the Spirit of God transforms the heart or mind of a person to respond to the laws of God. The Spirit of God within the person causes the individual to discern מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” (Job 32:8, 9). The word of God hidden in the לֵב “mind” prevents a person from sinning against the Lord (Ps 119:11).

⁴⁹ Toussaint and Quine view the new Spirit in Ezek 11:19 as the Spirit of God; see Toussaint and Quine, “No, Not Yet,” 131.

⁵⁰ Cf. Isa 11:2 where רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חֲכָמָה “the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom” is attested.

The word of God, which the Lord commands the prophet Ezekiel to receive into his mind and hear with his ears, strengthens his mind as strong as a rock to resist the words of the false prophets (Ezek 3:8, 9, 10). The Spirit of God and the word of God are used in parallel and are closely linked (Ezek 2:2; 37:1, 4; Isa 59:21; 34:16; Hag 2:5; Pss 33:6; 147:18; 148:8; Zech 4:6; 7:12; Mic 2:7; Prov 1:23; Gen 1:2, 3; Jer 4:12). In essence, the Spirit of God empowers the mind through the word of God to have new desires, motives, and purposes of obeying the laws of God, unlike the mind of stone which is unresponsive to the commandments of God. The problem with the people of God is their לֵב “heart or mind.”

In Ezekiel, their heart is presented as: (1) הַזֹּנֶה “the wanton” (6:9), (2) of הָאֶבֶן “the stone” (11:19; 36:26), (3) הֹלֵךְ “going” after their גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם “idols” and בְּצַעֲמָם “their covetousness” respectively (20:16; 33:31), and (4) אֲמֵלָה “weak” (16:30). Their heart or mind is divided between their loyalty to God and idols. Instead of הֹלֵךְ “going” after their idols and covetousness, God says to them בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ “you will walk in my statutes.” Therefore, God gives them לֵב אֶחָד “one heart” (Ezek 11:19; Jer 32:39) to obey his laws by putting רוּחִי in their קִרְבָּי, interchangeable with their heart, to strengthen them through his word to love him with all their heart (Deut 6:5). The translation of בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “in your entrails” suggests that God puts רוּחִי in the “internal organs” of his people. The language is metaphorical, however. In Ezek 36:26, God gives his people a לֵב חָדָשׁ “new heart or mind” and puts a רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “new Spirit” within them. The new heart and the new Spirit are in parallel, but not identical. The new mind is given to the people, whereas the new

Spirit is put within them. God removes their לֵב הָאֲבֶן “heart of stone” from their flesh and gives them a לֵב בָּשָׂר “heart of flesh.”

In 36:26, there is no mention of a change from a spirit of stone to a spirit of flesh to suggest that the לֵב הַחַדָּשׁ “new heart” and רוּחַ הַחַדָּשָׁה “new Spirit” are identical. Their heart of stone represents their hard לֵב “heart” or “mind,” which resists hearing the word of God (Ezek 3:7).⁵¹ Their mind of flesh symbolizes a receptive mind like that of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 3:10).⁵² God orders the prophet Ezekiel to eat the scroll and fill בְּטִבְחָךְ “your belly” and וּבִמְעֵיךָ “and your intestines” (Ezek 3:3). To do the will of God is the desire of the psalmist, because the psalmist says that the law is בְּתוֹךְ מִעֵי בְּטִבְחִי “within my belly” (Ps 40:9 (Eng 8)).

Regarding the placement of his law relative to his people, God puts it בְּקִרְבָּם “within them” and writes it upon לִבָּם “their heart” (Jer 31:33). In Lam 1:20, Job 20:14, and Isa 16:11, קִרְבִּי is used together with מִעֵי “bowel,” suggesting a close relationship between the two. In order to speak the word of God to his people, God commands the prophet Ezekiel to eat the scroll and fill בְּטִבְחָךְ “your belly” and וּבִמְעֵיךָ “and your intestines.” The prophet Jeremiah testifies that the words of God were found, and, when he ate them, they were a delight for לִבִּי “my heart” (Jer 15:16). The ear tests words as the mouth tastes food (Job 34:3).

⁵¹ As Nabal heard from his wife how David was about to kill him, לִבוֹ בְּקִרְבּוֹ “his heart within him” died (1 Sam 25:37). His mind was not good and responsive as before, for he died afterwards.

⁵² Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 233.

In Jer 31:33, the clause **נָתַתִּי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְּקִרְבָּם** “I have put my law within them” parallels the clause **וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “and I will put my Spirit within you” in Ezek 36:27. According to Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people, Israel, in order to enable them to obey his laws; whereas in Jeremiah, God puts his law within them. This is indicative of the fact that Ezekiel emphasizes the empowerment of the Spirit of God, as Israel obeys the laws of God, in the context of the old covenant, but Jeremiah stresses obedience to the law of God in the context of the new covenant.

In both Ezekiel and Jeremiah, God is the subject of the verb **נָתַן** “give” and the indirect object is Israel. However, the direct objects are **רוּחִי** “my Spirit” and **תּוֹרָתִי** “my law” respectively. The two are not synonymous, but complementary. God works through his Spirit to strengthen Israel to observe his law. Elsewhere in Jer 32:40, the clause **וְאֶת־יִרְאַתִּי אֶתֵּן בְּלִבְכֶם** “and I will put my fear within their heart” conveys a related idea of God putting his fear of obedience within the hearts of his people, Israel. In regard to God putting his Spirit “within” (Ezek 36:27), Dumbrell notes, “Unlike Jeremiah 31:31–34, it is not said here that the law will be placed in the heart, though in the theology of covenant renewal, familiar to the exilic prophets this step would have been assumed, since the human heart was regarded as the volitional and emotional center of the person.”⁵³ Wright argues that “God himself, by the gift of his Spirit, will see to it that his renewed people actually will fulfil the conditions that he himself sets.”⁵⁴ He further observes, “God will do in and for Israel what Israel’s history so gloomily demonstrated they could not do for

⁵³ William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002), 164.

⁵⁴ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 397.

themselves.”⁵⁵ Rendtorff argues: “Obedience to the commandments is Israel’s response to God’s guidance and gift of the covenant (Exod 19:4-6; 24:3-8).”⁵⁶

Therefore, to put his Spirit in the entrails of his people symbolizes God putting his Spirit within the hearts of his people to influence them, through his word, to respond to his law.⁵⁷ Their mind is as strong as that of the prophet Ezekiel—fortified against the influences of the spirit and words of the false prophets to be like the surrounding nations and serve wood and stone.⁵⁸ “There will always be some individuals who are wholeheartedly committed to him, and he will continue his dealings with them,” argues Linington.⁵⁹ Regarding the law that God puts within his people and writes upon their heart in Jer 31:33-34, Linington states, “Yahweh will forgive their sins (v 34) and will write his laws (not specified, but presumably the ones already known from Sinai) on their hearts. The laws are therefore, no longer outward only, but internalized, part of the people’s character.”⁶⁰ According to Laney, “With Jeremiah, Ezekiel set forth the New Covenant as a means of bringing a new heart and understanding to the people (36:25-28).”⁶¹ Sailhammer suggests that “Jeremiah looked forward to a time when the Torah

⁵⁵ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 397.

⁵⁶ Rendtorff, “‘Covenant’ as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus,” *JBL* 108 (1998): 393.

⁵⁷ In Jer 31:33, God puts his law in the heart of his people.

⁵⁸ Ps 119:11.

⁵⁹ Silvia Linington, “The Term *קְרִיית* in the Old Testament Part IV: An Inquiry into the Meaning and Use of the Word in the Books of Samuel and Kings,” *OTE* 19 (2006): 141.

⁶⁰ Silvia Linington, “The Term *קְרִיית* in the Old Testament Part II: An Inquiry into the Meaning and Use of the Word in the Prophetic Literature (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of Twelve,” *OTE* 16 (2003): 274.

⁶¹ J. Carl Laney, “The Prophets and Social Concern,” *BSac* 147 (1990): 41.

would be internalized, not written on tablets of stone (cf. 36:26) but written on their heart (Jer 31:33). . . . The view of the Mosaic law found in the Pentateuch is essentially that of the New Covenant passages in the prophets.”⁶²

Rendering *בְּקִרְבְּכֶם* “in your midst, among you, or within you” in the context of Ezek 36:27 implies that *רוּחִי* “my Spirit” is spatially put in the midst or among the people of God. In such a case, therefore, *רוּחִי* corresponds to *מִקְדָּשִׁי* “my sanctuary” that God puts *בְּתוֹכָם* “in their midst” (Ezek 37:26) and *כְּבוֹדִי* “my glory” that God sets *בְּגוֹיִם* “among the nations” (Ezek 39:21). The prophet Ezekiel sees the glory of God coming into the temple (Ezek 43:1-5). Hamilton maintains that God puts *רוּחִי* among his people by indwelling amidst them in the temple, according to Ezek 36:27.⁶³ Thus, he argues for the presence of the Spirit of God with the people and not in the people—regenerating them, but not indwelling them. Nevertheless, in Ezek 36:27, God puts *רוּחִי* within the people so that they can be able to obey his statutes and judgments. The presence of God represented by *כְּבוֹדִי* “my glory” cannot empower the people by renewing their heart or mind through the word of God to observe the divine laws. Rather, *כְּבוֹדִי* is a sign of the presence of God dwelling among them (1 Sam 4:21, 22; Ps 26:8).

Although the presence of God among the people elicits an outward fear and reverence for God (Deut 4:10), God puts *רוּחִי* within *לְבָבְכֶם* “their heart” to fear him from within their *קִרְבֵּי* (Deut 5:29). According to Ezek 36:27, the purpose of God of putting

⁶² John H. Sailhammer, “The Mosaic Law and the Theology of the Pentateuch,” *WTJ* 53 (1991): 261.

⁶³ Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 49, 51, 52, 54, 55.

רוּחִי within the people is to empower them to obey and have life by renewing their hearts through the Spirit. The sanctuary or glory of God among his people is an outward sign of the Spirit of God within their hearts (Ezek 37:26-28). The presence of God could not empower Israel to be obedient despite the fact that God dwelt among them (Ezek 8-11).

The conclusion drawn from the above investigation of בְּקִרְבְּכֶם is that the prepositional phrase indicates a specific locale—the לֵב “heart,” interchangeable with the mind, where God puts his Spirit. The Spirit of God strengthens their weak heart through the word of God by renewing their mind to do the divine laws.

The Identity of כֶּם

The possessive adjective כֶּם can be translated “your.” It is suffixed to the singular common noun קִרְבַּי to form the phrase קִרְבְּכֶם. The preposition בְּ is prefixed to קִרְבְּכֶם to form the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם. The plural of בְּקִרְבְּכֶם would be בְּקִרְבֵיכֶם.⁶⁴ The phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם occurs here in the context where a direct discourse of God is expected (Ezek 36:22-36). Verse 22 carries the messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱדַבְּרֵנִי יְהוָה “thus says the Lord God,” v. 32 contains the declaration formula נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֱדַבְּרֵנִי יְהוָה “declares the Lord God,” and v. 36 has אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי “I the Lord have spoken and I will do.”

The possessive adjective masculine plural כֶּם references the house of Israel (Ezek 36:22, 32). The plural כֶּם is used to emphasize the new mind as the קִרְבַּי for each individual person within the community of Israel. In order for obedience to the laws to assume a corporate responsibility in the context of a covenant, it must first begin with the

⁶⁴ Cf. Ps 103:1.

individual person (Ezek 18:9, 17, 21, 27; 33:15). God addresses his people in plural, yet having a singular referent to the house of Israel.⁶⁵ Bruehler argues that “it is quite possible in Hebrew to address a community collectively with a singular ‘you.’ The switch between singular and plural in addressing the community is demonstrated in the covenant texts found in Deuteronomy.”⁶⁶

In Ezek 36:17-21, 37, an indirect speech is adopted with reference to the house of Israel in the third-person masculine plural. According to Ezek 36:26 (cf. 11:19) where a new heart or mind parallels a new Spirit, God removes the heart of stone מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם “from your flesh.”⁶⁷ Like מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם, which suggests a singular קָרַב, מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם also references singular בָּשָׂר “flesh,” emphasizing the individual בָּשָׂר. In Deut 30:14, the word of God is not far from his people, but exceedingly קָרוֹב “near” לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ “in your mouth and in your heart to do it.”⁶⁸ God is speaking to his people collectively, as if it were a single person, based on the covenant relationship with them signified by the covenant formula—“you will be my people and I will be your God (Ezek 36:28). Existing as two nations, Judah and Ephraim, God makes them אֶחָד “one” nation instead of two (Ezek 37:22; cf. 15-28). He puts his Spirit within them to strengthen them to obey his laws (Ezek 37:14, 24).

⁶⁵ The house of Israel is a reference to a multitude of people who are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) (Ezek 33:24; Gen 15:5; 28:3-4, 13-14).

⁶⁶ Bart B. Bruehler, “Seeing through the עֵינַיִם of Zechariah: Understanding Zechariah 4,” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 438.

⁶⁷ In Ezek 11:19, God gives them לֵב אֶחָד “one heart or mind.”

⁶⁸ Here, the masculine singular possessive adjective הַ “your” is used.

Not only does God address his people collectively as one person considering their numbers (Ezek 33:24), but also on the account of the covenant that he establishes with them (Ezek 36:28; 37:26, 27). In the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*, “the initial returnees from the Babylonian exile are presented as steadfast and resolute in their fidelity to the covenant and God’s commandments.”⁶⁹ Therefore, the conclusion arrived at from the above investigation is that כֶּן “your” references the house of Israel. Although God addresses his people in plural, the plural emphasizes each individual person within the Israelite community. The Spirit of God is put within the heart of each individual to enable him or her to obey the laws of God in the context of a covenant between God and his people, Israel.

The Concept of וְעָשִׂיתִי

The phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי occurs eighteen times in the OT. The majority of the occurrences are concentrated in Ezekiel where it is used fifteen times (5:8, 9, 10; 11:19; 17:24; 22:14; 24:14; 25:17; 30:14, 19; 35:11; 36:27, 36; 37:14, 22). In ten of those occurrences, the verbal phrase has an object (5:8, 9, 10; 11:9; 25:17; 30:14, 19; 35:11; 36:27; 37:22). It is used five times without an object (17:24; 22:14; 24:14; 36:36; 37:14). In five of the usages, it is preceded by the phrase דִּבַּרְתִּי “I have spoken” as the antecedent, whereby God is the subject. The phrase is used in Ezek 36:27 with the dependent clause בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments

⁶⁹ Alex P. Jassen, “The Presentation of Ancient Prophets as Lawgivers at Qumran,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 325.

and do” as the object.⁷⁰ The object is signified by the sign of the accusative אֶת plus אֲשֶׁר.⁷¹ It can be translated “and I will do, work, make, act, perform, execute, or deal.”

The verbal phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי begins the first dependent clause after the main clause. It alludes to the oath formula כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂה “thus he will do,” which “always involves an assumption of responsibility on the part of the speaker.”⁷² Considering the object, the phrase suggests that God “does” by assuming the responsibility of empowering his people to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments. He acts by putting his Spirit within them to strengthen them to obey his laws. Through the word of God, the Spirit of God renews their mind for new motives and purposes of obeying the divine laws. God works for and with his people.

According to 1 Sam 14:6, 7, 45, יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה “God works” for and עם “with” Jonathan and his armor-bearer to עָשָׂה “do” what is in the לֵב “heart” of Jonathan. It is יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן “God who worked with Moses and Aaron” to bring Israel out of the land of Egypt (1 Sam 12:6, 7). What יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים “God does” stands forever וְהָאֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה שִׂירָאוּ מִלְּפָנָיו “and the Lord does in order that they may fear him” (Eccl 3:14). Therefore, according to Ezek 36:27, the verbal phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי, relative to its object, emphasizes the main verb אָתַן “I will put” in the main clause. The two acts of God, that is, אָתַן “I will put” and וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do,” are not mutually exclusive, but

⁷⁰ Targumim has וְאֶעֱבִיד “and I will ‘do’ ‘make.’”

⁷¹ Cf. Ezek 5:9.

⁷² Yael Ziegler, “‘So Shall God Do . . .’: Variations of an Oath Formula and Its Meaning,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 66.

complementary, the latter emphasizing the former. God “does” so that his people can “do.” He “works” for and with his people by putting his Spirit within them, thereby enabling them to observe his laws.⁷³

The ׀ attached to *וְעָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-* subordinates the first dependent clause *וְעָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-* to the main clause *וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם*. The *vav* is clausal, indicating an emphasis on what God “does” in connection with the main clause. It converts *וְעָשִׂיתִי*, a completed action, into an uncompleted action. The question is: When will God “do” by putting his Spirit within his people to obey his laws?

In the chiasm structure (36:22–32), the direct speech begins with the speech formula *לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם יְהוָה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי* “thus says the Lord God,” including the inclusion *לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם* “I am not doing for your sake,” and ends with the declaration formula *נֶאֱמַר אֲדֹנָי עָשָׂה* “the declaration of the Lord God,” including the inclusion *לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי־עָשָׂה* “I am not doing for your sake.” At the apex of the chiasm are the phrases *וְעָשִׂיתִי* “and I will do” and *וְעָשִׂיתֶם* “and you will do.” God is “doing” on the basis of his holy name and his people will “do” his laws. At the end of the next section of the direct speech in 36:33-36, God reiterates *אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי* “I the Lord, I have spoken and I will do.”

Therefore, God assumes the responsibility of doing what he has spoken or promised. He “does” so by putting his Spirit within his people to empower them to observe his laws.

⁷³ *Andrews Study Bible: New King James Version* (ed. Jon L. Dybdahl et al.; Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2010), 1088.

According to Ezek 37:14, God puts his Spirit within his people and causes them to rest on their land, emphasizing that **דִּבַּרְתִּי וַעֲשִׂיתִי** “I have spoken and I will do.” In Ezek 12:25 (cf. v. 28), God says **אֶדְבַּר דְּבַר וַעֲשִׂיתִיו** “I will speak a word and I will do it.” The verb **עָשָׂה** used with the sign of the accusative **אֵת אֲשֶׁר** to denote that God “does” what he has spoken is attested (Jer 51:12; Isa 55:11; 2 Kgs 10:10; Gen 28:15).⁷⁴ The phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתִי** informs “the readers of the irresistibility of the divine word.”⁷⁵ Therefore, according to Ezek 36:27, **וַעֲשִׂיתִי** “and I will do” is reminiscent of God doing what he has said, that is, putting his Spirit within his people. Doukhan posits, “When God speaks, He acts.”⁷⁶ God “does” for the sake of his holy name to empower the people so that they can observe his laws. This is not for their sake or according to their righteous character, for they have profaned his great name among the nations. In Ezek 11:19-20, God puts a new Spirit within his people and **לְמַעַן** “for the sake” the people obey his laws.

According to the inclusion **לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה** “I am not doing for your sake” (Ezek 36:22, 32), God is **עֹשֶׂה** “doing” on the account of his great holy name. He is sparing his people from destruction on the basis of his holy name (Ezek 36:21).⁷⁷ By sparing them, God is doing what he said he will do. He says that he will cause some of them to remain alive as escapees **לְמַעַן שְׂמִי** “for the sake of my name” among the nations,

⁷⁴ Elsewhere, God does what he has spoken (Gen 41:28, 32; Num 14:35; 23:19; 2 Sam 7:25; cf. 1 Sam 3:11; 2 Kgs 20:9; Isa 38:7, 15; cf. 48:3; Jer 1:12; 28:6; Ezek 24:14; Amos 3:7). The word of God will stand (Isa 40:8; cf. 8:10; Jer 44:28, 29; Ezek 13:6, 7).

⁷⁵ Karin Schöflin, “The Composition of Metaphorical Oracles within the Book of Ezekiel,” *VT* 55 (2005): 107.

⁷⁶ Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 195.

⁷⁷ Cf. Mal 3:17.

who will remember him and loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed when he breaks their heart of idolatry (Ezek 6:8, 9; 12:16; 20:43, 44).⁷⁸ He spares them so as to put his Spirit within them and empower them to obey his laws and have life, for he says וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” (Ezek 36:27). Through Israel, the holy name of God is profaned among the nations, and through them, God vindicates his profaned great holy name among the nations.

By sparing Israel on account of his great holy name and empowering them by putting his Spirit within them to obey his laws, God is forgiving their sins in anticipation for restoring them to his land which he gave to their fathers; they will be his people and he will be their God (Ezek 36:24, 25, 28, 29, 31).⁷⁹ The charge by the nations that Israel are the people of God, yet they have gone out of his country (Ezek 36:20), is not valid anymore, because there is a reversal of events. Not only is their strength to obey the laws of God affected by the Spirit of God, but also their repentance is influenced by the Spirit through the word of God as commanded to the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:7; 3:4, 10, 11). In the literary unit of Ezek 36:22-32, the qal participle masculine singular עֹשֶׂה “doing” (vv. 22, 32) and the phrases וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” and וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” (v. 27) depict a chiasm of reverse order AB:B’A’ shown below.

A עֹשֶׂה “I am doing” (v. 22)

B וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” and וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” (v. 27)

A’ עֹשֶׂה “I am doing” (v. 32).

⁷⁸ Cf. Dan 9.

⁷⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 248; God forgives the transgressions of his people relative to his name (Exod 23:21; Pss 25:11; 106:8; cf. 143:11).

In vv. 22 and 32, the participle עֹשֶׂה “I am doing” expresses a continuous activity, that is, what God is continuously doing for his people for the sake of his holy name through his Spirit climaxing in v. 27, where God acts so that they can obey his laws. As an ongoing process, God is sparing them from destruction on the basis of his holy name, despite the fact that they had profaned it.⁸⁰ The people lament that their sins and transgressions are against them and claim that they are cut off and face death (Ezek 33:11; 37:11; 18:31, 32). However, according to Ezek 37:14, 24, God puts his Spirit within them to empower them to obey his statutes and judgments to maintain life. Concerning the fulfillment of the oracle in Ezek 36:16-31, Zimmerli posits: “Thus in fixing a period for the oracle we cannot go beyond the time of the first return or perhaps of the rebuilding of the temple (Haggai, Zechariah).”⁸¹

Although וְעָשִׂיתִי is not a hiphil but qal form, the qal form used implies that God does not sovereignly force or arbitrarily cause his people to obey his laws against their free will or choice. God commands them to be ashamed of their ways (Ezek 36:31) and שׁוּבוּ “repent” (Ezek 14:6; 18:30; 33:11; cf. 33:12; Isa 31:6; Jer 4:14, 22; 18:11; 25:5; Zech 1:3, 4; Mal 3:7). Odell opines that “the command to be ashamed turns the claims and complaints of the people back on themselves and forces them to examine their role in the failure of the divine-human relationship.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Cf. Mal 3:17.

⁸¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2, 245.

⁸² Odell, “The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59-63,” *JSOT* 56 (1992): 111. Nevertheless, she says the people are ashamed after God forgives them (p. 102). It can be argued, however, that the shame is influenced by the Spirit of God, because they are to remember their evil ways, for the Spirit of God brings their sins to their memory.

The fact that God commands his people saying שׁוּבוּ “repent” shows that he is willing to forgive them, because he does not desire the death of a sinner, but that the sinner repent and have life. The Spirit of God gives life; therefore, it is “the Spirit of life” (Ezek 37:14). According to Ezek 1:12, 20, הַרְוִיחַ “the Spirit” influences and directs the movement of the wheels, and hence, the motion of the cherubim who have life according to the vision of the glory of God.⁸³

Block observes, “It was this animating spirit that also determined the direction and the freedom of movement of the heavenly vehicle.”⁸⁴ Not only does the Spirit of God control and direct the wheels and cherubim in the context of the glory of God, but also enters into the prophet Ezekiel and causes him to stand, move, hear God speak, and see the visions of the glory of God (Ezek 2:2; 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:4). As the wheels, cherubim, and the prophet Ezekiel are influenced by the Spirit of life of God regarding the direction to go, so the Spirit of God that God puts within his people influences them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments to obey them and have life. Although the word כָּלַח “forgive” is not attested in Ezekiel, other terms attested in the book such as כָּפַר “atone” (16:63), רָחַם “have compassion” (39:25), נָשָׂא “lift” (39:26), יָשַׁע “save” (36:29), and טָהַר “clean” (36:25) convey the idea of forgiveness from God by atoning, pitying, lifting, saving, and cleansing his people.

God atones for his people when they remember and are ashamed of their sins, declaring בְּכַפְרֵי־לִךְ לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ “when I forgive you all that you have done” (Ezek

⁸³ The definite article הַ specifies the הַרְוִיחַ (cf. Ezek 37:9,10 where הַרְוִיחַ occurs four times).

⁸⁴ Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1-24*, 101.

16:63; cf. 43:20, 26; 45:20; Pss 78:38; 79:9; Exod 32:30-32; Lev 16:16; Isa 6:7). Jealous of his great holy name, God says וְרַחֲמֵי כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל “and I will have compassion on all the house of Israel” (Ezek 39:25; cf. Pss 78:38; 79:9).⁸⁵ Declaring his name to Moses, God says that he is רַחוּם “compassionate” and נָשָׂא עֲוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאת “forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin” (Exod 34:6, 7). When God has compassion on his people, he נָשָׂא “forgives” them וַיִּנָּשׂוּ “and they lift” their treacherous acts they have committed against him (Ezek 39:26; Isa 33:24; Ps 32:1; Gen 4:7). He tells them, וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם “and I will save you from all your uncleanness” (Ezek 36:29; cf. 34:22; 37:23; Ps 79:9). He cleanses their sins which חָטְאוּ “they have sinned” when he promises, וַיְטַהַרְתִּי אֹתָם “and I will clean them” (Ezek 37:23; cf. 36:25, 33). Repentance comes about as a result of God working through his Holy Spirit.⁸⁶

Through the word of God, the Spirit of God transforms their mind into a new way of thinking and attitude toward the laws of God (Ezek 2:7; 3:4, 11; 36:26). Moreover, God cleanses them with clean water and saves them from their idols and abominations respectively (Ezek 36:25, 29). The ablution with water is reminiscent of the purification ritual in the day of atonement (Lev 16:24, 26, 30; cf. Exod 29:4; Num 8:7; 19).⁸⁷ Their

⁸⁵ According to the immediate context of Ezek 36:27, God is doing for the sake of his great holy name (Ezek 36:22). The adjective רַחוּם, always of God, is used among others as an attribute of the name of God when God נָשָׂא עֲוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאת “forgives iniquity, and transgression, and sin” in Exod 34:6, 7.

⁸⁶ Hans Walter Wolf, “Prophecy from the Eighth through the Fifth Century,” in *Interpreting the Prophets* (ed. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 21; Robin Routledge, “The Spirit and the Future in the Old Testament: Restoration and Renewal,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 358.

⁸⁷ See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 24, 25; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 730.

cleansing is accomplished through the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning (Isa 4:4). Elsewhere, the cleansing and salvation of the people of God is effected through the Holy Spirit of God (Pss 51:4, 9, 14, 16 [Eng 51:2, 7, 12, 14]). Block comments that “it is preferable to see here Yahweh’s direct cathartic actions, removing the defilement caused by the people’s idolatry and other violations of Yahweh’s covenant.”⁸⁸

Tiemeyer maintains: “The idea that prayer, repentance, and supplication might bring about a revised prediction is attested also in Ancient Near East sources.”⁸⁹ The people are holy to God when, for the sake of his holy name, they remember and do his commandments by the strength of his Spirit (Num 15:40; cf. Ezek 20:20; 44:24). “It would seem, then, that there is a firm association between the name (שם) and words of the root שקד,” suggests Wells.⁹⁰ Sprinkle comments that “Yahweh’s concern for his ‘holy name’ forces him to relent from destroying the nation.”⁹¹ As for the descendants of Abraham who keep the way of God and do his judgment, לְמַעַן “for the sake,” God would bring about אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עָלָיו “what he spoke concerning him” (Gen 18:19).⁹² The exiles return “to reestablish the Sinai covenant upon its ancient, Abrahamic foundation.”⁹³ The people of God “hoped to merit divine approval by repenting and keeping the terms of the

⁸⁸ Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 354.

⁸⁹ Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Prophecy as a Way of Cancelling Prophecy—The Strategic Uses of Foreknowledge,” *ZAW* 117 (2005): 341.

⁹⁰ Jo Bailey Wells, *God’s Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (JSOTSup 305; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 167.

⁹¹ Sprinkle, “Law and Life,” 290.

⁹² Cf. Pss 25:11; 79:9; 106:8; 143:11; Isa 48:9.

⁹³ Richard J. Bautch, “An Appraisal of Abraham’s Role in Postexilic Covenants,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 43.

Sinai covenant, but their positive outlook was based on their trust that God would keep the irrevocable covenant, the covenant of divine commitment to Abraham.”⁹⁴ The book of Ezekiel “speaks to those who have lost everything and yet have everything to gain, if only they acknowledge their guilt and put their trust in God of the covenant.”⁹⁵ The everlasting covenant “בריה עולם” is a *bilateral, conditional, and breakable* covenant involving the obligations of God *and humans*.⁹⁶

Regarding the restoration of the exiles, Day observes, “This sequence of return, regeneration, and renewal is an enlarged echo of the initial promise given in 11:18–20.”⁹⁷ Empowering his people by putting his Spirit within them, not only does God enable them to observe his laws, but also restores them to their land, fulfilling the word of the covenant he made to their fathers regarding the possession of their land (Ezek 36:28; Lev 26:40-45). God shows himself holy by forgiving and restoring his people to his land. God “sanctifies himself through Israel when he brings the scattered Israel from among the peoples to their land.”⁹⁸ “This triadic relationship of God-land-people was a common ancient Near Eastern . . . gods-land-people arrangements,” observes Frendenburg.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁴ David Noel Freedman and David Miano, “People of the New Covenant,” in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period* (ed. Stanley Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 12.

⁹⁵ Renz, “Ezekiel,” 226.

⁹⁶ Steven D. Mason, “*Eternal Covenant*” in *The Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 226.

⁹⁷ Day, “Ezekiel and the Heart of Idolatry,” 31, 32.

⁹⁸ Ka Leung Wong, “Profanation/Sanctification and the Past, Present and Future of Israel in the Book of Ezekiel,” *JSOT* 28 (2003): 230.

⁹⁹ Frendenburg, *Ezekiel*, 316.

surrounding nations have possessed the land of God for themselves and magnified against God, although God was in the land (Ezek 35:10, 12, 13; 36:2-5). However, God is going to dispossess them and give back the land to his people for the sake of his holy name and not for the sake or character of his people, Israel (Ezek 36:6, 34, 35).

The dispossession of the nations occupying the land of Israel by God in order to resettle his people for the sake of his holy name is reminiscent of how God dispossessed the nations from the land he gave to their fathers as he brought Israel out of Egypt. He dispossessed the nations because they were wicked (Deut 9:4-7). In the same way, God dispossesses the nations round about the land of Israel, because they have possessed it and gloated over the captivity of Israel, although God was in the land (Ezek 36:5; 35:10). As God empowers his people through his Spirit to obey his laws, he brings about the time or day his word envisions.¹⁰⁰ He says that his people קָרְבוּ לְבוֹא “are near to go” to their land (Ezek 36:8).¹⁰¹ He will make his name known amidst his people, Israel, and bring about the day he has spoken (Ezek 39:7, 8).

Responding to the complaints of his people that the word of the חֲזוֹן “vision” of the prophet is too far in the future, and therefore is not fulfilled, God tells the prophet Ezekiel to inform them that קָרְבוּ הַיָּמִים “the days are near” for the word of every חֲזוֹן “vision” (Ezek 12:22, 23, 27). Otto remarks that “the people were called upon to wait its fulfilment, for it was certainly a word of the Lord, it would surely come to pass.”¹⁰² By

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Ezek 6:8; 12:16.

¹⁰¹ God will dispossess the nations and give the land to his people (Ezek 36:5, 7; 35: 11, 14, 15).

¹⁰² Randall E. Otto, “The Prophets and Their Perspective,” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 228.

restoring his people to their land, on the basis of strengthening them through his Spirit to obey his laws, God provides for them not only an opportunity to obey his laws under one nation, but also the context in which to keep them. The land supports abundant produce and cattle that not only sustain life, but are also used in the worship and sacrificial services to God (Ezek 36:38; 44-48). The restoration of the sanctuary of God enables them to keep his laws regarding the sanctuary and the land according to their covenant with God (Ezek 37:26; 40-48).¹⁰³ The captivity could not provide a conducive environment for Israel to keep the laws of God as stipulated with regard to the land that God gave to their fathers.¹⁰⁴ In Ezek 20:33, God swears that he will rule over his people.

Launderville comments,

The use of the oath formula emphasizes again the Lord's commitment to his word; his integrity demands that he follow through on his original promise that he would be their God. Therefore, the Lord's action of bringing the exiles out from the nations is due first of all the Lord's commitment to his word. It is in this connection between promise and fulfillment that reality is revealed. Ezekiel emphasizes the objective character of the Lord to his promise. It is not for the sake of the Israelites that the Lord acts—a subjective relationship—but rather for the sake of his name; i.e., his reputation as one who has the power and the will to follow through on his promises (Ezek 36:22).¹⁰⁵

The majority of English versions translate וְעָשִׂיתִי with a causative meaning “and I will cause you to.”¹⁰⁶ The translations treat וְעָשִׂיתִי as a hiphil form, but grammatically it is a qal form. The hiphil form of עָשָׂה is not attested in the MT. Theoretically, the hiphil

¹⁰³ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 382.

¹⁰⁴ For example, they did not have cities of refuge, which provided safety for someone before they were judged (Num 35).

¹⁰⁵ Dale Launderville, *Spirit and Reason: The Embodied Character of Ezekiel's Symbolic Thinking* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 351.

¹⁰⁶ See p. 8 above.

form of וְעָשִׂיתִי would be וְהָעֲשִׂיתִי.¹⁰⁷ The qal stem “is simple semantically in that notions of causation are absent.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, “in contrast to the other five major stems, *Qal* and *Niphal* stems ordinarily have no element of causation in their predication.”¹⁰⁹

To translate וְעָשִׂיתִי as a hiphil requires that תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk” and תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep,” which are qal forms second masculine plural, be translated “to walk” and “to keep” respectively as infinitives. The object of וְעָשִׂיתִי suggests that God is the one who “does” what he has said or spoken. He takes the responsibility upon himself, concerning what he has said to his people, by taking the initiative of putting his Spirit within them, so that they are able to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments.

Some scholars interpret the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי with a causative nuance, like the majority of the English versions that are noted above, to mean that God causes his people to obey his laws by forcing or imposing his Spirit within them, irrespective of their will.¹¹⁰

For example, Schwartz argues, “For Ezekiel, Israel’s compliance with YHWH’S laws will ultimately be accomplished by force, when, following the return from exile,

¹⁰⁷ The hiphil form first-person common singular וְהָעֲלִיתִי of עָלָה “to go up,” which shares a similar stem with עָשָׂה, is used in Ezek 37:12, and the hiphil form first-person singular וְהָעֲלִיתִי of הֵלַךְ “to walk” is found in Ezek 36:12.

¹⁰⁸ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 362.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ In his commentary, Joyce argues that, since the Spirit of God is the dynamic power of God, the moral will of Israel is renewed by the dynamic power of God, considering that God makes them observe his laws, and, therefore, Israel is passive and inactive in their renewal; see *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2007), 204.

YHWH himself transforms his people into his very obedient servants (36:25-27).”¹¹¹ Greenberg interprets *וְעָשִׂיתִי* as “alluding to Israel’s enforced obedience to the law.”¹¹² He claims that “God will put his spirit into them, he will alter their hearts (their minds) and make it impossible for them to be anything but obedient to his rules and commandments.”¹¹³ For Joyce, “ultimately, however, since obedience is guaranteed, it would seem that the responsibility of Israel has been subsumed in the overriding initiative of Yahweh.”¹¹⁴

Bowen strongly argues, “In Ezekiel there is no confessing, no humbling, no making amends. Israel does nothing. God acts unilaterally toward Israel to ensure that Israel will never again disobey God’s law.”¹¹⁵ She maintains that “they will always follow God’s statutes and observe God’s ordinances. It will be impossible for Israel to do anything else.”¹¹⁶ Robson asserts, “Yahweh’s intervention, bringing about change in attitudes and behavior, will ensure that the history of rebellion and failure will never be repeated.”¹¹⁷ He also argues,

¹¹¹ Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View,” 47. He reasons that God acts unilaterally against their will to force his people into compliance with the old covenant (ibid., 51, 60, 65).

¹¹² Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 733; see also Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 190.

¹¹³ Greenberg, “Three Conceptions of the Torah in Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Die Hebräische Bible und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte*, Fest R. Rendtorff (ed. E. Blum et al., Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 375; see also Nancy R. Bowen, *Ezekiel* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2010), 223.

¹¹⁴ Joyce, “Divine Initiative and Human Response,” 127.

¹¹⁵ Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 223.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 223.

Here, again, the apparent antimony of divine initiative and human responsibility reappears. The house of Israel is to be marked by repentant shame (36:32), even in the present; yet the obedience that is envisaged (36:27b) is clearly brought about by the initiative of Yahweh. The presence of a new heart and a new driving force, in fact Yahweh's own רוח, within the house of Israel, points to willing action by them in obedience—yet the fact that both are the gift of Yahweh points to Yahweh's sovereignty initiative. Yahweh's action is more than simply “creating the conditions for human responsibility,” for Yahweh “causes” obedience (v. 27).¹¹⁸

Wright sees

a tension here (as throughout the Bible) between the role of human will and choice and the role of divine causation. God commands obedience and we must make our free choice to respond to obey—or not. But at the same time, God gives his Spirit and ‘makes’ that obedience happen. One pole of the tension affirms human freedom. The other affirms divine sovereignty.¹¹⁹

According to the above view, all the Israelites are deemed to be controlled sovereignly by God through his Spirit. Their observance of the laws is guaranteed from then on, and into the future “to insure the people’s utter and unending obedience.”¹²⁰ Thus, when their disobedience and sins are evident in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, it is argued that the promise of God in Ezek 36:27 was not fulfilled in their life at the time of restoration.¹²¹ The view overlooks the fact that וְעָשִׂיתִי is a qal form and not causative hiphil.

Judging by the object of וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do,” that the people are to walk in statutes and keep the judgments of God, וְעָשִׂיתִי suggests that God enables his people to obey his laws. He “does” by empowering them through his Spirit that he puts within

¹¹⁸ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 223.

¹¹⁹ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 297.

¹²⁰ Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, “The Book of Ezekiel: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections” (NIB 6; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2001), 1492.

¹²¹ See p. 11 above.

them. The Spirit of God strengthens them by renewing their mind through the word of God and transforms their desires, motives, and purposes to respond to his laws. God commands the prophet Ezekiel to go and speak to the exiles בְּדִבְרֵי “through my words” (Ezek 3:4; cf. 2:4, 7; 3:10, 11; 11:25; 12:28) whether they obey or cease to obey. The people are free to choose to hear or to cease to hear. Their freedom to will and obey is maintained under the influence of the Spirit of God through the word of God. Block convincingly argues that “Yahweh will not impose his grace on a rebellious people. They must accept responsibility for both the course of their lives and their destiny. Without repentance God cannot forgive and the death sentence remains inevitable. But where repentance occurs, grace triumphs and the sinner is granted life, full and abundant.”¹²² For Hummel, “God does not impose his grace on the unwilling.”¹²³

Scholars such as Fredenburg, McConville, and Rooker, among others, claim that Israel did not repent and, therefore, God did not put his Spirit within them in order to obey his laws. Citing reasons such as disobedience of Israel as the consequence of being under the Persian rule beyond the Babylonian captivity, the sin of Israel as evidenced in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, and lack of evidence in the book of Ezekiel that they repented, the scholars maintain that the blessings of restoration were never realized by the people of God.¹²⁴ Schwartz argues that the cleansing of Israel was just a ritual

¹²² Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 1-24*, 589.

¹²³ Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 547.

¹²⁴ Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 298, 300; McConville, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 223, 224; Rooker, “Evidence from Exile,” 127.

purification from their physical impurities and not forgiveness.¹²⁵ He maintains that, according to Ezekiel, God forces his people to obey, because “Israel neither realizes nor confesses its sinfulness and there is no indication that the exile is expected to initiate a process leading to their rectified behavior.”¹²⁶ Therefore, according to him, “*Israel is never forgiven.*”¹²⁷ Greenberg maintains that “God’s purification of impenitent Israel takes effect without Israel’s volition.”¹²⁸

The argument that Israel did not repent does not consider that:

1. The restoration of Israel was based on the salvation, forgiveness, and mercy of God for the sake of his great holy name, and not for their evil ways, for God does what he says he will do (Ezek 36:22, 27, 32; 20:43, 44). Israel was unwilling to obey the word of God because of their rebellious heart (Ezek 3:7), and, consequently, God exiled them. In captivity, God breaks their stubborn heart by the experience of the exile, because they loathe their idols for the sins they have committed through them and remember God (Ezek 6:8-10). “When God restores his people, he forgives, regenerates, sanctifies, and empowers,” posits Kufeldt.¹²⁹

2. Repentance was an individual responsibility within a corporate covenant responsibility (Ezek 18:9, 17, 21, 27; 33:14, 15). God does not force Israel to obey him or put his Spirit within a person irrespective of the will of the individual. The willingness

¹²⁵ Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View,” 49.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹²⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 738.

¹²⁹ George Kufeldt, “Ezekiel” (ABC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 700.

of a person to receive the Spirit and the word of God is based on the willingness to have life, repent, obey, and to maintain the life received through the Spirit of God. However, VanGemeren and Abernethy argue that “Yahweh’s promise of restoration is not contingent on Israel’s response. Yahweh takes responsibility for both Israel’s transformation and the future covenant relationship and blessings.”¹³⁰ Their argument depicts God as restoring his people irrespective of their will. This is not consistent with the context of restoration, whereby the people loathe themselves for the evil they have committed against God, and God forgives them (Ezek 36:31; 16:63; 6:9; 20:43).

3. Forgiveness of the current sins and transgressions of Israel does not guarantee their future sinlessness. Their future obedience still depends on their willingness to be empowered by the Spirit of God put within them to have life and maintain it by obeying. The Spirit of God influences them through the word of God in their future obedience.

4. There are Israelites who obey the command of God to go and build the house of God in Jerusalem (Ezra-Neh 1:1-7). To fulfill the word of God spoken by the prophet Jeremiah concerning the restoration of Israel, God influences the spirit of king Cyrus and the spirit of his people who are willing to go and build his house in Jerusalem and restore the worship services.

In conclusion, therefore, considering the object of וְעָשִׂיתִי, that the people are to walk in the statutes and keep the judgments of God, the phrase implies that God works for and with his people by putting his Spirit within them to empower them to obey his statutes and judgments. He does what he has spoken, that is, puts his Spirit within them

¹³⁰ VanGemeren and Abernethy, “The Spirit and the Future,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 339.

for the sake of his holy name. The Spirit of God within them renews their mind and strengthens them through the word of God to repent and respond to his laws.

Although the word סָלַח “forgive” is not attested in Ezekiel, unlike his contemporary Jeremiah, other words such as כָּפַר “atone,” רָחַם “have compassion,” טָהַר “cleanse,” and יָשַׁע “save,” suggesting forgiveness, are used. God forgives Israel and works for and with his people to obey his laws and restores them to his land and fulfills the חֲזוֹן of the prophet.

The Grammatical and Syntactical Use of אֵת אֲשֶׁר

Used together, the direct object marker אֵת and relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר occur nine times in Ezekiel (2:8; 3:1; 5:9; 12:25; 16:45; 23:22; 36:27). In the eight instances (2:8; 3:1; 5:9; 12:25; 16:45; 23:22), אֵת governs אֲשֶׁר, whereby אֲשֶׁר is used as relative pronoun, meaning “that.”¹³¹ In Ezek 36:27, however, אֲשֶׁר introduces a final clause with the meaning “so that” you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and you will do (them) [cf. Deut 4:40].¹³² The sign of the accusative אֵת marks the direct object of וַעֲשִׂיתֶם, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them.” The direct objects (i.e., the prepositional phrases בְּחֻקֵי and וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי) precede the verbal phrases תִלְכוּ and תִשְׁמְרוּ, respectively, for emphasis.

Concerning אֵת אֲשֶׁר, Holmstedt cautions, “אֵת אֲשֶׁר complement clauses should not be confused with אֵת אֲשֶׁר clauses preceded by the particle אֵת, often thought to mark the

¹³¹ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 180.

¹³² Ibid., 638-39; see also Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 635.

accusative case. The latter type of clause is more accurately a headless relative which stands in the object position.”¹³³ God intends that his people obey his statutes and judgments and have life. However, it is impossible to obey the laws and maintain life without the empowerment of the Spirit of God.

Therefore, God puts his Spirit within them to strengthen them so that they can obey his laws. In Ezek 36:27, אֶת governs the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר, marking the object of וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” to introduce a final clause. God “works” by enabling his people to obey his laws by putting his Spirit within them. God works through his Spirit to strengthen his people for obedience.

The Clause בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ

The significance of בְּחֻקֵי is at par with its counterpart מִשְׁפָּטֵי, because the people are supposed to “walk in” them and “keep” them interchangeably (Ezek 37:24; cf. 18:19, 21). Statutes and judgments occur together twenty times in Ezekiel. Once, they are referenced as the statutes and judgments of the fathers of the people of Israel, where God forbids his people to do them (20:18) because they are not good and cannot give life (20:24, 25). The noun חֻקָּה/חֻק occurs twenty-six times in various forms in the book (5:6(2x), 7; 11:12, 20; 18:9, 17, 19, 21; 20:11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25; 33:15; 36:27; 37:24; 43:11(2x), 18; 44:5, 24; 46:14) and can be translated “something subscribed,” “statutes,” “due,” or “enactment.” Nineteen times it is attributed to God and once (20:18) to the fathers of the people of Israel. Thrice it is associated with the house of God (43:11;

¹³³ Robert D. Holmstedt, “Headlessness and Extraposition: Another Look at the Syntax of אֲשֶׁר,” *JNSL* 27 (2001): 5.

44:5) and once designated for the altar (43:18) and daily offerings (46:14), respectively.

The prepositional object בְּחֻקֵי occurs twice in Ezekiel (11:12; 36:27).

The phrase וּמִשְׁפָּטַי occurs three times in Ezekiel (11:12; 18:9; 36:27). The *vav* prefixed to it is a phrasal conjunctive *vav*, joining clauses מִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ and בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ¹³⁴. The phrase can be translated “and my judgments,” “and my justice,” “and my ordinances,” or “and my decisions.” It is placed before the governing verb תִּשְׁמְרוּ for emphasis. Zimmerli asserts: “The double expression משפטי־חקותי shows the coming together in Israel’s sacred law of both the casuistic (משפטים) and apodictic (חקת) types . . . which is already apparent in the Book of the covenant.”¹³⁵ When the wicked יָשׁוּב מִכָּל יְשׁוּבוֹ “repents from all his sins,” בְּחֻקֵי הַחַיִּים הֵלֵךְ “walks in the statutes of life,” and חָטְאָתוֹ “repents from all his sins,” וַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט “and has done justice,” חַיָּה יִחְיֶה “surely he shall have life” (Ezek 18:21; 33:15; cf. 18:7, 9, 17, 19, 30, 32; 33:11, 14).¹³⁶ Repentance demands that the sinner יָשׁוּב “restore” what has been acquired unjustly (Ezek 33:15; 18:7, 12, 17). It involves remembering God, one’s own evil ways, loathing oneself for the wickedness done, and casting away all transgressions committed against God (Ezek 36:31; 6:9; 20:43; 18:31).

Associated with life, בְּחֻקֵי “my statutes” and וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” relate to the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” that God puts within his people to have life (Ezek 37:14) and הַרוּחַ “the Spirit” that leads the living beings (Ezek 1:12, 20). The preposition בְּ prefixed

¹³⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 648.

¹³⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 175.

¹³⁶ In his relationship with Israel, God commands them תְּחַיֵּי “to have life” (Ezek 16:6).

to הָקִי is of agent; the people walk by the statutes of God. To walk in or go by the statutes of God implies that the statutes are understood as ways or the character of God. The way of the statutes of God is attested (Ps 119:33).

The ways of the people of Israel are evil (Ezek 36:31); and the false prophets of the house of Israel are הֹלְכִים “walking” after רוּחָם “their spirit” (Ezek 13:3; cf. Jer 23:16, 32). The spirit of the people is to be like the families of the earth that serve wood and stone (Ezek 20:32). Moreover, their heart is הֹלֵךְ “going” after their idols (Ezek 20:16; 11:21; cf. 33:31), and רוּחַ זְנוּנִים בְּקִרְבָּם “the spirit of harlotry is within them” (Hos 5:4). On various occasions, God accuses his people of not walking in his statutes, but doing according to the statutes and judgments of the nations round about (Ezek 5:6, 7; 11:12; 20:13, 16, 21). When he brought them from Egypt, God warned Israel not to walk in the statutes of people of the land of Canaan (Lev 18:3).¹³⁷ Thus, when they are doing according to the nations surrounding them, they are walking in the statutes of those nations (Ezek 5:6, 7; 11:12) and the statutes of their fathers. As God brought his people to the land he swore to give them, they sacrificed and offered gifts on בְּמָקוֹם “high place” (Ezek 20:28, 29).¹³⁸ “As for idolatry, various rulers are said to have used images, typically from other cults,” observes Greenspahn.¹³⁹

The people complain that the way of God is not fair. However, God counters their accusation by telling them that it is their way which is not just (Ezek 18:25, 29; 33:11, 17,

¹³⁷ Moshe Greenberg, “Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel,” *JANESCU* 22 (1993): 35.

¹³⁸ Amnon Ben-Tor, ed., *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (trans. R. Greenberg; New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), 174, 196, 197, 292, 326.

¹³⁹ Frederick E. Greenspahn, “Syncretism and Idolatry in the Bible,” *VT* 54 (2004): 493.

20). Their ways bring death, but the ways of God lead to life. In Deut 30:15, God sets before Israel **וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת־הָרָע** “life and good or death and evil.” If Israel obeys, they have life and good, but if they disobey, the consequences are death and evil. “At the center of Ezekiel 18 (and 33:10-20) stands the message of life. It is clear that the prophet was not therewith introducing something new, but was simply authorizing the fresh acceptance of a message which had previously been expressed by the priests of the temple,” posits Zimmerli.¹⁴⁰ Coxhead supposes that “*to walk in God’s precepts* is nothing else than to form [one’s] life and morals according to the rule which has been prescribed by God.”¹⁴¹ Kaiser explains that “God’s law was meant to be a light on one’s path: it was intended to point out which direction a person should go.”¹⁴²

God gave Israel his statutes and judgments when he brought them out of Egypt (Ezek 20:11, 13, 21; Deut 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; Neh 9:13; Jer 44:10). In Ezek 20:11, the statutes are specified as **חֻקֹתַי** “my statutes” and **מִשְׁפָּטַי** “my judgments” respectively. Apart from the ten words of the covenant written on the tablets of stone (Deut 4:13), God also speaks to Moses the statutes and judgments (Deut 4:14; 5:31; 6:1; 31:9, 24-26).¹⁴³ God gives the ten words, statutes, and judgments in order **לְהוֹרִתָם** “to teach” Israel **לַעֲשׂוֹת** “to do” them (Exod 24:12; Lev 10:11; Deut 4:13; 5:1; 6:1; cf. 33:10).

¹⁴⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 387.

¹⁴¹ Coxhead, “John Calvin’s Interpretation,” 307.

¹⁴² Walter C. Kaiser, “Images for Today: The Torah Speaks Today,” in *Studies in Old Testament Theology* (ed. Robert L. Hubbard, Robert K. Johnstone, and Robert P. Meye; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1992), 118.

¹⁴³ Abraham, the forefather of the people of Israel, kept the statutes of God (Gen 26:5; cf. 18:19).

The עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים “ten words” are differentiated from the statutes and judgments by the following vocabulary:

1. They are specified by the definite article הַ and numerical cardinal masculine singular construct עֲשֶׂרֶת “ten” (Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4).
2. God דִּבֶּר “spoke” directly to Israel (Deut 5:22; 10:4) וַיִּכְתֹּבם עַל־שְׁנֵי לְחֻת אֲבָנִים “and he wrote them upon two tablets of stone” (Deut 4:13; cf. 5:22; 9:10; 10:2, 4; Exod 31:18; 32:15, 16).
3. God directly נָתַן “gave” them to Moses (Exod 24:12; Deut 10:4; 9:11).
4. Moses made an ark for them to be put in when he testifies וָאֲשַׁם “and I put them” (Deut 10:2, 5).
5. They are called דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית “words of the covenant” (Exod 34:28) and לְחֻת הַבְּרִית “tables of the covenant” (Deut 9:15).

The statutes and judgments, however, are differentiated from the ten words by the following vocabulary:

1. They are specified by the definite article הַ, adjective feminine singular וְזֹאת “and this . . . the statutes and judgments” (Deut 6:1), adjective plural אֵלֶּה “these statutes” (Deut 17:19), and הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים “these judgments” (Deut 7:12).
2. The fact that God דִּבֶּר “spoke” to Moses to speak to Israel is suggestive of mediation (Lev 10:11; Deut 5:31) וַיִּדְבֹּר אֲלֵהֶם “and he spoke to them” (Deut 5:1).

3. Unlike the ten words, הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר “they were written in a book” (Deut 30:10) by Moses וַיִּכְתֹּב “and he wrote” (Exod 24:3, 4; cf. 28:58; 31:24; 31:26; Deut 31:24).

4. The Levites in charge of the ark of the covenant put the סֵפֶר “book” מִצַּד “beside” the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:26). Thus, the ten commandments are distinct from the statutes and judgments.¹⁴⁴ However, the latter are based on the former. The statutes and judgments are the praxis or practical aspect of the ten words or commandments in the context of the covenant between God and his people, Israel. The ten words or commandments are recorded in Exod 20:1-17, but the judgments are explained in Exod 21-23.¹⁴⁵

Regarding the difference between the ten words or commandments and the statutes and judgements, “there is a distinction between the ten, which are command laws, and the balance of the laws in Exodus, and those found in Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, which are primarily ‘case’ laws—extensions of the ten based on new circumstances and pronounced by judges,” writes Kuntz.¹⁴⁶ Swanepoel opines: “The function of the law in Deuteronomy is to protect the weak from exploitation by the strong, and justice is the spirit and the apparatus to which this is done.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ God wrote the ten words or commandments with his finger on the tablets of stone (Exod 24:12; 31:18; 32:15, 16; 34:1, 28), but Moses wrote the statutes and judgments in a book (Exod 34:27; 24:4).

¹⁴⁵ Peter Enns, *Exodus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), 442; Calum M. Carmichael, *The Origins of the Biblical Law: The Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), ix; Herbert Wolf, *Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1991), 152.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Grimley Kuntz, *The Ten Commandments in History: Mosaic Paradigm for a Well-Ordered Society* (ed. Thomas D’Evelyn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 10.

¹⁴⁷ M. G. Swanepoel, “The Import and Function of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament,” *OTE* 5 (1992): 385.

For Walton,

In contrast to the Decalogue, which is introduced as the “words” (*devarim*) that Yahweh spoke (Exod 20:1), the Book of the Covenant is introduced as the “judgments/decisions” (*mishpatim*) that Moses instructed by God to set before the people. In Exodus 21:2-22:17 these decisions are presented as case law introduced by a protasis with the decision following, as in the ancient Near Eastern exemplars. From Exodus 22:18-23:19 the text adopts the apodictic formula, which simply dictates what they are not to do.¹⁴⁸

The judgments are case laws applying moral law to civil society. Restored to their land, not only are the judges required to execute justice according to the judgments of God (Ezek 44:24), but, also, the people are supposed to do justice to one another (Ezek 18:5-8). God requires them to apply the principles of his judgments in dealing with one another, including the aliens among them. Since judgments belong to God, when the people judge, he is actually doing the judging. As long as the people are willing to judge by the laws, God judges through his Spirit because “justice emanates from the nature of God.”¹⁴⁹

The oppression of the poor, widows, orphans, and sojourners is one of the sins condemned by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 18:12; 22:7).¹⁵⁰ Outside Israel, “in the Akkadian world, kings indeed could prevent the excessive oppression of the poor by periodically cancelling debt, and freeing slaves.”¹⁵¹ The statutes are to be kept by the people at all times, including, but not limited to, the appointed times (Ezek 44:24). The

¹⁴⁸ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 292.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 141; see also Richard A. Allbee, “Asymmetrical Continuity of Love and Law between Old and New Testament: Explicating the Implicit Side of a Hermeneutical Budge, Leviticus 19:11-18,” *JSOT* 31 (2006): 159.

¹⁵⁰ Laney, “The Prophets and Social Concern,” 40.

¹⁵¹ Mary R. Bachvarova, “Relations between God and Man in the Huro–Hittite *Song of Release*,” *JAOS* 125 (2005): 48.

appointed seasons involve place, time, and quantity (Ezek 43-46). In regard to place, God commands the people to keep the חֻקֵי בֵּית־יְהוָה “statutes of the house of God” when they rebuild it (Ezek 44:5; cf. 43:11). Concerning time, God gives them the חֻקֵי עוֹלָם תָּמִיד “statutes of perpetual daily offering” (46:14). Relating to the quantity, as to how much to do or to what extent, Israel has the חֻקֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ “statutes of the altar” (43:18).

Obedied without the power of the Spirit of God, repentance toward God, or obtaining forgiveness from God, the statutes and judgments are not good, but evil ways which cannot give life (Ezek 20:24, 25).¹⁵² Transgressing against the laws brings death to the people, because there is a penalty of death for the transgressor (Lev 20; Exod 21:12, 14–17). Israel complains that their sins and transgressions are upon them, and because of them pine away, are cut off, have lost hope, their bones are dry, and have no life (Ezek 33:10; 37:11). Their eyes are after the idols of their fathers, and God defiles them when they offer all their firstborn as sacrifices by fire (Ezek 20:26).¹⁵³ Concerning Ezek 20:26, Zimmerli comments,

V. 26a has directly in mind the demand of the firstborn by Yahweh which is earlier to be found in Ex 22:28. Whilst more peaceful times silently presuppose the possibility of the redemption of human firstborn by an animal sacrifice (Ex 13:13, 15), there came into currency in the time of Ahaz and Mannasseh, undoubtedly under various foreign influences, a literal interpretation of the command. Ezekiel could not simply dismiss this rigorous interpretation with a gentle wave of the hand.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Scholars differ concerning the laws that God gave his people which were not good. It is argued that the laws: (1) are God’s laws perverted by the people; (2) are sacrifices and gifts that God commands to be performed in v. 26; (3) are the laws of other nations, and (4) represent the judgment of God. For various views, see for example: Block, *The Book of Ezekiel 1-24*, 636-40.

¹⁵³ God commanded Israel to redeem all their firstborn males and those of their unclean animals (Exod 13:15; Num 18:15).

¹⁵⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 411.

The people of Israel, in their spirit, desire to be idolatrous by serving wood and stone like the other nations, because they אַמְרִים נְהִיָה כְגוֹיִם כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָרֶץ לְשָׂרֵת עֵץ וְאֶבֶן “are saying ‘let us be like the families of the earth to serve wood and stone’” (Ezek 20:32). God is aware of their spirit, because he alerts them when he says וּמַעֲלוֹת רוּחְכֶם וְהָעֹלָה אֲנִי יֹדְעֶתִיָּה “and the coming up of your spirit I know it” (Ezek 11:5).¹⁵⁵ He warns לָא תִהְיֶה עֲלֵי-רוּחְכֶם הָיִו לֹא תִהְיֶה “but the rising of your spirit to be shall not be” (Ezek 20:32).¹⁵⁶ In Mesopotamia, the

Mesopotamian gods were worshiped in their temples in corporal manifestations as living, anthropomorphic cult statues. Given the centrality of these statues to the cult, it may be assumed that a ritual for assimilating the finite, physical image to the transcendent, intangible god and transforming the humanly manufactured icon into a living deity was one of the most significant practices in Mesopotamian religion.¹⁵⁷

Wong observes, “As idolaters they do not recognize Yahweh as the true God and hence his demand for holiness, and as murderers they do not respect the sanctity of life whose source is God.”¹⁵⁸ Concerning idolatry, Day writes,

According to the Book of Ezekiel, “Idolatry is the quintessential cause of the Babylonian Exile.” The sin of idolatry was the primary reason for God’s judgment on Israel—whether idolatry at the high places (chap. 6), idolatry in the temple (chap. 8), or idolatry in the heart (chap 14). Of all the sins God condemns and people commit, idolatry is the root sin, the sin that explains all others.¹⁵⁹

According to Zimmerli,

¹⁵⁵ God knows their thoughts, as expressed in words, which they are speaking (cf. 36:3; 38:10).

¹⁵⁶ By working through his Spirit, God changes their plans and makes them his own people.

¹⁵⁷ Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, “The Mesopotamian God Image: From Womb to Womb,” *JAOS* 123 (2003): 147.

¹⁵⁸ Wong, “Profanation/Sanctification,” 212.

¹⁵⁹ Day, “The Heart of Idolatry,” 21.

The 'conditions of life' (so further 33:15) for individuals are proclaimed to the present generation which stands under judgment, as its own possibility of life. Against a fateful expectation of death Ezekiel sets, not a simple expectation of life, but the living word of God which calls men and demands of the obedience, and only therein promises life.¹⁶⁰

In Ezek 22:25-30, the people practice extortion, their prophets mislead them by false visions, their priests neglect to do and teach them the laws of God, and their princes pervert justice.

VanGemeran holds the view that:

The true prophet built on the foundation of the Mosaic *law*. As the guardians of the theocracy, they operated solely from the framework of revelation. They remained true to the foci of the Mosaic legislation: exclusive loyalty to Yahweh the covenant-Lord (suzerain) strict adherence to the ethics of Sinai (regulations pertaining to holiness, righteousness and justice, love and fidelity, and a concern with peace), a sensitivity to social issues (justice and care for the right of the poor, aliens, orphans, and widows), and a hope that the Lord would grant to Israel the privilege of his presence in blessing and protection, resulting in *rest*.¹⁶¹

The restoration of the temple was an important project for the people in obeying his statutes and judgments. Wood argues, "A prime order of business on arriving in the homeland was the rebuilding of the temple. Its immediate construction was imperative for the restoration of temple worship for the spiritual wellbeing of the returned exiles and as a witness of Jewish devotion to Yahweh before the neighboring people."¹⁶²

In captivity, the exiles lacked guaranteed freedom of worship, as well as the original physical sanctuary that gave them the context of observing the laws of God as prescribed in their covenant with God. "The notion that the ritual must be performed

¹⁶⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 175.

¹⁶¹ VanGemeran, "Prophets," 84.

¹⁶² Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* (rev. David O'Brien; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1986), 335.

according to the written rules occurs also in the Ugaritic texts,” notes Weinfeld.¹⁶³ In exile, not only does the prophet Daniel pray facing Jerusalem in accordance with his adherence to the law of God, which he is accused of keeping, but also for the restoration of the exiles and the temple in Jerusalem (Dan 6, 9). Therefore, in order to restore his temple and people, Israel, God charges Cyrus, king of Persia, and Israel to build the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1).¹⁶⁴ “The central theme of Ezekiel 40-48 is the restoration of the temple and the return of the glory of God to it,” notes Davidson.¹⁶⁵

In conclusion, the clause *וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי הַשְּׁמֵרוֹ* implies that the people obey the statutes and judgments that God gave Israel in the context of the covenant relationship between him and his people, Israel. As statutes of life, they are to be obeyed through the Spirit of God that gives life.

The Phrase *וַעֲשִׂיתֶם*

The phrase *וַעֲשִׂיתֶם* occurs twice in Ezekiel (36:27; 24:22). In 24:22, it is used relative to the phrase *עָשִׂיתִי* “I have done,” whereby the prophet Ezekiel implores the people saying *וַעֲשִׂיתֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי* “and you shall do as I have done.”¹⁶⁶ The *vav* prefixed is clausal and emphasizes the second dependent clause by subordinating it to the first

¹⁶³ Moshe Weinfeld, *The Place of the Law in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 37.

¹⁶⁴ God foretells this event in Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10 and Isa 44:28.

¹⁶⁵ Davidson, “The Chiastic Literary Structure,” 77.

¹⁶⁶ The idea of reciprocity displayed here by *וַעֲשִׂיתֶם* and *עָשִׂיתִי* alludes to the concept of the play on words *וַעֲשִׂיתִי* and *וַעֲשִׂיתֶם* in Ezek 36:27, whereby God “does” so that his people “do.”

dependent clause **בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ** “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments.” The verbal phrase lacks an object, but the object is implied as the statutes and judgments of God. In Ezek 11:20; 20:11, 13, 19, 21; 37:24 (cf. Lev 18:5, 19:38, 25:18; 20:22; Deut 4:14), the antecedent of the object **אֲתָם** is the statutes and judgments of God. God cites what his people have done against him, providing the basis for captivity,

Behold, the princess of Israel in you, everyone according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst, the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. You have despised my holy things, and profaned my sabbaths. There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and men in you who eat upon the mountains; men who commit lewdness in your midst. In you men uncover their fathers’ nakedness; in you they humble women who are unclean in their impurity. One commits abomination with his neighbor’s wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you defiles his sister, his father’s daughter. In you men take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and increase and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God (Ezek 22:6-12; cf. 18:10-13; 8:3, 5, 10-12, 14-17; 36:17-18; 20:27-32; 16 [RSV]).

It is impossible to do the laws of God through human strength. According to Ezek 20:11, 13, 21; Lev 18:5, when **יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם** “a person does them lives by them.” Here, **הָאָדָם** “the person,” specified by the definite article **הַ**, is the one who, by human ability, **יַעֲשֶׂה** “will do” without the working of God through his Spirit as expressed in Ezek 36:27 **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do” and **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do.” The human weakness lacks the power of the Spirit of God.

Although they have not kept his laws, God intends that the people observe them as he works within them through his Spirit. The inclusion **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do” and **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do,” according to Ezek 36:27, therefore, is a stylistic feature used by

the author to convey the manner in which God “does.” He puts his Spirit within his people to empower them to observe his statutes and judgments and do them. Therefore, **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** references the people of God doing the statutes and judgments of God. It is a willing response to the initiative of God as God works within them through his Spirit to empower them for obedience to his laws.

Summary

Ezekiel 36 belongs to the chapters that are concerned with the restoration of the people of God, Israel, from the Babylonian exile. Ezekiel 36:27 is the emphasis or high point of the chiasmic structure exhibited in ch. 36:22-32. Verse 27 comprises the main clause or the independent clause and two dependent clauses marked by clausal *vavs*. The direct objects **רוּחִי**, **בְּחֻקֵי**, and **מִשְׁפָּטַי** of the verbal phrases **אֶתֶּן**, **תֵּלְכוּ**, and **תִּשְׁמְרוּ**, respectively, are placed before the verbs for emphasis. The verbal phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתִי** has its object as **אֵת אֲשֶׁר-בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do (them).” The phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** lacks an object; however, the object is implied as the statutes and judgments of God. The phrases **וַעֲשִׂיתִי** and **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** depict a word play and an inclusion. God “does” so that his people can “do.” He puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his laws. The majority of modern English versions translate **וַעֲשִׂיתִי** “and I will cause,” introducing a causative nuance. Some scholars, therefore, view God as acting unilaterally by forcing Israel to observe his statutes and judgments.

The Spirit of God in Ezekiel is in contrast with the spirit that the Israelites walk after. Their intention is to be like the nations surrounding them in order to serve wood and stone. They are doing according to the statutes and judgments of their fathers and the surrounding nations. They lament that they are utterly cut off and the way of the Lord is unjust. However, God intends to put his Spirit within them so that they can obey his statutes and judgments and have life. By doing what he has said and vindicating his name through his people, Israel, God acts for the sake of his holy name.

Conclusion

The emphasis or high point depicted in Ezek 36:27 calls for attention. God wants his people to have life as opposed to their death. However, the people lament that their transgressions and sins are against them, they are cut off, and have no life. Thus, they testify to the fact that they are incapable of obeying the laws of God. Therefore, in order to give them life and empower them to obey his laws, God puts his Spirit within them. Life is maintained by doing the statutes and judgments of God through the power of the Spirit. The Spirit of God empowers the people to repent of the transgressions that they have committed against God. The Spirit of God also strengthens the people through the word of God by renewing their mind for new desires, motives, and purposes to respond to the laws of God. God forgives them for the sake of his holy name. He does not arbitrarily force them to obey his laws, but works through his Spirit to will and observe his laws.

The statutes and judgments are the praxis or practical aspects of the ten words or commandments of God, which God gave them to be observed in the context of the

covenant between God and Israel. The people recognize God as Yahweh, and God acknowledges them as his people—a covenant formula. He restores them to his land, which he gave to their fathers, and fulfills the וַיִּרְוֶה “vision” of the prophet, thereby vindicating his holy name through them among the nations.

CHAPTER 3

INTRATEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27

The following investigation endeavors to explore the intratextuality of Ezek 36:27 by comparing it with the texts that have corresponding words, phrases, and clauses within the book of Ezekiel.¹ The purpose is to determine how the texts inform Ezek 36:27 with regard to the Spirit of God and obedience to the divine laws. The method used includes: noting the semantic and grammatical differences and similarities, collating the words or phrases of the two texts, and discussing the implication of the similarities and differences in translation and interpretation of v. 27. The texts selected are discussed as they appear in the MT.² Tables are drawn to aid in the comparison.

Ezekiel 11:19-20

In Ezek 11:19-20, the text **וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם . . . בְּחַקְתִּי יֵלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִשְׁפָּטִי**

אֶתֶם “and I will put a new Spirit within you . . . they will walk in my statutes

and keep my judgments and do them” parallels the text **וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם . . . בְּחַקִּי**

וְעֲשִׂיתֶם “and I will put my Spirit within you . . . you will walk in my

¹ As used in this study, intratextuality (within text[s]) refers to linguistic, literary, and syntactical relationships between selected texts within the book of Ezekiel and v. 27. I have used the word *intertextuality* in the title of the dissertation for simplification. See the definition of intertextuality on p. 105.

² The research does not address the issues of authorship, date, unity, or transmission of the book of Ezekiel; see p. 14 above.

statutes and keep my judgments and do them” in Ezek 36:27. In Ezek 11:19, רוח is qualified by the adjective חדשה “new” and lacks the direct object marker את. In Ezek 36:27, רוחי is modified by the possessive adjective י “my” and is preceded by the direct object marker את. The common feminine plural of חקה is used in 11:20, while in 36:27, the masculine plural is used. The verbal phrases ילכו, ישמרו, and יעשו in 11:20 are in third masculine plural, but the verbal phrases תלכו, תשמרו, and תעשיתם in 36:27 are in second masculine plural. The verbal phrase יעשו in 11:20 has אתם as the object. The object is lacking for the verbal phrase תעשיתם in 36:27. The phrase משפטי in 11:20 is preceded by the sign of the accusative, but lacks in 36:27. Table 3 compares the two texts.

Table 3. Comparison between Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:27

Ezekiel 11:19-20	Ezekiel 36:27
רוח “and Spirit”	ואת־רוחי “and my Spirit”
חדשה “new”	—
אתן “I will put”	אתן “I will put”
בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”	בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”
בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes”	בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes”
יֵלְכוּ “they will walk”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
יִשְׁמְרוּ “they will keep”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you shall keep”
וְעָשׂוּ “and they will do”	וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do (them)”
אֹתָם “them”	—

In Ezek 11:19, the new Spirit that God puts within his people is semantically identical to the new Spirit in Ezek 18:31 and 36:26. All three occurrences of רוח חדשה in

the OT are in Ezekiel, and there is no reference to human spirit. Elsewhere, the adjective *חַדָּשָׁה* and noun *חַדָּשׁ* are used with verbs *עָשָׂה* “do,” *בָּרָא* “create,” *כָּרַח* “cut,” and *נָתַן* “put,” where God is the subject (Isa 43:19; 65:17; Jer 31:22, 31; Ps 40:4). In Pss 51:12 (Eng 10), 104:30, and Lam 5:21, the piel *חִדְּשָׁה* “renew” is used where God is the subject, signifying that God renews with intensity by creating anew. In Psalm, God renews by creating through *רוּחַ*, his Spirit, *רוּחַ קָדְשְׁךָ* “your Holy Spirit” (51:13 [Eng 11]) and *רוּחְךָ* “your Spirit” respectively. The occurrence of *רוּחַ חַדָּשָׁה* in Ezek 36:26 is emphasized as *רוּחִי* “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27, implying that *רוּחִי* is the Spirit of God. In both 36:26 and 11:19, *רוּחַ חַדָּשָׁה* is put *בְּקִרְבְּכֶם* “within you” as in 36:27. In 18:31, however, the people have to do for themselves *רוּחַ חַדָּשָׁה*. Here, in 11:19, *רוּחַ חַדָּשָׁה* is paralleled by *לֵב אֶחָד* “one heart,” but in 36:26, *רוּחַ חַדָּשָׁה* is in parallel with *לֵב חַדָּשׁ* “new heart.”

According to 11:19, the new Spirit put within the people implies that God puts his Spirit as a new Spirit to renew the heart of the people by making it one in order for them to obey his laws stated in 11:20. The laws are referenced by the direct object marker *אֹתָם* “them,” but they are implied in 36:27, because *אֹתָם* is lacking. Their heart is divided between walking after their idols and inquiring of their God (Ezek 20:16, 31, 39; 14:3, 4, 5; 11:21; 33:30-32; Josh 24:23). God wants their allegiance to be directed to him alone, hence giving them one heart (Ezek 14:5, 11; 13:22).³ Their false prophets are prophesying from their own hearts, leading them away from God (Ezek 13:2, 3, 23). Robson rightly observes that “the obedience which is made possible by the ‘one heart and

³ Deut 6:1-6.

a new spirit' in 11:19, and which will be the case under the new king (מלך) in 37:24, will be brought about by the divine רוח in 36:27a."⁴ According to Ezek 11:19-20, God puts a new Spirit within his people לְמַעַן “for the sake” to obey his laws, and they are his people, and he is their God—a covenant formula.⁵ In Ezek 36:22, 32, God “does” for the sake of his holy name. He works through his Holy Spirit (36:27) to empower his people to obey the divine laws. Therefore, Ezek 11:19-20 informs Ezek 36:27 and vice versa. Some scholars interpret the new Spirit in 11:19 as human spirit.⁶ Zimmerli observes that unlike Ezek 36:27, in Ezek 11:19 there is “no specific reference to the spirit of God.”⁷ The same argument, however, can be made that in 11:19 there is no specific reference to human spirit. If הַרוּחַ הַקָּדוֹשׁ is human spirit, as Zimmerli claims, because there is no specific reference to the Spirit of God, then it should not be also assumed that the Spirit of God is empowering the people to observe the laws of God in v. 20, since the Spirit of God is not referenced. Greenberg argues that the people will be forced to obey the laws of God when he writes, “Vss. 19-20 foreshadow the doctrine of the future compulsory obedience of the Israelites worked out later in 36:26-27.”⁸ However, other scholars such as Toussaint and Quine consider the new Spirit in Ezek 11:19 as the Spirit of God.⁹

⁴ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 252.

⁵ Here, לְמַעַן stands alone without an object, implying for the sake of the holy name of God.

⁶ See for example, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 262; Robson *Word and Spirit*, 245; Cooke, *International Critical Commentary of the Book of Ezekiel*, 125, 202; Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 110, 175, 320.

⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 249.

⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 190.

⁹ Stanley D. Toussaint and Jay K. Quine, “No, Not Yet: The Contingency of God’s Promised Kingdom,” *BSac* 164 (2007): 134.

Ezekiel 18:9

The clause **בְּחֻקֹתַי יִהְיֶה וּמִשְׁפָּטַי שָׁמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת** “he will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments to do” in Ezek 18:9 bears semantic resemblance to **בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי** “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do.” The prepositional phrase **בְּחֻקֹתַי** in 18:9 is based on the feminine plural of **חֻקָּה**, while in 36:27, the phrase **בְּחֻקֵי** is based on the masculine plural of **חֻק**.¹⁰ The verbal phrases **יִהְיֶה** and **שָׁמַר**, according to 18:9, have the subject in the imperfect and perfect third-person singular respectively, whereas in 36:27, the phrases **תִלְכוּ** and **תִשְׁמְרוּ** have the subject in the imperfect second masculine plural. According to 18:9, the verbal phrase **לַעֲשׂוֹת** is an infinitive construct, while in 36:27, the phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** with a prefixed **וַ** is a qal perfect second masculine plural. The infinitive construct is of purpose signified by the preposition **לְ** and represents timelessness in obeying the laws of God. In Ezek 36:27, God “does” to strengthen his people to do his laws. Table 4 compares the two texts.

Table 4. Comparison between Ezekiel 18:9 and 36:27

Ezekiel 18:9	Ezekiel 36:27
בְּחֻקֹתַי “in my statutes”	בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes”
יִהְיֶה “he will walk”	תִלְכוּ “you will walk”
וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
שָׁמַר “has kept”	תִשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep”
לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”

¹⁰ The difference in gender does not influence the meaning of statutes as different in both texts.

The presentation of the subject in the third-person singular in the verbal phrases **יְהַלֵּךְ** and **שָׁמַר** in 18:9 implies that obedience is individualized. The person must repent by restoring the pledge and turning the hand from transgression (vv. 7, 8; cf. 17, 21), walking in the statutes, and keeping the judgments of God and **תִּיּהּ יִחְיֶה** “surely he will have life.” Here in 36:27, the verbal phrases **תִּלְכוּ** and **תִּשְׁמְרוּ** occur in second masculine plural, emphasizing the individual responsibility of obedience in a corporate responsibility envisioned in 18:9. By obeying the statutes of life (Ezek 33:15), and receiving forgiveness of sins and transgressions from God, the individual maintains the life received through the Spirit of God.

In Ezek 36:27, the phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do” presents an uncompleted action. However, the action is completed when a person, willingly through the empowerment of the Spirit, hears the word of God, repents, and obeys (Ezek 18:21, 27, 28; 33:12, 15, 19). The Spirit of God convicts the person of sin and repentance through the word of God. When God forgives him or her, he puts his Spirit within the person in order to obey the divine laws, thereby maintaining the life received.

The comparison between 18:9 and 36:27 demonstrates that the individual obedience stipulated in the former is emphasized in the latter in the context of corporate responsibility through the empowerment of the Spirit of God.

Ezekiel 18:31

Ezekiel 18:31 **וַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם . . . וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה** “and do for yourselves . . . also a new Spirit,” has phrases that parallel the phrases in Ezek 36:27 **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם . . . וְאֶת־רוּחִי** “and my

Spirit . . . and you will do.” In 18:31, the qal imperative masculine plural **וַעֲשׂוּ** is used, while qal perfect second masculine plural **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** is used in 36:27. The prepositional phrase **לְכֶם** “for yourselves,” found in 18:31, is missing in 36:27. The phrase **וְרוּחַ**, according to 18:31, is qualified by the adjective feminine **חֲדָשָׁה** and lacks the sign of the accusative **אֵת**. In 36:27, the phrase **רוּחִי** is modified by the possessive adjective י “my” and is preceded by the object marker **אֵת**. Table 5 collates the two texts.

Table 5. Comparison between Ezekiel 18:31 and 36:27

Ezekiel 18:31	Ezekiel 36:27
וְרוּחַ “and Spirit”	וְאֵת־רוּחִי “and my Spirit”
לְכֶם “for your self”	כֶּם “your”
וַעֲשׂוּ “and do”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
חֲדָשָׁה “new”	—

According to Ezek 18:31, God commands Israel to do for themselves a new Spirit, but in Ezek 36:27, he instead puts his Spirit within them so that they can obey his laws. The imperative phrase **וַעֲשׂוּ** “and do” in 18:31 suggests an uncompleted action. The action is completed when God puts his Spirit within them so that they can observe his statutes and judgments. The majority of the English Bible versions translate **וַעֲשׂוּ** “and make or get.”¹¹ Furthermore, some scholars see the new Spirit in 18:31 as the

¹¹ See for example, KJV, NRSV, NAS, RSV, CJB, ESV, NKJ, NLT, NAU, NAB, BBE, CSB, YLT, TNK, WEB, NJB, NIB, DBY.

anthropological or human spirit of the people that they should change for themselves.¹² It is argued that the human spirit needs to be replaced with the dynamic power of God or the Spirit of God promised to be put within them in Ezek 11:19; 36:26. The question arising from the English translations and the identity of the new Spirit as scholars view it is whether the people are capable of making or getting a new heart and a new human spirit for themselves.

Comparatively, the people are supposed to do for themselves a new Spirit in Ezek 18:31, while in Ezek 36:27, God puts the Spirit within them and it is identified as רִיחִי “my Spirit,” signifying that it is the Spirit of God. On the one hand, God commands Israel to do for themselves a new Spirit, but on the other, he puts his Spirit within them. The tension created by the command of God to do for themselves a new Spirit and the act of God of putting his Spirit within them has generated debate among scholars.¹³ The two statements are not contradictory, however. According to the inclusion and wordplay וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” . . . וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezek 36:27, God works for and on behalf of his people by putting his Spirit within them so that they can do his laws. God works for his people through his Spirit by way of their repentance and forgiving them of their sins. Thus, “through his Spirit Yahweh participates directly in man’s new obedience.”¹⁴ This concept is in contrast with when הָאָדָם “the person” is doing the laws

¹² For example, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 262; Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, 125, 202; Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 110, 176, 320; Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 82; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 145; John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 89.

¹³ For the debate, see Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 217-23.

¹⁴ Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1056.

without the working of God (Ezek 20:11, 13, 21; Lev 18:5), because there is no repentance involved, and hence no forgiveness from God.

According to Ezek 18:30-32, Israel should *שׁוּבוּ* “repent” and cast away all the transgressions they have committed. Levison argues, “It is left to individual Israelites to repent, to throw away their sins and to make *for themselves* a new heart and a new spirit.”¹⁵ God desires them to have life and, therefore, he has *רַחֵם* “compassion” on them and *כַּפֵּר* “forgives” them (cf. Ezek 39:25; 6:63) and puts his Spirit within them.¹⁶

However, God does not arbitrarily put his Spirit within his people or forgive them while they are unrepentant; otherwise, he would not command them to repent. They must be willing to accept and receive the Spirit of God in their hearts. Repentance is a change which the Spirit of God effects in them by renewing their mind through the word of God to have a new desire, motive, and purpose of obeying the divine laws. Not only are they supposed to desire to have the Spirit of God within them to have life and empower them to repent, but also to obey the divine laws and sustain the life received. In this sense, the people are doing for themselves a new heart and a new Spirit.

The apparent tension is resolved when the new Spirit is seen not as the human spirit, but as the Spirit of God, having the quality of renewing the hearts of the people. If the Spirit of God is not in view in Ezek 18:31, then how is it possible for the people to make or get their heart or human spirit without assuming that the Spirit of God not

¹⁵ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 90.

¹⁶ Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 238; Cooper, *Ezekiel* (NAC 17; Broadman and Holman, 1994), 193; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 588, 589; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 119.

mentioned in the text is empowering them? The command of God to do for themselves a new heart and new Spirit suggests that God wants them to repent and be forgiven.

The people are not able to change their own hearts; they say that their transgressions and sins are against them and they are cut off, wasted, their hope destroyed, and have no life (Ezek 33:10, 11; 37:11). They are incapable of walking in the statutes and keeping the judgments of God, because their transgressions and sins are against them and they have no hope (Ezek 33:11; Josh 24:19). The purpose of God of putting his Spirit within his people is to give them life, empowering them to obey his laws and maintain the life.¹⁷ In order to have life, they must repent and be forgiven of their sins.¹⁸

Repentance is influenced by the Spirit of God by renewing their hearts through the word of God that the Lord commands to the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:4, 5; 3:10).¹⁹ God tells the prophet Ezekiel to go and speak the words of God to them (Ezek 2:7; 3:4, 10). If the people hear the word of God and are willing to repent, the Spirit of God convicts them of their transgressions through the word of God. They will have a new desire, motive, and purpose to obey the divine laws. Therefore, for the people to do for themselves a new Spirit represents their repentance influenced by the Spirit of God, whereby God forgives them and puts his Spirit, the new Spirit, within them to have life and maintain the life by obeying the divine laws. Ezekiel 18:31 informs Ezek 36:27.

¹⁷ The life Israel is to maintain is both physical and spiritual.

¹⁸ Their sins are posing to them the threat of death.

¹⁹ Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1055.

Ezekiel 20:21

According to Ezek 20:21, the clause **בְּחֻקֹתַי לֹא־הֵלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי לֹא־שָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת** “they did not walk in my statutes and keep my judgments to do them which a man will do and have life by them” contrasts the clause **וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחֻקֵי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and I will do so that you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do (them)” in Ezek 36:27. In 20:21, the feminine plural of **חָקָה** is used, but in 36:27, the masculine plural of **חָק** is used. The difference in gender does not suggest that the statutes of God are different in both texts, but the same.

In 20:21, the direct object marker **אֵת** is used with **מִשְׁפָּטַי**, but is not present in 36:27. The *vav* conjunction is attached to **מִשְׁפָּטַי** in both texts. According to 20:21, the verbs **הֵלְכוּ** and **שָׁמְרוּ** are third-person masculine plural, whereas in 36:27, the verbs **תִּלְכוּ** and **תִּשְׁמְרוּ** are second-person masculine plural. The negative particle **לֹא** “not” used in connection with **הֵלְכוּ** and **שָׁמְרוּ** is absent in 36:27. The infinitive construct **לַעֲשׂוֹת** and *qal* imperfect third-person masculine singular **יַעֲשֶׂה** in 20:21 are matched by the phrases **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** and **וְעָשִׂיתִי** in 36:27. However, the subject of **לַעֲשׂוֹת** and **יַעֲשֶׂה** in 20:21 is **הָאָדָם** “the person,” while the subject of **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** and **וְעָשִׂיתִי** in 36:27 is Israel and God, respectively.

The article **הַ** attached to **אָדָם** specifies the noun, indicating that the person is doing the laws by himself or herself. The relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר** in 20:21 corresponds to the relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר** in 36:27. The phrase **אוֹתָם** in 20:21, whose antecedent is the phrases **וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי** and **בְּחֻקֹתַי**, is missing in 36:27. The texts are compared in table 6.

Table 6. Comparison between Ezekiel 20:21 and 36:27

Ezekiel 20:21	Ezekiel 36:27
בְּחֻקֹתַי “in my statutes”	בְּחֻקַי “in my statutes”
לֹא־הָלְכוּ “they did not walk”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
לֹא־שָׁמְרוּ “they did not keep”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep”
יַעֲשֶׂה/לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do”/ “he will do”	וְעָשִׂיתִי/וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and I will do”/“and you will do”
אֲשֶׁר “that”	אֲשֶׁר “that”
אוֹתָם “them”	—
הָאָדָם “the person”	—
וְחַי “and live”	—
בְּהֵם “by them”	—

According to Ezek 20:21 (cf. 11, 13, 19), Israel rebels against God by not doing his laws. Life is promised to the person who obeys them **אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בְּהֵם** “which (the) man will do them and have life by them,” implying that obedience envisioned in Ezek 36:27, through **רוּחִי** within the people, gives life. The preposition **בְּ** of means or instrument, suggesting that the person maintains life by means of doing the laws. The part that God plays **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do” by putting his Spirit within his people to empower them to obey the laws according to 36:27 is missing here in 20:21. The fact that the people have rebelled against God and disobeyed his laws proves that they have no human power to obey them. They lament that their sins and transgressions are against them and question how they can have life under this circumstance (Ezek 33:10). God addresses them through the prophet Ezekiel as rebellious (Ezek 2:5-9; 3:26;

12:2, 3, 9, 25; 18:12; 24:3; 44:6). According to Deut 27:26, the person who does not do the words of the law is cursed.

In Ezek 36:27, unlike 20:21, God directly participates in the obedience of his people by putting his Spirit within them so that they can obey his laws. Without God working within them through his Spirit, it is impossible to obey the divine laws, because they are not repentant and God does not forgive their sins. The Spirit of God renews their heart by transforming it from the heart of stone into the heart of flesh, signifying new life (Ezek 36:26). The change is effected through repentance and forgiveness of their sins and transgressions (Ezek 18:31). The Spirit of God empowers them by strengthening their mind, through the word of God, to have a new motive and purpose of obeying the laws of God. They have life by means of the Spirit of God and maintain the life received by obeying the laws of God through the Spirit. Therefore, obedience to the laws of God is possible only by the means of the Spirit of God within a person and not keeping the law. The life received through the Spirit of God is maintained by obeying the divine laws by the strength of the Spirit, as opposed to observing them by their human strength.

Ezekiel 36:26

In Ezek 36:26, the clause **וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “and I will put a new Spirit within you” parallels the main clause **וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “and I will put my Spirit within you” in v. 27. The semantic difference is that in v. 26, **רוּחַ** is qualified as **חֲדָשָׁה** and lacks the sign of the accusative **אֶת**, whereas in v. 27, **רוּחַ** is modified by the possessive adjective “my” and preceded by the object marker **אֶת**. The verbal phrase **אֶתֵּן**

and the prepositional object בְּקִרְבְּכֶם are identical in both texts. In both clauses, the objects are emphasized by being placed before their governing verbs in the Hebrew word order.²⁰ Table 7 collates the two texts.

Table 7. Comparison between Ezekiel 36:26 and 36:27

Ezekiel 36:26	Ezekiel 36:27
<p>וְרוּחַ “and Spirit”</p> <p>חֲדָשָׁה “new”</p> <p>אֶתֵּן “I will put”</p> <p>בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”</p>	<p>וְאֵת “and”</p> <p>רוּחִי “my Spirit”</p> <p>אֶתֵּן “I will put”</p> <p>בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”</p>

According to the parallelism shown in table 7, the new Spirit that God puts within the people in v. 26 is emphasized in v. 27 by the possessive adjective first-person common singular י “my” as his Spirit. In both texts, God puts both the new Spirit and his Spirit בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you.” The implication is that the phrases אֶתֵּן and בְּקִרְבְּכֶם in the two verses are identical, and, therefore, the identity, purpose, and function of the new Spirit and the Spirit of God are deemed identical.

According to v. 26, the qualifying adjective חֲדָשָׁה “new” suggests that God renews the לֵב “heart” of his people by his Spirit, emphasized in v. 27, so that they can have a לֵב חֲדָשָׁה “new heart” of בָּשָׂר “flesh.” The לֵב חֲדָשָׁה “new heart” given to Israel can also

²⁰ The normal word order for biblical Hebrew is verb-subject-object; see Elizabeth Hayes, “Hearing Jeremiah: Perception and Cognition in Jeremiah 1:1-2:2,” *HSS* 45 (2004): 115.

be interpreted as new mind, because it also means mind (Ezek 38:10; Jer 3:16; 19:5; 32:35; 44:21). According to Job 34:3, the mind receives the words of God through the ears. Commissioning the prophet Ezekiel to proclaim his words to the rebellious house of Israel in order to hear or cease to hear, God tells him, אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרַי אֲשֶׁר אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ קַח, בְּלִבְכֶּה וּבְאָזְנֶיךָ שְׁמָע “all my words that I will speak to you; receive in your mind and hear with your ears” (Ezek 3:10).

The people have a hard לֵב “mind” and hard מִצְחָה “forehead” (Ezek 3:7; cf. 2:7). The Spirit בּוֹא “enters” the prophet Ezekiel just as God דִּבֶּר “speaks” to him, indicating that the Spirit is closely linked with the words of God that the prophet Ezekiel speaks to the people. For God to give them a new mind of flesh different from that of stone, the people are supposed to hear with their ears and receive in their mind the word God sent through the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, accompanied by the Spirit, the word of God transforms their mind. The transformed mind of flesh signifies that their mind is warm and receptive to the words of God, as opposed to their former cold and unresponsive, hard and stony mind.

Scholars are divided regarding whether the new Spirit in v. 26 is the Spirit of God or human spirit. Some see the new heart paralleling the new Spirit in v. 26 as synonymous, because both refer to the gift to the people of God of being renewed to be able to obey him.²¹ God renews their heart, which is also their spirit—the seat of their

²¹ See the following (but not limited to): Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 245; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 262; Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1055, 1056; Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 53; Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 320; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1997), 730; Joyce, “Divine Initiative and Human Response,” 111; Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 116; Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 392.

moral thinking (Ezek 11:5; 20:32). Thus God renews their heart, which is also their spirit by his Spirit. According to this view, the human spirit is renewed by the Spirit of God, although the Spirit of God is not mentioned in the text.

In order to prove that the people were not individually indwelt by the Spirit of God in the OT covenant, Hamilton argues that רִיחַ הַדָּשָׁה in v. 26 is a new attitude to the people through regeneration, paralleled by the לֵב הַדָּשָׁה of which both the new heart and the new spirit will be effected in the future when the people will return to their land.²² He further argues that the רִיחִי “my Spirit” in v. 27 that God puts within his people is God indwelling among his people in the temple, through his spirit or presence partially fulfilled in Hag 2:5, when the people will be restored to their land.²³ Kaiser negates Hamilton by arguing that “the Holy Spirit did indwell Old Testament believers.”²⁴ Hamilton translates the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם with one meaning only—“among you.” The phrase also means in your “inward part” or “entrails.” The phrase is identical in v. 26 and v. 27, suggesting that the new Spirit in v. 26 and the Spirit of God in v. 27 are put in the same locus of the people.²⁵ Although in v. 26, רִיחַ הַדָּשָׁה and לֵב הַדָּשָׁה are parallel, they are not necessarily synonymous, because whereas לֵב הַדָּשָׁה is elaborated in the text to mean the heart of flesh which replaces the heart of stone, רִיחַ הַדָּשָׁה is not.²⁶

²² Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 49-54.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Kaiser, “The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament,” *EvQ* 82 (2010): 315.

²⁵ Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit,” 39.

²⁶ For chiasmic arrangement of vv. 26-27, see Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 52.

Concerning the parallelism between the new Spirit and the new heart in v. 26, Block observes that “the prepositions associated with the verbs are different. Where as the new mind is given to (*l-*) Israel, the new spirit is placed within (*bqrb*) her.”²⁷ By being put within the people, the Spirit of God indwells them for obedience to the divine laws. The purpose of God in putting his Spirit within his people is to enable them to obey his laws by transforming their heart of stone into a heart of flesh. The new Spirit in v. 26 is new in the sense that the Spirit renews the hearts of the people by transforming their hearts from hearts of stone into hearts of flesh—from being cold and unresponsive to being warm and responsive to the laws of God. The people will have a new motive and purpose of obeying the laws of God. The purpose of God is accomplished if his Spirit is put in the inward part or the hearts of the people and not indwelling outside them in the temple as the presence of God.

The view by Hamilton that God will put his Spirit among his people by indwelling in the temple when they go back to their land overlooks the fact that the people drove God out of his sanctuary as they served idols and disobeyed his laws (Ezek 8-11). Under those circumstances, the presence of God in the sanctuary could not prevent the people from transgressing the laws of God. On the contrary, the presence of God made them feel that they were protected and secure despite their transgression (Ezek 13:10, 16). The presence of God indwelling in the temple after their restoration cannot empower the people to obey the divine laws.²⁸

²⁷ Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit,” 39.

²⁸ For the definition of being indwelt by the Spirit of God, see Kaiser, “The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament,” 309.

The רוּחַ הַדָּשָׁה in v. 26 emphasized as רוּחִי in v. 27 is put within the people for the purpose of transformation of their mind. Other scholars view the new heart and the new Spirit as complementary. The new Spirit is interpreted as the new human driving force, or power of the people, renewed by the dynamic power of God independent of their renewed heart.²⁹ Thus, the dynamic driving force of God becomes their new driving force. Greenberg comments, “God will replace Israel’s hopelessly corrupted spirit with his own impulsion to goodness and righteousness.”³⁰ He notes, “Now in 36:27 ‘my spirit’ defines what was just called ‘a new spirit’ (36:26) to be implanted in the people, that will bring about conformance to God’s laws (36:27).”³¹ Robson contends, “The stubborn, rebellious house of Israel has no ‘driving force’ to obey. It needs Yahweh’s dynamic, potentiating, revivifying רוּחַ.”³²

The above interpretation perceives God as having a driving force that forcefully overrides the human spirit and takes control of their being. The view, therefore, advances the idea that God arbitrarily forces his Spirit within his people and transforms their corrupt spirit into a new divine spirit irrespective of their will. The view fails to notice that the new Spirit emphasized as the Spirit of God brings about the transformation of a new heart by renewing the mind of the people, through the word of God, to obey the divine laws.

²⁹ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 245-49; Hans Wolff, *Anthropology* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1974), 54.

³⁰ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-47*, 730.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 746-47.

³² Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 249.

The false prophets of Israel are prophesying מִלְּבָבָם “from their mind” and walking after רוּחָם “their spirit” (Ezek 13:2, 3; cf. 11:5; 20:32). Although they claim that they are speaking the word of God and expect the word to stand, God has not spoken or sent them (Ezek 13:6-8). Their heart goes after idols of wood and stone and has become like stone-cold and unresponsive to the laws of God. They have not observed the laws of God, but have done according to the laws of the nations round about (Ezek 5:7; 11:12). Therefore, God transforms their heart to respond to his word through the new Spirit—his Spirit.

Scholars such as Block, Robson, Tuell, and Wright perceive the new Spirit in v. 26 as the Spirit of God expressed in v. 27. Block concludes, “Now we learn that the *ruah* referred to in v. 26 is indeed Yahweh’s Spirit. Furthermore, the transformation effect of the infusion of this *ruah* is described: Yahweh thereby causes them to walk in his statutes and observe his covenant standards.”³³ For Robson, “the new רוּחַ promised in v. 26 is further identified as none other than Yahweh’s רוּחַ.”³⁴ “The new spirit is *God’s* spirit,” asserts Tuell.³⁵ Wright argues that “the promise made in 36.26, ‘I will put in you a new *ruach*’ . . . is explicated in v. 27, ‘my *ruach* I will put in you.’”³⁶

The view expressed by Block, Tuell, Robson, and Wright lends credence to the fact that the new Spirit in v. 26 is the Spirit of God due to the following reasons:

³³ Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit,” 39.

³⁴ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 243.

³⁵ Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 247.

³⁶ T. John Wright, “The Concept of *Ruach*,” in *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs: The Art of Exegesis; Studies in Honor of Antony F. Campbell, SJ for His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Mark A. O’Brien and Howard N. Wallace; New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2004), 148.

1. The *רוּחַ הַדָּשָׁה* “new Spirit” is emphasized in v. 27 as *רוּחִי* “my Spirit,” implying that it is the Spirit of God.
2. The adjective *הַדָּשָׁה* suggests that *רוּחַ* renews the hearts of the people, because when put within the heart, *רוּחַ* has the quality or power of renewing the heart. Their heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh, alluding to an act of new creation. The text does not mention the replacement of the “spirit,” but of the *לֵב* “heart.” According to Ezek 11:19, God gives Israel *לֵב אֶחָד* “one heart” and puts a *רוּחַ הַדָּשָׁה* “new Spirit” within the people. They are not given one heart and one spirit put within them.
3. God puts the new Spirit, his Spirit, within his people to renew their mind and give them a heart of flesh in order to obey his laws.
4. The prepositional phrase *בְּקִרְבְּכֶם* “within you” in both verses is identical, and references the heart of the people, contrary to the opinion of Hamilton that the phrase in v. 27 means “among you.”³⁷ Hamilton contends that the phrase is used in the OT with reference to the presence of God among his people, and it “would be remarkable if the uses of the form in Ezekiel 36:26 and 27 were the lone exceptions to this pattern of usage in the Old Testament.”³⁸ Hamilton does not show how God puts the new spirit as human spirit among the people in v. 26. Concerned with proving that the Spirit of God is the presence of God not indwelling the people in the OT, he fails to see that the new Spirit emphasized as the Spirit of God is put within the people for the purpose of obedience to the divine laws.

³⁷ Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 49.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

5. The new heart is given to the people, but the new Spirit is put within them.

The new heart is a gift from God renewed by the new Spirit—the Spirit of God. Therefore, God puts a new Spirit, his Spirit, within them to enable them to hear, speak, and do his laws according to his word. The new Spirit effects a new change of desire, purpose, and motive to obey the laws of God, instead of prophesying out of their heart and walking after their spirit to do the laws of the nations round about.

Ezekiel 37:14, 24

The text וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי בְכֶם וְחַיִּיתֶם . . . וְעָשִׂיתִי . . . וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי יֵלְכוּ וְחֻקֹּתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אוֹתָם “and I will put my Spirit within you and you will have life . . . and I will do . . . and they will walk in judgments and keep my statutes and do them,” according to Ezek 37:14, 24, parallels the text וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי אֵתְּךָ בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and I will put my Spirit within you and I will do so that you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do (them)” in Ezek 36:27. In both texts, the phrase רוּחִי is modified by the possessive adjective first-person common singular י “my,” signifying that it is the Spirit of God.³⁹ In 37:14, the phrase lacks אֵת, the sign of a direct object. The object marker אֵת attached to רוּחִי by a *Maqqef* in v. 27 serves to emphasize the phrase.⁴⁰

The root נָתַן is used in both clauses; however, in 37:14, qal perfect first-person singular is used, while qal imperfect first-person singular is employed in 36:27. In 37:14,

³⁹ Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 599.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

the prepositional phrase בְּכֶם is used, while בְּקִרְבְּכֶם is used in 36:27. The prepositional בְּכֶם used in 37:14 can be also translated “among you.” However, the purpose of God of putting his Spirit within his people is for them to have life וְחַיִּיתֶם “and you will have life.” The phrase וְחַיִּיתֶם in 37:14 is lacking in 36:27, but assumed because the Spirit of God placed within the people gives them life according to Ezek 37:14.

In 37:14, the verbal phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” parallels the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי in 36:27 and references to God “doing” what he has spoken (cf. Ezek 36:36; 12:25, 28; 17:24; 22:14; 24:14). In 37:24, the prepositional phrase וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי and the phrase וְחֻקֹּתַי are paired with the phrases וְלָכֹה and יִשְׁמְרוּ, respectively. In 36:27, the prepositional object בְּחֻקָּי and the phrase וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי are paired with תִּלְכּוּ and תִּשְׁמְרוּ, respectively. This arrangement demonstrates that walking in the statutes of God is interchangeable with keeping his statutes, and keeping his judgments is equivalent to walking in his judgments. In 37:14, the verbal phrases are expressed in the third masculine plural, while in 36:27, they are in second masculine plural.

The feminine plural of חֻקָּה is used in 37:24, whereas the masculine plural of חֻק is used in 36:27. The difference in gender in 37:24 and 36:27 does not imply that the statutes in the former are different from the statutes in the latter. A conjunction *vav* is prefixed to the feminine plural of חֻקָּה in 37:24, but it is lacking in 36:27. Here in 37:24, the object of the verbal phrase וְעָשִׂוּ is given as אֹתָם, but in 36:27, the object is lacking but implied as the statutes and judgments of God for Israel to walk in and keep. The correspondence between the two clauses is presented in table 8.

Table 8. Comparison between Ezekiel 37:14, 24 and 36:27

Ezekiel 37:14, 24	Ezekiel 36:27
—	וְאֵת “and”
רוּחִי “my Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
וְנָתַתִּי “and I will put”	אֶתֶּן “I will put”
בְּכֶם “in you”	בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”
וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
וְחָיִיתֶם “and you will live”	—
וְחֻקֵּי “and my statutes”	בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes”
יֵלְכוּ “they will walk”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
וּבִמְשֻׁפְטֵי “and in my judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
יִשְׁמְרוּ “they will keep”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep”
וְעָשׂוּ “and they will do”	וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”

In Ezek 37:14, God puts his Spirit within his people to have life and they maintain it by obeying his statutes and judgements stated in v. 24 of the same chapter. Associated with life here in v. 14, the Spirit of God alludes to הַרוּחַ “the Spirit” that gives life (Ezek 37:9, 10; cf. 1:12, 20). In Ezek 36:27, God puts his Spirit within the people so that they can obey his laws. By virtue of being within the people, the Spirit of God in Ezek 36:27 gives them life, and they maintain the life by observing the divine laws. According to 37:14, וְעָשִׂיתִי is preceded by the phrase דִּבַּרְתִּי “I have spoken,” implying that God will do what he has spoken. In 36:27, וְעָשִׂיתִי is preceded by the main clause, whereby God says that he will put his Spirit within his people. The main clause is part of the direct discourse of God introduced by the messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה “thus says the Lord God” (36:22) and concluded by the declaration formula נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה “declares the Lord God” (36:32). In 36:27, therefore, God does what he has said, that is, he puts his

Spirit within his people to empower them, so that they are able to obey his laws and maintain life that they have received from the Spirit of God of life. God works through his Spirit to enable obedience.

Scholars view the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 37:14 in various ways:

1. It is understood by some as the Holy Spirit to be given in the context of the new covenant in the New Testament.⁴¹

2. It is seen as the breath of God which gives life to his people.⁴²

3. It is interpreted as divine energy which influences human lives.⁴³

4. It is perceived as the dynamic power of God.⁴⁴

According to 37:14, 24, the purpose of God of putting his Spirit within his people is to have life and sustain it by obedience to his statutes and judgments. On the account of their sins and transgression being against them, the people lament נִגְזְרָנוּ לָנוּ “we, ourselves are cut off” (Ezek 37:11), וְאֵיךְ נַחְיֶה “how then, can we have life?” (Ezek 33:10).⁴⁵ As God חַי “has life,” he wants Israel בְּשׁוּב “to repent” (Ezek 33:11). He guarantees life to each individual person who repents and obeys the statutes and

⁴¹ See for example, Alexander, “Ezekiel,” 922, 925; Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1056. Cooper does not view the Holy Spirit only from the New Testament perspective, but also from the Old Testament point of view, cautioning that the Holy Spirit should not be perceived as exclusive to the Christian church; see Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 317.

⁴² For example, see Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 382; Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 237; Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 119.

⁴³ Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 392, 400.

⁴⁴ Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 209.

⁴⁵ The word נִגְזַר is used for destroying a person (Isa 53:8; cf. 1 Kgs 3:26).

judgments (Ezek 18:9, 17, 21, 27; 33:14, 15). He forgives them and has compassion on them (Ezek 16:63; 39:25).

In Ezek 36:27, God puts his Spirit within his people to empower them to obey his statutes and judgments. By his Spirit, God renews their לֵב “mind” (Ezek 36:26) בְּדַבְרֵי “through my word” which he commissions the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 3:4; cf. 2:7, 10). In the ministry of the prophet Ezekiel, the Spirit of God is closely associated with the word of God (Ezek 11:5; 37:1, 4; cf. 1:3-4; 2:1; 3:24). As in the prophet Ezekiel, the Spirit of God makes the word of God effective in the mind of the people by strengthening their will to respond to the initiative of God. God makes the mind of the prophet Ezekiel as חֹזֶק “strong” as a rock when the prophet receives all the words of God in his לֵב “mind” and hears them with his ears and goes to speak to Israel under the influence of the רוּחַ “Spirit” (Ezek 3:8-12, 24). The people have new desires, motives, and purposes to observe the laws of God. God wants his people to obey him right away and not in the distant future.

Addressing the relation between רוּחִי in Ezek 36:27 and רוּחִי in Ezek 37:14, Block says, “The entire unit (37:1-14) is an exposition of the notion introduced in 36:26-27.”⁴⁶ Sprinkle remarks, “there is a connection, however, between 36:27a (‘and I will put my spirit within you’) and the revivification of Israel in 37:1-14 where the ‘life’ language is filled in.”⁴⁷ Fredenburg narrates, “The possible reference to Yahweh’s spirit in verse 14

⁴⁶ Block, “The View from the Top,” 196.

⁴⁷ Sprinkle, “Law and Life,” 291.

perhaps points to Yahweh giving his spirit as the means of life. The previous reference to the ‘new spirit’ in 36:26-27 points in this direction.”⁴⁸

Wright relates,

Ezekiel 36:26-27 is part of the context in which ch. 37 is presently situated. In particular, 37.1-14 develops the gift of the *ruach* promised in 36.27a, and 37.15-28 depicts the political and geographical situation in which the obedience of 37.27b is to happen, with 37.14a and 37.24b functioning as the ‘final captions’ to 36.1-13 and 37.15-23 respectively.⁴⁹

Day observes, “This sequence of return, regeneration, and renewal is an enlarged echo of the initial promise given in 11:18-20.”⁵⁰ Contrary to רוחי being put within the people in the distant future in the New Testament context, God puts רוחי within his people Israel, to obey his laws in the context of the covenant between him and his people at the time of their restoration, because he is being vindicated through them for the sake of his great holy name (Ezek 36:22, 23; 20:41). According to Ezek 36:8 and 12:23, the time to go back to their land is near and for the fulfillment of the word of כָּל-חֶזוֹן “every vision” respectively. God declares to his people כִּי בַיּוֹמֵיכֶם בַּיַּת הַמְּרִי אֲדַבֵּר דְּבַר וְעָשִׂיתִיו “for in your days, a rebellious house, I will speak a word and I will do it” (Ezek 12:25).

The people are saying that the vision that the prophet is seeing will not come to pass for many days and the time is far distant, but God insists that the word that he will

⁴⁸ Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 326; see also Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 355, where he views the new Spirit as the Spirit of God and describes the mind of stone as talking about the mind “of coldness, insensitivity, incorrigibility, and even lifelessness (cf. 1 Sam 25:37).”

⁴⁹ T. John Wright, “The Concept of *Ruach* in Ezekiel 37,” in *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs: The Art of Exegesis; Studies in Honor of Antony F. Campbell, SJ for His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Mark A. O’Brien and Howard N. Wallace; New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2004), 148-49.

⁵⁰ N. John Day, “Ezekiel and the Heart of Idolatry,” *BSac* 164 (2007): 31-32.

speak will be done (Ezek 12:27, 28).⁵¹ He will turn toward the land of Israel (Ezek 36:9) and will not hide his face anymore from his people, Israel (Ezek 39:29). God turned his face from his sanctuary because of the shedding of blood and violence of his people, Israel (Ezek 7:22).

In Ezek 36:27, God says בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן “And I will put my Spirit within you,” whereas in Ezek 39:29, he declares שֶׁפָּכַתִּי אֶת־רוּחִי עַל־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל “I have poured my Spirit upon the house of Israel.”⁵² Since the people are already living, the Spirit of God is not the breath of life given to them, as Levison argues, but the Spirit of God.⁵³ As an independent Spirit of life, the Spirit of God gives life to the people and empowers them to obey the laws of life (Ezek 33:15), enabling them to sustain the life given. The empowerment by the Spirit to obey the laws depends on the people if they repent of their transgressions and sins, which they have committed against God (Ezek 18:21-23, 27-28,

⁵¹ As God is committed to the fulfillment of the vision of the judgment of Israel, so is he devoted to fulfilling the word of the vision of their restoration.

⁵² In Ezek 36:27, the Spirit of God put within Israel is expressed as not yet occurred, but in Ezek 39:29 the Spirit of God poured out upon the house of Israel is portrayed as it has taken place after God ceases to hide his face from Israel, for God פָּנָה “turns” towards the land of Israel, because Israel is near to go home (Ezek 36:8, 9). Therefore, the putting of the Spirit of God within Israel and the pouring of the Spirit of God upon Israel comes after God turns his face towards his land and his people Israel—a reversal of when God turned his face away from his sanctuary (Ezek 7:22; cf. 8:6; 9:3; 11:23); see Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 179. The LXX, including some English translations (ASV, KJV, CBJ, NAS, NAB, NAV, NKJ, YLT, DBY), renders שֶׁפָּכַתִּי in the past tense “I have poured,” whereas other English versions (RSV, NRS, NET, NIB, NIV, NJB, NLT, TNK) translate the phrase in the future “I will pour.” Scholars vary as to when God pours his Spirit upon Israel. Block sees the time as prior to the invasion of Gog (Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 488; idem “Gog and the Pouring Out of the Spirit: Reflections on Ezekiel 39:21-29,” *VT* 37 [1987]: 268). Cooper argues for the time of the Messianic age (Cooper, *Ezekiel*, 346). Tanner proposes the fulfillment to take place after the second coming of Christ; see J. Paul Tanner, “Rethinking Ezekiel’s Invasion by Gog,” *JETS* 39 (1996): 38-39. Hummel advocates for the time of Pentecost in the New Testament (Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1145).

⁵³ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 98, 99.

30; 33:11-12, 14-16, 19).⁵⁴ Interpreting רוח as divine energy or dynamic power of God relegates the Spirit of God as energy or force “emanating from God.”⁵⁵ On the contrary, the Spirit of God demonstrates independence and capability of leading, transporting, descending, and giving life to other beings (Ezek 1:12, 20, 21; 2:2; 3:12, 24; 8:3; 11:1, 5, 24; 37:1, 14).

In conclusion, the Spirit of God that God puts within his people to have life in Ezek 37:14 and obey his statutes and judgments (v. 24) alludes to the Spirit he puts within them in Ezek 36:27 in order to obey his laws and maintain the life they receive through the Spirit. The Spirit of God empowers them through the word of God to obey the laws of life. God “does” what he has spoken by putting his Spirit within them.

Concluding the intratextuality of Ezek 36:27, not only does a literary similarity exist between the texts under consideration, but, also, it exhibits similar thematic and theological concepts. The theological ideas in the texts are expressed in phrases and words that inform about the Spirit of God and obedience to the divine laws. The people cannot obey the laws and have life by their own power.

Therefore, God puts his Spirit within them to have life and empower them, through his word, to obey his laws. They maintain the life received by observing the divine laws through the Spirit of God.

⁵⁴ William VanGemeren and Andrew Abernethy, “The Spirit and the Future: A Canonical Approach,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 340; Robin Routledge, “The Spirit and the Future in the Old Testament: Restoration and Renewal,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 357.

⁵⁵ Firth and Wegner, introduction to *Presence, Power and Promise*, 17.

Summary

Ezekiel 11:19-20: The initiative of God: God gives Israel לֵב אֶחָד “one heart” and puts a רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “new Spirit” within them וַעֲשׂוּ “and they do” חֻקֹתַי “my statutes” and מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments.”

Ezekiel 18:9: The initiative of God: The person who walks בְּחֻקֹתַי “in my statutes” וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” keeps לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do” truth יִחְיֶה “surely shall have life.”

Ezekiel 18:31: The initiative of God: God commands Israel, וַעֲשׂוּ “and do” for yourselves a לֵב חָדָשׁ “new heart” וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “and new Spirit.”

Ezekiel 20:21: Human initiative: הַאָּדָם “the person” who walks בְּחֻקֹתַי “in my statutes” וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” keeps and יַעֲשֶׂה “shall do” them, וְחָי “then has life” בָּהֶם “by them.”

Ezekiel 36:26: God’s initiative: God gives Israel a לֵב חָדָשׁ “new heart” of flesh, indicative of life, and puts a רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה “new Spirit” within them.

Ezekiel 36:27: The initiative of God: God puts רוּחִי “my Spirit” within his people Israel and says, וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” so that בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes” you will walk וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” you will keep וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do.”

Ezekiel 37:14, 24: The initiative of God: God puts רוּחִי “my Spirit” within his people Israel and says, וְחָיִיתֶם “and you will have life” וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי “and in my judgments” walk וְחֻקֹתַי “and my statutes” keep וַעֲשׂוּ “and do.”

CHAPTER 4

INTERTEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27

IN OT SELECTED TEXTS

In this chapter, selected texts from the OT are exegetically investigated to explore the role of the Spirit of God in relation to obedience to the laws of God in the context of a covenant. The purpose of the study is to examine how the texts inform the relationship between the Spirit of God and obedience to the statutes and judgments of God in Ezek 36:27. Other words and phrases relevant to the study that occur in common within the contexts of the texts are taken into consideration.

According to the *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*,

intertextuality refers to the ways in which the meaning of a text is shaped by its relationship with other texts. . . . A text engages in a dialogue with other texts at the time it was written, and that same text continues to contribute to a dialogue with other texts, especially in the case of biblical text because its meaning is shaped by the wider canon of Scripture.¹

“Intertextuality is concerned with the relationship between texts.”² As it is used as an exegetical method in this chapter, intertextuality of Ezek 36:27 involves the correspondence of shared vocabulary on lexical, grammatical, and thematic levels between the OT selected texts and Ezek 36:27. The investigation does not deal with the

¹ *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, 355-56.

² *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel* (ed. Sipke Draisma; Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1989), 18.

current scholarly debate on intertextuality, but assumes intertextuality on the basis of the definition given above.³

The method used entails: noting the corresponding word(s), phrase(s); collating the word(s) and phrase(s); and discussing their implications. A table is drawn for the purpose of aiding in the comparison of the texts. An evaluation of the texts is undertaken at the end of the investigation to show how the texts correspond to Ezek 36:27. The texts are based on and treated in accordance with the Hebrew canon arrangement in the MT—the final form of the Hebrew text.

Due to the various modern English version translations available, the selected versions used are not based on arbitrary choice, but personal preference for the text under consideration.

Ezekiel 36:27 reads:

וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחַקִּי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם

“And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations” (NLT).

³ For current scholarly debate on intertextuality, see the following (but not limited to): Kirsten Nielsen, “Intertextuality and Hebrew Bible,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 17-31; John Barton, “Intertextuality and the ‘Final Form’ of the Text,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 32-37; Michael Fishbane, “Types of Biblical Intertextuality,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 39-44; Sommer, “Exegesis, Allusion, and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible,” 479-89; Antoon Schoors, “Misuse of Intertextuality in Qoheleth Exegesis,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 45-49; Longman and Enns, *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 325-29; Rooker, *Studies in Hebrew Language, Intertextuality, and Theology* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003); Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, “Figures in Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality,” in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Jordan M. Scheetz, *The Concept of Canonical Intertextuality and the Book of Daniel* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 1-35; George Wesley Buchanan, *Introduction to Intertextuality* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen Biblical Press, 1994); Marko Juvan, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* (trans. Timothy Pogačar; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University, 2008).

Torah

Genesis 6:3

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא-יֵדוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעֹלָם בְּשָׁנָם הוּא בָשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמָיו מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה:

“Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years’” (NAS).

In Gen 6:3, רוּחִי “my Spirit” parallels רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27 as רוּחַ of God, because the phrase is identical in both texts. The Spirit of God is the subject of the verb יֵדוֹן in Genesis, but in Ezekiel, רוּחִי is the object of the verb אֶתֵּן, which is emphasized by being placed in the beginning of the main clause where God is the subject. According to Genesis, רוּחִי takes the propositional phrase בָּאָדָם. In Ezekiel, רוּחִי has בְּקִרְבְּכֶם as its prepositional object. The preposition ב is identical in the two texts, signifying the relationship between רוּחִי and the people. The two texts are compared in table 9.

Table 9. Comparison between Genesis 6:3 and Ezekiel 36:27

Genesis 6:3	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחִי “my Spirit” בָּאָדָם “within human”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”
Context: Covenant בְּרִיתִי “my covenant” (6:18)	Context: Covenant formula- לִי לְעַם- לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

In Gen 6:3, רוּחִי can be translated variously as “my Spirit,” “my breath,” or “my wind.” However, the context, the verb יָדוֹן, and the prepositional phrases בְּאָדָם and לְעֵלָם determine the correct translation of the phrase. The adverb לֹא used with the qal imperfect third-person masculine singular יָדוֹן implies a permanent prohibition.⁴ The activity of רוּחִי, that is, יָדוֹן is stated in the negative לֹא-יָדוֹן, implying that at a certain point in time, רוּחִי will permanently cease to יָדוֹן.

The phrase יָדוֹן is hapax legomenon, derived “from דִּין ‘to judge.’”⁵ It can be translated “will strive,” or “will contend.” According to the BHS apparatus on Job 19:29, the common noun masculine singular דִּין “judgment” (*Qere*) occurs alongside common noun masculine singular דִּין “judgment” (*Kethib*). The LXX translates יָדוֹן καταμείλη “stay,” “live,” “remain.” As a proper noun, יָדוֹן is attested in Neh 3:7; and as a common noun, מִדּוֹן is found in synonymous parallelism with דִּין “judgment” (Prov 22:10), indicating that the idea of יָדוֹן is closely associated with judging. The noun דִּין “judgment” is at par with מִשְׁפָּט (Jer 5:28; Job 36:17; cf. Pss 140:13; 9:5, 9; 7:9 [Eng 8]; Ezra 7:25; Ezek 44:24; Exod 18:22, 26; Jer 21:12). The prophet Jeremiah considers himself מִדּוֹן וְאִישׁ רִיב וְאִישׁ אִיִּשׁ “a man of strife and contention” (Jer 15:10).

Davidson argues, “The Hebrew verb *yadon* in Gen 6:3 comes from the root, *dun*, which is simply an alternate spelling of the verb *din* “to judge/strive,” paralleling the

⁴ Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 41.

⁵ Claus Westerman, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion S.J.; Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1984), 375.

Hebrew verb *lun*, which also appears as *lin*. This is the solution proposed by various lexicographers.”⁶ Mathews suggests, “The NIV’s ‘contend’ probably reflects the root *din* meaning ‘judge, rule’ (as BDB), indicating God will no longer deal with or plead on behalf of man.”⁷ Keil and Delitzsch comment, “The verb דון = דין signifying to rule (hence אֲדוֹן the ruler), to judge, as the consequence of ruling.”⁸

Analyzing דָּוֹן, Bernstein has the following opinion:

It appears that the Qumran commentary interprets the biblical verse by paraphrasing it, furnishing a straightforward reading of its first and last portion (while omitting, it should be stressed, its very difficult middle). In the first half, it “translates” the rare דָּוֹן as יָדוּר, and in the second it stresses the decretal force of יָהִי יָמִין by “rendering” אֲיָחָזְכֻוּ.⁹

There is no consensus among scholars and modern English Bible versions regarding the interpretation and translation of Gen 6:3 respectively.¹⁰ Concerning דָּוֹן, Sailhamer cautions that “in the light of the complete lack of consensus on the philological meaning of the term, it is best to follow the lead of the LXX and seek a sense for the word from within the immediate context.”¹¹ Wenham remarks, “Almost every word in this

⁶ Richard Davidson, “‘O Expirito Santo no Pentateuco’ [The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch],” Paper presented at the IX Simpósio Bíblico-Teológico Sul-Americano, Foz do Iguaçu, PR, Brazil, 20 May 2011, 19.

⁷ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 333.

⁸ Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), 4.

⁹ Moshe J. Bernstein, “4Q252 i 2 לא ידון רוחי באדם לעולם: Biblical Text or Biblical Interpretation,” *RevQ* 16 (1994): 426.

¹⁰ Some English versions translate דָּוֹן as “strive or contend” (KJV, NAS, NIV, NIB), “abide” (RSV, JPS, TNK, ESV), “plead” (DBY), “be” (BBE), “live” (CBJ), “remain” (NAB, CSB, NET, DRA, LXE), “struggle” (GWN), “responsible” (NJB), and “put up with” (NLT).

¹¹ Sailhamer, *EBC* 2:78

statement has been the subject of controversy.”¹² The phrase **בְּאָדָם** “in the man” has the definite article **הַ**, implying that **אָדָם** “man” is specific. The first occurrence of **הָאָדָם** “the man,” where the phrase **אָדָם** is used with the definite article **הַ**, is in Gen 1:27; compare 2:7; 5:1, 2, where God **בְּשָׂר** “creates” male and female human beings of **בְּשָׂר** “flesh” (Gen 2:23). The definite article specifies the word **אָדָם** “man” in Gen 1:26, whereby God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” The Spirit of God definitely, therefore, is involved in the creation of **אָדָם** “man” (Gen 1:1, 2; Job 33:4; 26:13; Pss 104:30; 33:6) in the capacity of “a personal being, the Holy Spirit.”¹³

The increase of the wickedness of **הָאָדָם** “the man” (Gen 6:1, 5), especially by the sons of **הָאֱלֹהִים** “(the) God” intermarrying with the daughters of **הָאָדָם** “the man” (Gen 6:2, 4) triggers the striving of the Spirit of God **בְּאָדָם** “in the man” to come to an end, according to Gen 6:3.¹⁴ The first time whereby the definite is prefixed to the divine name, **הָאֱלֹהִים**, is in Gen 5:22, 24, whereby Enoch, of the generation of Seth, walks with God and has sons and daughters alike his forefathers.¹⁵ The wickedness and the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of **הָאָדָם** “the man” are so great and **רַע כָּל-הַיּוֹם**

¹² Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Waco Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 141.

¹³ Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 16.

¹⁴ The definite article attached to the divine name **אֱלֹהִים** specifies **הָאֱלֹהִים** “(the) God, whom Enoch walks with” (Gen 5:22, 24).

¹⁵ Regarding the sons of God and daughters of men in Gen 6:2, 4, Davidson rightly points out that “‘the sons of God’ are the professed people of God from the line of Seth (Gen 5:1-32), and the ‘daughters of men’ are the women from the rebellious line of Cain (Gen 4:16-24).” Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 16; Richard Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 181-84.

“evil every day,” such that God regrets that he created אָדָם הָ, “the man,” for it grieved God to his heart (Gen 6:5, 6). God, therefore, intends to wipe out אָדָם הָ, “the man” he עָשָׂה “made” and בָּרָא “created” (Gen 6:6, 7). But Noah found favor with God (Gen 6:8).

The word לְעֹלָם “forever” in Gen 6:3 implies that the Spirit of God, who created אָדָם הָ, “the man” (male and female), cannot strive without an end, convicting them of their רָע “evil” expressed in vv. 1, 2, 4, 5 (cf. 6, 7). The fact that אָדָם הָ, “the man” is בָּשָׂר “flesh” suggests the transient and weak nature of humanity (Gen 6:13, 17; 7:21; Ps 78:39; Isa 40:6, 7), as opposed to God who is Spirit (cf. Isa 31:3).

The phrase בְּשָׂגָם “for indeed” emphasizes the phrase בְּאָדָם “with the man” that הוּא בָשָׂר “he is flesh” and is made up of the preposition בְּ “in,” relative pronoun שֶׁ, “which,” and the adverb גַּם “also.”¹⁶ However, the preposition בְּ is causal “because” and therefore the phrase can be translated in short “for indeed.” The particle גַּם “also” is used in connection with the preposition phrase לְעֹלָם “forever” in Gen 3:22, as in Gen 6:3, where אָדָם הָ, “the man” gains knowledge of טוֹב וְרָע “good and evil,” and the Lord God is aware that the man intends to eat from the tree of life and live לְעֹלָם “forever.”¹⁷

Therefore, the Lord God casts the man out of the garden of Eden (Gen 3:23). The idea that אָדָם הָ, “the man” can live forever doing רָע “evil” goes against the will of God and his Spirit. Hence, in Gen 6:3, the Spirit of God does not strive forever בְּאָדָם “in the man” to

¹⁶ Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 22.

¹⁷ Davidson has the view that the phrase בְּשָׂגָם is the infinitive construct of שָׁגָה “to go astray,” translated as “in their going astray” (Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 23, 24). See also Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “שָׁגָה, שָׁגָה, שָׁגָה,” BDB 168-69, 992-93.

abandon רַע “evil,” for human beings are flesh. God extends to the antediluvian a grace period of 120 years to do טוֹב “good” instead of רַע “evil.”

Scholars interpret רוּחִי here in Genesis as:

1. An ethical principle of God that is judging the prevailing evil conduct of human beings
2. Divine feeling
3. The principle of life given to human beings at creation
4. Divine substance found in God and angels.¹⁸

The translation of רוּחִי, נְדוּן, בְּאָדָם and לְעֵלָם affects the translation and interpretation of the text. The context of רוּחִי in Gen 6:3 does not suggest that the phrase be interpreted as an ethical principle of God, divine feeling, or divine substance found in God and angels, because, whereas these attributes are impersonal, the Spirit of God is a personal divine being who creates and pleads with הָאָדָם “the man.” If רוּחִי is viewed as the breath of life from God given to human beings at creation, then the life span of the antediluvian is understood to be shortened to 120 years, comparative to their long life spanning hundreds of years prior to the flood.

If רוּחִי is taken as the Spirit of God, then, רוּחִי is judging בְּאָדָם “within the man” by striving with the antediluvian for a period of 120 years, after which רוּחִי permanently ceases to plead with them. Davidson argues in favor of the Spirit interceding. He writes, “The Spirit is ‘striving for’ the people, with divine grace pleading and interceding on

¹⁸ John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), 144-45.

humanity's behalf. The thrust of the passage is not upon divine condemnation, but upon divine grace seeking to win over humanity to God, warning them of the consequences of their sins, and entreating them to exercise repentance and reformation.”¹⁹

The latter view that רִיחֵי is the Spirit of God that pleads with the antediluvian world fits the context based on the following:

1. God created הָאָדָם “the man” through his Spirit, and it is by his Spirit that he is striving with the man to abandon wickedness.

2. In the sight of God, the רַעַת הָאָדָם “wickedness of the man,” מַחְשַׁבֹת לִבּוֹ “thoughts of his heart,” חַמָּס “violence,” וְתַשְׁחֶתֶת הָאָרֶץ “and the corruption of the earth” (Gen 6:5, 11-13) are contrasted with the character of Noah, who is צַדִּיק “righteous,” תָּמִים “blameless,” מְצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה “walks with God,” אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ “finds grace in the eyes of God,” וַיַּעַשׂ “and does” everything God צִוָּה “commands him” (Gen 6:8, 9, 22).²⁰ God establishes his covenant בְּרִיתִי “my covenant” with Noah at the end of the flood (Gen 6:18; cf. 9:9, 11-17). The reason for the destruction of the antediluvian by flood is due to their wickedness, evil thoughts, corruption, and violence. For example, due to increased profanity, the sons of God intermarry with the daughters of men (Gen 6:4). For Fretheim, “‘Wickedness’ refers to both sinful acts and their consequences. The indictment encompasses not simply actions, but the inner recess of the human heart.”²¹

¹⁹ Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 20.

²⁰ Paul Kissling, *Genesis* (CPNIVC 1; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 2004), 281.

²¹ Terence E. Fretheim, “The Book of Genesis: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections” (NIB 1; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1994), 389.

3. Shortening the life span of the generations after the flood to 120 years does not solve the problem of evil thoughts of their heart. After all, it is Noah and his family that outlives the flood and lives for hundreds of years (Gen 11). If it is a matter of shortening the life span to 120 years, it should be evident in the life span of Noah and the immediate post-flood generation—which is not the case. Noah is a righteous person and, therefore, cannot bear the consequences of the shortening of his life.

The Spirit of God is the one who created human beings (male and female) and can convict them of their sins (including those related to marriage standards) to turn from wickedness and be righteous, blameless, and walk with God like Noah. Noah must have had רוחי within him in order to convince the people, through his preaching, that a flood would come. His character of righteousness, perfection, and walking with God is only attainable through the power of רוחי. The Spirit of God does not permanently cease to strive and convict him, for God saves him and his family from the destruction of the flood.²²

The life of Noah “is a picture of simple obedience to God’s command and trust in his provision,” notes Sailhamer.²³ “The blameless are characterized by their abstaining from iniquity (2 Sam 22:24; Ezek 28:15) and walking in the law of the LORD (Ps 119:1).”²⁴ For Brayford, “One who is צדיק is legally and thus morally ‘right’ before God

²² According to Exod 23:7, the person who attains the righteous standard of the law of God does not suffer the death of the judgments of God (cf. Ezek 14:14, 20 where Noah, Daniel, and Job would deliver their lives by their righteousness from the four sore judgments of God in the time of Ezekiel).

²³ John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis” (EBC 2; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), 81.

²⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170.

and one in Sarna's words, 'whose conduct is found to be beyond reproach by the divine judge.'²⁵

4. The fact that the antediluvians are wicked, in contrast to the righteousness of Noah, implies that the standard of the law of God is in view. God judges through judgment (Ezek 44:24; Ps 72:2; cf. 1 Sam 24:16 [Eng 15]).

5. The destruction of the world and the antediluvians is a reversal of creation.²⁶

Compared with Ezek 36:27, Gen 6:3 presents רִוּחַי as judging the antediluvian world by striving within them and convicting them regarding their wickedness, corruption, evil thoughts, and violence, in order to be righteous, blameless, and walk with God as Noah is, and does, in the eyes of God. For Noah to be righteous, blameless, and walk with God in the eyes of God, he must be empowered by רִוּחַי. God saves him from the judgment of the flood and establishes a covenant with him, because he obeys God by doing what God commands him to do. God "utters the word ברית seven times, an indication that this is a complete and comprehensive covenant act."²⁷

According to Ezek 36:27, God puts רִוּחַי within the people to empower them, so that they can walk in his laws and do them. By doing the laws of God, the people are righteous (Ezek 18:9, 22) like Noah. Noah is attested in Ezek 14:14, 20 as being righteous in comparison with Israel, in view of the judgments of sword, famine, evil

²⁵ Susan Brayford, *Genesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 262.

²⁶ The flood waters destroyed everything (except Noah and his family) and covered the earth (Gen 7:17-24) like the waters which covered the earth at creation (Gen 1:9).

²⁷ Ellen van Wolde, "Facing the Earth: Primeval History in a New Perspective," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (JSOTSup 257; ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 38.

beasts, and pestilence, which God brings upon the land due to transgressing his law. The house of Israel rebels against God by doing הרָעוּת “the wickedness” (Ezek 8:9), לְבָם הִלְךְ “their heart goes” after their idols (Ezek 20:16), are הִנְשָׁחָתוּת “corrupt” (Ezek 20:44), and the priests הִמְסוּ “have violated” the law of God (Ezek 22:26; cf. 7:11, 23; 8:17; 28:16; 45:9). God spares them (Ezek 36:21), allows some to escape from the judgments he brings upon them (Ezek 6:8; 12:16), and saves them from their abominations (Ezek 36:29). He restores his covenant relationship with them, in regard to the land he gave to their fathers signified by the covenant formula, “you will be my people and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:28). Nevertheless, God will purge out the rebels who transgress against him when he enters into judgment with them (Ezek 20:35-38).

The parallels between Gen 6:3 and Ezek 36:27 in their contexts show that רִוּחַ is empowering the people from within by convicting them of their evil so that they can obey God. According to Genesis, God saves Noah, but destroys the evil antediluvian generation and makes a covenant with Noah. In the case of Ezekiel, God destroys the rebels, saves the remnant from his judgments, and makes a covenant with those whom he saves.

Genesis 41:28, 34, 38-40, 55

הוּא הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל-פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה
הִרְאָה אֶת-פַּרְעֹה:

“It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do.”

יַעֲשֶׂה פַרְעֹה וַיִּפְקֹד פְּקָדִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַחֲמֹשׁ אֶת-אָרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם בְּשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִי הַשְּׁבַע:

“Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years.”

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-עֲבָדָיו הֲנִמְצָא כֹּהֵּ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ
 אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יֹסֵף אַחֲרַי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹהִים
 אֹתְךָ אֶת-כָּל-זֹאת אֵין-נִבֹן וְחָכָם כְּמֹדֶךָ:
 אַתָּה תִּהְיֶה עַל-בֵּיתִי וְעַל-פִּיךָ יִשְׁקוּ כָּל-עַמִּי רַק הַכֶּסֶף
 אֶגְדֹּל מִמֶּךָ:

“And Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?’ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; you shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.’”

וַתִּרְעַב כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה לֶלֶחֶם
 וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לְכָל-מִצְרַיִם לְכוּ אֶל-יֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמַר לָכֶם
 תַּעֲשׂוּ:

“When all the land was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, ‘Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do’” (RSV).

In Gen 41:38, the construct אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ “the Spirit of the Lord” matches רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezekiel, suggesting congruency. In Ezek 36:27, the possessive adjective first-person common singular modifying the noun רוּחַ references God, and, therefore, corresponds to אֱלֹהִים in Genesis. The prepositional phrase בּוֹ “in him” matches the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you.” The pronominal suffix third-person masculine singular וְ “him” in Genesis echoes the possessive adjective second masculine כָּם “your” in Ezekiel. The noun קָרַב is not present in Genesis. The preposition בַּ references the locus where the Spirit of God is. The participial phrase עֹשֶׂה “he is doing” corresponds to וְעֹשֶׂיתִי “and I will do” and עֹשֶׂה “I am doing” in Ezek 36:27 and 36:22, 32,

respectively. The subject of both phrases is God. According to Gen 41:28, God is doing his **הַדְבָר** “the word” by his Spirit through Joseph. In Ezek 36:27, God is going to do what he has spoken in regard to putting his Spirit within his people to obey his laws and restore them to their land (36:36).²⁸ In Genesis and Ezekiel, God is **עֹשֶׂה** “doing” through his Spirit. The verbal phrases **יַעֲשֶׂה** and **תַּעֲשֶׂוּ** “he will do” and “you shall do” in Gen 41:34 and 41:55, respectively, echo **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** “and you shall do” in Ezek 36:27. Table 10 presents the comparison between the texts.

Table 10. Comparison between Genesis 41:28, 34, 38-40, 55 and Ezekiel 36:27

Genesis 41: 28, 34, 38-40, 55	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of God”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
בּוֹ “in him”	בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”
עֹשֶׂה “he is doing”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
תַּעֲשֶׂוּ/יַעֲשֶׂה “he/you shall do”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Covenant between Pharaoh and Joseph (41:41-44)	Context: Covenant formula— לִי לְעַם—לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, recognizes that Joseph possesses **רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ** “the Spirit of God in him,” because God answers him favorably regarding his dream through Joseph (41:16, 28). Pharaoh perceives that Joseph has the Spirit of God in him after Joseph interprets the dream and counsels him regarding the necessary steps to take

²⁸ The **הַחֲזוֹן** “vision” will soon be fulfilled in their days (Ezek 36:8; 12:25, 27, 28).

concerning the preparation for the famine under a discerning and wise overseer. The fact that Pharaoh observes that Joseph has the Spirit of God within him implies that the interpretation of the dream and the advice are **הַדְבָר** “the word” of God spoken by Joseph that God himself is doing, since God is answering Pharaoh favorably or for peace. The definite article **ה** specifies that the **הַדְבָר** is of God that the Lord is doing and not of Joseph. By stating **בְּלִעְדֵי** “apart from me” (41:16), Joseph specifically informs Pharaoh that it is God alone who is answering the dream of the king. Joseph is not able to bring the word of God to pass, only God himself can. The **רוּחַ חֵכְמָה וּבִינָה** “Spirit of God” of **רוּחַ יְהוָה** “wisdom and discernment” (Isa 11:2; cf. Job 32:8) gives Joseph wisdom and discernment to advise Pharaoh according to the word of God, and, therefore, God preserves Pharaoh, Joseph, and their people. Joseph advises Pharaoh to **יַעֲשֶׂה** “do” by appointing an overseer with **נְבוֹן** “discernment” **וְחָכָם** “and wisdom” over the land of Egypt (41:33). The king follows the counsel given by Joseph to appoint him as overseer since God has caused Joseph to know everything and there was none **נְבוֹן** “discerning” **וְחָכָם** “and wise” like Joseph.²⁹ Therefore, Pharaoh resolves to put Joseph over all of his house except his throne. It is the intention of Pharaoh that his people order themselves according to the word of Joseph influenced by the Spirit of God within him.

The Spirit of God within Joseph relative to obedience is evidenced first when Joseph advises the king **יַעֲשֶׂה כְּדַבְרֵי** “let Pharaoh do” by appointing a discerning and wise person to be over the land of Egypt (41:34; cf. v. 33). Pharaoh sets Joseph over the land

²⁹ The statutes and judgments that God commanded his people to do are discernment and wisdom for them before other people (Deut 4:5, 6).

of Egypt because Joseph speaks the word of God that the Lord is doing (41:28). Second, all the people of Pharaoh are to יִשָּׁק “arm themselves” according to the word of Joseph פִּיךָ “your mouth” (41:40).³⁰ Third, Pharaoh directs his people, תַּעֲשׂוּ “you shall do” what Joseph יֵאמֵר “shall speak” (41:55). Thus, the people order themselves by the word of Joseph. In Genesis, the people of Pharaoh will do what Joseph יֵאמֵר “will say” to them—the word of God, whereas in Ezekiel, Israel will do the laws of God through the word of God spoken by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:4, 7; 3:4, 10, 11; cf. 33:30).³¹

The verbal phrase יִשָּׁק can be translated “he will kiss” or “will be armed with,” with reference to עַמִּי “my people”—the people of Pharaoh.³² Intending to become the deputy to the king and judge people righteously, Absalom would extend his hand to the person who came to the king for judgment וְנִשָּׁק “and kiss” him (2 Sam 15:5; cf. Prov 23:23–26). The Egyptians are to do according to the word of Joseph. The Spirit of God gives Joseph wisdom and discernment through the word of God.³³ The words of Joseph parallel the words of the Lord by the prophet Ezekiel, for both have the Spirit of God in them.

³⁰ The word of Joseph is essentially the word of God, because he credits God for the solution of the dream (41:16; cf. 40:8). God causes Joseph to know discernment and wisdom, for he gives wisdom, and his mouth offers knowledge and discernment (Prov 2:6). God causes a person to discern his law (Ps 119:34).

³¹ Statutes and judgments are the words of God he spoke to his people (Exod 34:3; Ps 147:19; Neh 9:13).

³² See BHS apparatus where Peshita has the concept: “he will judge.” For further discussion on יִשָּׁק, see Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 504.

³³ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 42. The Spirit of God of wisdom and the fear of the Lord is attested (Isa 11:2), and Joseph states that he fears God (Gen 42:18).

Some scholars argue that Pharaoh is referencing “spirit of gods” when he says רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים since he is foreign to the God of Israel and speaks “from the perspective of polytheism.”³⁴ This view is not necessary because:

1. Pharaoh turns to Joseph for an interpretation of his dream after his magicians and wise men, who are supposed to be connected with his polytheistic gods, are unable to interpret the dream (41:8; cf. Dan 2:2, 10).

2. Four times Joseph emphasizes to Pharaoh that it is הַאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂה “the Lord doing” (Gen 41:25, 28; cf. 32) what he has spoken to Pharaoh. The article prefixed to אֱלֹהִים demonstrates that Joseph speaks of the Lord, the God of whom Pharaoh says has shown Joseph every thing. For Pharaoh to attribute the Spirit within Joseph to gods later in v. 38, is to ignore the specific הַאֱלֹהִים “(the) God” Joseph is referencing.

3. God speaks by the mouth of foreign kings (2 Chr 35:22).

4. It is impossible to know the mind of Pharaoh apart from the perspective of the inspired word authored by Moses, unless one conjectures.

5. Translating the divine name אֱלֹהִים “God” fits the context, because Pharaoh is depending on God, whom Joseph is referencing, to show him the dream.

Levison argues that the Spirit of God in Joseph is the spirit of God of life of “supremely divine character.”³⁵ Levison is interpreting the Spirit of God in the OT from the perspective of the breath of life given to human beings by God. Hamilton contends that “God’s Spirit” refers to “outstanding ability in the areas of political economy and

³⁴ David G. Firth, “The Spirit and Leadership: Testimony, Empowerment and Purpose,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 261.

³⁵ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 50, 76.

statesmanship.”³⁶ He argues, “That Joseph can do what no one else can is taken as evidence that he has the Spirit. . . . Joseph’s experience of the Spirit, therefore, is hardly presented as normative.”³⁷ The Spirit of God in Joseph is not the spirit of God of life of divine character, but the Spirit of God enabling Joseph to interpret the dream and giving him wisdom and discernment to guide Pharaoh, showing how God is answering his dream favorably. Elsewhere, the Spirit of God in Daniel enables him to interpret the dream of a foreign king, Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:8, 9, 18; cf. 5:11, 14). The wisdom of Joseph “is itself evidence of the work of the Spirit of God.”³⁸

Comparing Genesis with Ezekiel, Genesis presents God as doing his word, which he reveals through his Spirit in Joseph to Pharaoh. Pharaoh and his people obey by doing according to the word of God, which the Lord is doing through the power of his Spirit. God “does,” and Pharaoh and his people “do.” In Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people to empower them so that they can obey his laws. God “does” his word that he sends through the prophet Ezekiel by his Spirit. God “does,” and his people “do.”

In conclusion, the Spirit of God in Joseph brings about obedience through the word of God. Pharaoh, his house, and his people obey by doing what Joseph tells them. The texts parallel Ezek 36:27, whereby the Spirit of God put within the people empowers them so that they can obey the laws of God through the word of God by the prophet Ezekiel.

³⁶ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50* (ed. R. K. Harrison; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994), 503.

³⁷ Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 28.

³⁸ Firth, “The Spirit and Leadership,” 263.

Exodus 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6

וְאַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלֵּאתִיו רוּחַ חָכְמָה
וַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי אַהֲרֹן לְקִדְשׁוֹ לְכַהֲנֹתִי:

“And you shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me.”

וְנָתַתְּ אֶל־חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת־הָאֹרִיִּם וְאֶת־הַתְּמִיִּם וְהָיוּ
עַל־לֵב אַהֲרֹן בְּבֹאוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־מִשְׁפָּט
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־לִבּוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד:

“And you shall put in the breast piece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.”

וְהָיוּ עַל־אַהֲרֹן וְעַל־בָּנָיו בְּבֹאֵם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֵי
בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקִדְשׁוֹ וְלֹא־יִשְׂאוּ עוֹן וּמָתוּ חֲקַת
עוֹלָם לוֹ וְלִזְרֵעוֹ אַחֲרָיו:

“And they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. It *shall be* a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.”

וְאִמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה וּבְתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת
וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה:

“And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.”

וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ אֶת אֱהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן־אֲחִיסָמֶד לְמִטֵּה־דָן
וּבְלֵב כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב נָתַתִּי חָכְמָה וַעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ:

“And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you” (NAS).

The construct רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of the Lord” in Exod 31:3 parallels רִיחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The verbal phrase נָתַתִּי “I have put,” according to Exod 31:6, is matched by אֶתֶּן “I will put” as per Ezekiel. In Exod 31:6 (cf. 35:34), the phrase נָתַתִּי “I have put” carries the same notion as the phrases מִלֵּאתִי “I have filled him” (28:3) and וְאִמְלֵא “and I have filled (31:3). God puts in and fills the לֵב “heart” of the people, including Bezalel and Oholiab, with his Spirit that gives wisdom to do all that he has commanded.³⁹ In Ezek 36:27, God puts his Spirit in the קִרְב “within,” suggestive of their לֵב “heart” (36:26).

The construct חֻקָּה “statute” in Exod 28:43 matches the phrase בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes” in Ezekiel. The statute is עוֹלָם “everlasting,” and, therefore, according to Ezek 44:24, the priests are to keep חֻקֵּי “my statutes.” The phrases הַמִּשְׁפָּט/מִשְׁפָּט “judgment/the judgment,” according to Exod 28:30, relate to וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי “and my judgments” in Ezekiel, because Aaron bears the judgments of Israel upon his heart. The priests are supposed לְשַׁפֵּט “to judge” בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי “by my judgments” (Ezek 44:24). Used with the article הַ, מִשְׁפָּט is specified to suggest that a particular judgment is indented. God gave Israel judgments which Moses set before them (Exod 21:1; 24:3). The verbal phrase וְעָשׂוּ

³⁹ See Davidson, “The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch,” 31; Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 65.

“and they will do” in Exod 28:3; 31:6 corresponds to וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezekiel.

Table 11 shows the correspondence between the two texts.

Table 11. Comparison between Exodus 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6 and Ezekiel 36:27

Exodus 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of the Lord”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
נָתַתִּי “I have put”	אֶתֵּן “I will put”
חֻקֹּת “statute”	בְּחֻקֵי “my statutes”
הַמִּשְׁפָּט/מִשְׁפָּט “judgment/the judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
וַעֲשׂוּ “and they will do”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: בְּרִית “covenant” (Exod 31:16)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

Here in Exodus, God instructs Moses to speak to every person in whom the Lord has put his Spirit of wisdom to make garments for Aaron and his sons and do what he has commanded. This is for the purpose of consecrating Aaron for the priesthood of God in harmony with what God has commanded Moses—a perpetual statute. Thus, “Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually” (28:30).

The רוּחַ חָכְמָה “Spirit of wisdom” in 28:3 can be identified with the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of God” in 31:3 based on the following:

1. In both texts, God is the subject of the verb מָלֵא “to fill.”

2. The רִיחַ חֲכָמָה “Spirit of wisdom” which God fills with אֵל-כָּל-חֲכָמֵי-לֵב “all those who have wisdom of the heart,” including Bezalel and Oho’liab in 28:3, is identified as רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of God” in 31:3.

3. The purpose of God in putting רִיחַ חֲכָמָה “Spirit of wisdom,” at par with filling with רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of God,” regarding the people is for them to do what God has commanded them to do, that is, to make garments for Aaron and build the tabernacle and its furniture.⁴⁰

4. The רִיחַ יְהוָה “Spirit of God,” which is the רִיחַ חֲכָמָה “the Spirit of wisdom” and רִיחַ הַעֵת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה “the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God” is attested in Isa 11:12.

5. The Spirit of God is associated with the wisdom in Joseph (Gen 41:38, 39) and Joshua—Joshua is full of רִיחַ חֲכָמָה “the Spirit of wisdom” (Deut 34:9). In both cases, the people do what Joseph has said and what God has commanded.

6. Elsewhere, the prophet Micah is filled with the power of the Spirit of God to declare to Israel their sin (Mic 3:8).

Aaron bears the מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” of the people upon לִבּוֹ “his heart” in the context of an everlasting בְּרִית “covenant” (Exod 31:16). According to Bailey, “As Yahweh performed the creation by means of the Spirit (Gen 1:2-2:3), so Israel built the Tabernacle by means of Yahweh’s Spirit.”⁴¹ Bezalel “was able to fully employ his

⁴⁰ According to 1 Kgs 7:14, Hiram is filled with wisdom and constructs the temple of God as requested by king Solomon.

⁴¹ Randall C. Bailey, *Exodus* (CPNIVC; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 2007), 330-31.

created gifts when he was filled with God’s Spirit.”⁴² In their contexts, when Exod 28:3, 30, 43; 31:3, 6 are compared with Ezek 36:27, the former narrates the role רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים “the Spirit of God” as רִיחַ הַכְּמָה “spirit of wisdom” plays. God fills and gives the people his Spirit in their heart and they become wise in their heart. The people do as he has commanded them; and as their priest, Aaron bears their מִשְׁפָּט upon his heart in the form of הַמִּשְׁפָּט “the judgment” of Urim and Thummim. The priesthood of God is an everlasting חֻקַּת “statute,” which the people are supposed to do in the context of the בְּרִית “covenant.”

According to Ezekiel, God puts רִיחִי “my Spirit” in their קֶרֶב, suggestive of their new heart (36:26) and empowers them to do his statutes and judgments, according to the word of God he has spoken to the prophet Ezekiel. A covenant relationship between God and his people is restored, indicated by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (Ezek 36:28; cf. 16:63).

Levison, Averbeck, and Merrill equate the Spirit of God with the heart.⁴³ To equate the Spirit of God with the heart fails to recognize that God puts wisdom בְּלֵב “in the mind” of all the wise כָּל-אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִךָ אֵת וְעָשׂוּ “and they will do all that I commanded you.” Here, the object of the verbal phrase וְעָשׂוּ is צִוִּיתִךָ כָּל-אֲשֶׁר signified by the mark of the direct object אֵת. The Spirit of God of wisdom puts wisdom, discernment,

⁴² James K. Bruckner, *Exodus* (NIBCOT; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008), 273.

⁴³ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 55, 62, 63, 66; Averbeck, “Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 29; Merrill, “Samson Saga and Spiritual Leadership,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 285.

knowledge, and craftsmanship in their mind to do what God has spoken. Stuart maintains that the Spirit of God “perfected Bezalel’s wisdom, insight, knowledge, and work performance in general. . . . In other words, the way the filling of the Spirit of God affected Bezalel was to enable him to be wiser, more insightful, more knowledgeable, and more capable of any sort of work which God assigned him.”⁴⁴

The Spirit of God is directly related to the word that God has commanded through Moses. God works through his Spirit in their heart so that they are able to do what he has commanded. This concept is reflected in Ezek 36:27, whereby God puts his Spirit within his people to renew their mind. God works through the Spirit for the purpose of empowering them to do his laws in the context of the covenant between him and his people, Israel.

The conclusion drawn from the above parallels is that the obedience effected by the Spirit of God of wisdom in Exodus resembles the obedience that is brought about by the Spirit of God that God puts within his people, Israel, in Ezekiel. In both texts, the people do the statutes of God in the context of the covenant between God and his people, Israel.

Numbers 27:18, 22; Deuteronomy 34:9; Joshua 24:25, 31

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה קַח-לְךָ אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נּוּן אִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר-רִנַּח בּוֹ וְסָמַכְתָּ אֶת-יָדְךָ עָלָיו:

“So the LORD said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.’”

⁴⁴ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 650.

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
וַיַּעֲמֵדְהוּ לְפָנָיו אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְלִפְנֵי כָל־הָעֵדָה:

“And Moses did just as the LORD commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation.”

וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון מָלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה כִּי־סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו
עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.”

וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִית לָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּשֶׂם לוֹ חֹק וּמִשְׁפָּט בְּשֶׁכֶם:

“So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.”

וַיַּעֲבֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל יְמֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל יְמֵי הַזִּקְנִים
אֲשֶׁר הָאָרִיכוּ יָמִים אַחֲרָיו יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְאֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּ אֵת
כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:

“And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel”⁴⁵ (NAS).

In Num 27:18-22 and Deut 24:9, *רוּחַ* echoes *רוּחִי* in Ezek 36:27. The phrase “in him” in Numbers matches *בְּקִרְבְּכֶם* “within you” in Ezekiel. The preposition *ב* is identical in both texts, but the noun *קִרְב* is not present in Numbers. A possessive adjective is used in Ezekiel, but Numbers has an objective pronoun. The *רוּחַ* “Spirit in him” in

⁴⁵ Although the book of Joshua belongs to the Prophets, according to the Hebrew Canon, its texts are cited here together with the Torah texts, because they provide a snapshot of the beginning and ending of the leadership of Joshua.

Numbers is identified as רִיחַ חֲכָמָה “Spirit of wisdom” in Deuteronomy. The qal perfect third masculine singular עָשָׂה “he did” and the common noun masculine singular מַעֲשֵׂה “deed” in Josh 24:31 reflect the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” in Ezekiel. In both texts, God is the subject. The common noun masculine singular חֹק “statute” and the phrase וּמִשְׁפָּט “and judgment” in Josh 24:34 correspond to the phrases בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes” and וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” respectively in Ezekiel.⁴⁶ The phrases וַיַּעַשׂ “and he did” and וַיַּעֲשׂוּ “and they did” according to Numbers and Deuteronomy respectively mirror the phrase וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezekiel. Table 12 compares the texts.

Table 12. Comparison between Numbers 27:18, 22; Deuteronomy 34:9; Joshua 24:25, 31 and Ezekiel 36:27

Numbers 27:18, 22; Deuteronomy 34:9 Joshua 24:25, 31	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ “Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
בו “in him”	בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you”
מַעֲשֵׂה/עָשָׂה “deed/he did”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
חֹק “statute”	בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes”
וּמִשְׁפָּט “and judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ/וַיַּעַשׂ “and they did/and he did”	וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: בְּרִית “covenant” (Josh 24:25)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם-לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

⁴⁶ Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 351.

According to Numbers, God informs Moses that he will die on Mount Nebo, because he rebelled against the word of God in the wilderness of Zin (Num 27:12-14; Deut 34:4, 5). Moses pleads with God to appoint a leader for the people. He acknowledges that God searches all the spirits of the people. God commands Moses to take Joshua, of whom God says רִיחַ בּוֹ “the Spirit is in him,” and ordain him before Elea’zar the priest, and the congregation יִשְׁמְעוּ “will obey” (27:20). It can be argued that the Spirit that is in Joshua in Num 27:18 is the Spirit of God of wisdom (Isa 11:2), which fills him according to Deut 34:9 based on the following:

1. Elsewhere the prepositional phrase בּוֹ “in him” is used in association with the Spirit of God (Num 41:38; Isa 59:19). In Deuteronomy, Joshua is said to be filled with the רִיחַ חֶכְמָה “Spirit of wisdom,” because Moses has laid his hands on him. As a leader chosen by Moses to share leadership responsibilities like the seventy elders, Joshua must have had the share of the Spirit of God which was upon Moses. Since Joshua takes the full responsibility of leading Israel, which Moses had, he must be filled fully with the Spirit of God commensurate with the full responsibility he assumes.

2. As a faithful and courageous spy to follow God together with Caleb who had רִיחַ אַחֵרֶת עִמּוֹ “another Spirit with him” different from the other spies (Num 14:6-10, 24, 30, 38; 26:65; 32:12), Joshua must have had the Spirit of God in him.

3. The filling of Joshua with the Spirit of wisdom parallels the filling of the people with the Spirit of wisdom and the filling of Bezalel with the Spirit of God in wisdom respectively (Num 28:3; 31:3). It also parallels the Spirit of God in Joseph which gives him wisdom and assumes the responsibility of ruling over the people of Pharaoh as

deputy of the king (Gen 41:38, 39). The רֹחַ חָכְמָה “Spirit of wisdom” in Joshua effects obedience at three levels: (1) Moses, (2) Joshua, and (3) The people.

In the first level, Moses obeys וַיַּעַשׂ “and he did” as God commands him (Num 27:22). Since God prevents Moses from leading the people to possess the land, Moses earnestly yearns for a person whom the Lord knows regarding his spirit, because God searches the spirits of all people. Therefore, Moses obeys the command of the Lord when God tells him that Joshua has רֹחַ בָּא “Spirit in him.” According to Gane, “Joshua already has the Spirit.”⁴⁷ For Cole, “the life of Joshua evidenced that the [Holy] Spirit of God controlled his life.”⁴⁸

In the second level, Joshua obeys by רֹחַ חָכְמָה “the Spirit of wisdom” of God בּוֹ “in him” that gives him wisdom as he leads the people through פִּי “his word,” which the priest enquires from the Lord בְּמִשְׁפָּט “by the judgment” of Urim (Num 27:21). The Spirit within Joshua is reminiscent of the portion of the הָרוּחַ that God takes from Moses and gives to the seventy elders on the mountain, including Joshua (Num 11:25-29). Joshua leads the people to the land that God gave them according to the covenant between him and Israel. “The principal gift of the Spirit here was wisdom, a necessary endowment of Joshua was to be able to take Moses’ place and successfully complete the conquest and occupation of Canaan.”⁴⁹ The Spirit of wisdom in Joshua is closely connected with the word of Joshua.

⁴⁷ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004), 741.

⁴⁸ R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers* (NAC 3B; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 469.

⁴⁹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC 4; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 455.

In the third level, Joshua is to be ordained so that the people יִשְׁמְעוּ “will obey” (Num 27:20). Moses sets his authority upon him וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו “and they heard him” (Deut 34:9). The people obeyed by doing וַיַּעֲשׂוּ “and they did” what God commanded Moses in accordance with the word of Joshua which the priest inquired from God. Israel serves God all the days of Joshua and the elders after him, because they know the מַעֲשֵׂה “deed” which God עָשָׂה “has done” for them (Josh 24:31). At the end of his life, Joshua makes a covenant for Israel by setting up a הֶחָק “statute” וּמִשְׁפָּט “and judgment” for them (Josh 24:31). Mattingly sums up the obedience of the people thus, “A call to שָׁמַע (listen) is a call to understand and respond to what is heard. Calling for attention and understanding has obedience as a consequence.”⁵⁰

Levison maintains that the Spirit in Joshua “is vitality, a quality of life.”⁵¹ Other scholars including (but not limited to) Kalland view the רוּחַ חָכְמָה in Joshua as his leadership ability.⁵² This view, however, overlooks the fact that the construct רוּחַ חָכְמָה “Spirit of wisdom” is a genitive of effect.⁵³

The Spirit of wisdom in Joshua is the Spirit of God that causes or effects wisdom. Without the power of the Spirit of God, the people cannot serve God, because he is a holy God (Josh 24:19). The Spirit of God “will enable Joshua to be a wise leader in Moses’

⁵⁰ Keith Mattingly, “The Significance of Joshua’s Reception of Laying on of Hands in Numbers 27: 12-23,” *AUSS* 39 (2001): 202.

⁵¹ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 40.

⁵² See Earl S. Kalland, “Deuteronomy” (EBC 3; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 235, note 9; Clyde M. Woods and Justin M. Rogers, *Leviticus–Numbers* (CPNIVC; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 2006), 354.

⁵³ Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 146.

stead for God’s people.”⁵⁴ Compared with Ezek 36:27, Num 27:18, 22, Deut 34:9, and Josh 24:25, 31 present God as “doing” through the רוח הַקְּמָה in Joshua, and Israel obeys what God commanded Moses. The people obey by heeding the word which Joshua receives from God through the enquiry of the priest by the judgment of Urim.⁵⁵ Joshua makes a covenant for Israel and sets up for them a חֶק “statute” וּמִשְׁפָּט “and judgment.”

In Ezekiel, God “does” by putting his Spirit within the people so that they can obey his statutes and judgments. The people obey through the Spirit of God by the word of God from the prophet Ezekiel. The Spirit of God in Joshua that empowers Israel to hear the word of God by the mouth of Joshua and do the laws of God in Numbers and Deuteronomy, parallels the Spirit of God that God puts within his people in order to obey his laws through his word by the prophet Ezekiel.

Therefore, the spirit of God of wisdom in Joshua that empowers Israel through the word of God by Joshua to do what God commanded Moses according to Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, parallels the Spirit of God that the Lord puts within his people to empower them to obey the divine laws through the word of God from the prophet Ezekiel.

Prophets

Isaiah 42:1-4

הֲנֵן עַבְדִּי אֶתְמַדְּבֹוּ בְּחִירֵי רְצֹנָהּ נַפְשֵׁי נְתַתִּי רוּחִי עָלָיו מִשְׁפָּט לְגוֹיִם יוֹצֵיא׃
 לֹא יִצְעַק וְלֹא יִשָּׂא וְלֹא יִשְׁמִיעַ בְּחֹזֶן קוֹלוֹ׃

⁵⁴ Willem VanGemeren and Andrew Abernethy, “The Spirit and the Future,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 328.

⁵⁵ The people obey God in all the days of Joshua (Josh 24:31; Judg 2:7).

קָנָה רְצוֹן לֹא יִשְׁבֹּר וּפְשָׁתָהּ כִּהְיָה לֹא יִכְבְּנָה לְאַמַּת יוֹצֵיא מִשְׁפָּט:
לֹא יִכָּהֵה וְלֹא יִרְוֵץ עַד־יִשָּׁיִם בְּאֶרֶץ מִשְׁפָּט וּלְתוֹרַתוֹ אֵימָם יִנְחִילוּ:

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law” (RSV).

In Isa 42:1, נָתַתִּי רוּחִי “I have put my Spirit” is semantically paralleled by רוּחִי אֶתֵּן “I will put my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The root נָתַן is common in both texts. However, Isaiah uses qal perfect first-person common singular, while Ezekiel has qal imperfect first-person common singular. According to Isaiah, the prepositional phrase used is עָלָיו “upon him,” whereas in Ezekiel is בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you.”

The difference in prepositional phrases does not suggest that the Spirit of God upon the servant of God is different from the Spirit of God put within the people, because the Spirit of God can be upon or within a person.⁵⁶ The word מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” occurs three times in Isa 42. It corresponds to וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” in Ezek 36:27, implying that the servant of the Lord will bring forth the judgments of God at par with the law of God to the nations.⁵⁷ Table 13 presents the correspondence between Isaiah and Ezekiel.

⁵⁶ See ch. 2, p. 27.

⁵⁷ KJV and NJB translate מִשְׁפָּט “judgment.”

Table 13. Comparison between Isaiah 42:1-4 and Ezekiel 36:27

Isaiah 42:1-4	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחִי “my Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
נָתַתִּי “I have put”	אֶתֵּן “I will put”
מִשְׁפָּט “judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
Context: בְּרִית “covenant” (42:6)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The Spirit of God upon his servant in Isa 42 has direct influence on the servant of God to bring out judgment to the nations and establish it in the earth. Targum has רוּחַ קְדוֹשִׁי “my Holy Spirit” for רוּחִי “my Spirit,” רִיבִי “my judgment” instead of מִשְׁפָּט “judgment,” and יגְלִי “he will reveal” in place of יוציא “he will cause to go out.”⁵⁸

The servant of God establishes מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” and וְלְחֻרְתּוֹ “and his law,” for which the coastlands wait.⁵⁹ The judgment that the servant of God brings to the nations parallels his law that the coastlands await. The law occurs three times in Isa 42, the same number of times judgment occurs. In this context, מִשְׁפָּט is associated with the תּוֹרָה “law.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Holger Gzella, “New Ways in Textual Criticism: Isaiah 42, 1-4 as a Paradigm Case,” *ETL* 81 (2005): 416.

⁵⁹ The law here is identified as belonging to the servant of God, considering the antecedent of the pronominal suffix third-person masculine singular ו in וְלְחֻרְתּוֹ “and for his law” (Isa 42:4).

⁶⁰ Joseph Blenkinsop, *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2002), 210.

Although scholars agree that the speaker in Isa 42:1 is God, they are not in consensus as to the identity of the servant of God, whether it is Israel, the prophet (Isaiah), king (Cyrus), or Messiah (Jesus).⁶¹ The judgment that the servant of God brings out to the nations is reminiscent of the word of God that יֵצֵא “goes out” of his mouth (Isa 55:11). God makes the mouth of his servant Israel as a sharp sword, because the judgment of his servant מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgment” is with God, so that the tribes of Israel may be raised and the salvation of the Lord may go to the ends of the earth (Isa 49:1-6).

The Spirit that God puts upon his servant echoes the Spirit of God that speaks through the servant of God, David, and the word of God על “upon” his tongue (2 Sam 23:2; cf. Isa 11:4; 28:11). The tongue of the righteous speaks מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” (Ps 37:30); and the Lord sends his servant וְרוּחוֹ “and his Spirit” (Isa 48:16). The relationship between the Spirit of God upon the servant of the Lord and judgment, according to Isa 42:1-4, parallels the relationship between the Spirit of God that God puts within his people in Ezek 36:27.

In the context of Isa 42, the servant of God is empowered by the Spirit of God and brings forth מִשְׁפָּט, including his law וְלִתְּוֹרָתוֹ “and his law” for the purpose that the nations may obey them. God gives his servant for a לְבְרִית עִם “covenant to the people.”⁶² The servant is obedient to God, because not only does he deliver מִשְׁפָּט and וְלִתְּוֹרָתוֹ “also his law” to the nations, but also magnifies and makes the תּוֹרָה “law” glorious (Isa 42:21).

⁶¹ Peter Wilcox and David Paton-Williams, “The Servant Song in Deutero-Isaiah,” *JSOT* 42 (1988): 79, 85; see also Hyun Chul Paul Kim, “An Intertextual Reading for ‘A Crushed Reed’ and ‘A Dim Wick’ in Isaiah 42:3,” *JSOT* 83 (1988): 113; E. G. Singh, “The Character of the Servant’s Mission in Isaiah 42,” *AJT* 14 (2000): 3.

⁶² The preposition לְ is of specification.

The Spirit of God “empowers the servant to administer justice for the nations, and to endure until he has established justice in the earth.”⁶³ The coastlands and their inhabitants obey God by glorifying him (42:12). In Ezek 36, the Spirit of God that God puts within the people empowers them to obey the divine laws through the word of God by the prophet Ezekiel. God is vindicated through his people among the nations (36:23).

In conclusion, therefore, the רוּחִי “my Spirit” that God puts upon his servant in Isaiah is congruous with the רוּחִי “my Spirit” that God puts within his people in Ezekiel. In both texts, the Spirit of God empowers the servant of God and the people to obey the law of God and glorify God among the nations in the context of a covenant.

Isaiah 63:10-11, 14

וְהָמָּה מָרוּ וְעָצְבוּ אֶת־רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ וַיִּהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֹיֵב הוּא
 נִלְחַם־בָּם: וַיִּזְכֹּר יְמֵי־עוֹלָם מִזֶּה עִמּוֹ אִיְהוָה הַמַּעֲלֵם מַיִם
 אֶת רֵעֵי צֹאנוּ אִיְהוָה הַשָּׁם בְּקִרְבוֹ אֶת־רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ:

“But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his holy Spirit.”

כַּבֵּה־מָהּ בַּבִּקְעָה תִרְדּוּ רוּחַ יְהוָה תִּנְיַחֲנוּ כֵן נִהְיֵתָ עִמָּךְ
 לַעֲשׂוֹת לְךָ שֵׁם תִּפְאַרְתָּ:

“Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name” (RSV).

⁶³ Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 189.

The constructs אֶת־רוּחַ קָדְשׁוֹ “his Holy Spirit” and רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” in Isa 63:10, 11 correspond to the phrase וְאֶת־רוּחִי “and my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The construct relationship אֶת־רוּחַ קָדְשׁוֹ is an attributive genitive, whereby the pronominal suffix third masculine singular “modifies the whole chain.”⁶⁴ The possessive suffix ו attached to קָדְשׁ suggests that the author perceives רוּחַ “to be an independent personality.”⁶⁵ The prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבּוֹ “within him (them)” in Isa 63:11 echoes the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you” in Ezek 36:27. The third-person masculine pronominal suffix is used in Isaiah, whereas the possessive adjective second masculine plural is used in Ezekiel.⁶⁶ In both texts, the preposition ב and the noun קָרַב are identical. The antecedent of the pronominal suffix ו in Isaiah is עַם “people.” The antecedent of the possessive adjective in Ezekiel is בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל “house of Israel.” The people of God are the house of Israel.

In Isa 63:14, the infinitive construct לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do” is echoed by the verbal phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” in Ezek 36:27. The infinitive construct in Isaiah suggests timelessness, whereas in Ezekiel, the inversive perfect indicates an uncompleted action. In both texts, the subject is God and he “does” for the sake of his holy name and to make it glorious (cf. Ezek 36:22, 32). God vindicates his great holy name through what he does for his people, Israel. Isaiah and Ezekiel are compared in table 14.

⁶⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 150.

⁶⁵ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 90.

⁶⁶ עַם is collective singular.

Table 14. Comparison between Isaiah 63:10-11, 14 and Ezekiel 36:27

Isaiah 63:10-11, 14	Ezekiel 36:27
אֶת־רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ “his Holy Spirit” רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” בְּקִרְבּוֹ “within him (them)” לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do” —	וְאֶת־רוּחִי “and my Spirit” בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you” וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Short form of the covenant formula עַמִּי “my people” (63:8)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

According to Isaiah, Israel is portrayed as being rebellious against the Holy Spirit of God. However, although God fights them, he still remembers them in the days of Moses who put אֶת־רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ “his Holy Spirit” בְּקִרְבּוֹ “within him (them).” Consequently, the Spirit of God gives them rest and God leads them to make for himself a glorious name. Their rebellion against the Spirit of God is closely associated with their rebellion against the law of God (Ps 78:5, 7, 10). According to Ezek 20:8, 13, 21 (cf. Ps 78:8), Israel rebelled against God in that they did not obey the statutes and judgments of God. Thus, they rebelled against the Holy Spirit of God who enables them to observe the divine laws, despite the fact that God had put his Spirit within them. Moses plays an important role here, because God gave him the laws for Israel. The Holy Spirit leads them and gives them rest, and God makes for himself a glorious name.

Taking into account their contexts, Isa 63:10, 11, 14 compares with Ezek 36:27. In Isaiah, although God fights against them because they have rebelled against his Holy

Spirit, he leads them and his Spirit gives them rest, making for himself a glorious name. Moses plays an important role in communicating the word of God to them.

In Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people to enable them to obey his laws for the sake of his holy name and vindicates his great holy name through them before the nations (Ezek 36:23; 39:27). He accuses them of being a rebellious house (Ezek 2:3, 5-9, 26; 12:2, 3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6). He settles them in their land that he gave to their fathers (36:28) despite the fact that they have profaned his holy name (Ezek 36:22, 23). The prophet Ezekiel plays an active part in speaking to them the word of God.

Hamilton argues that the Holy Spirit of God in Isa 63:10, 11 is the presence of God in the pillar of fire in the midst of Israel as they came out of Egypt.⁶⁷ Walton supports Hamilton when he writes, “In those contexts the SOL is the manifestation of God’s presence which is intrinsically holy.”⁶⁸ Block views the Holy Spirit of God, according to Isa 63:10, 11, 14, “as a synecdochic reference to God himself.”⁶⁹ The stand taken by Hamilton, Walton, and Block that the Holy Spirit of God within the people is the presence of God is influenced by their view of the Spirit of God as the presence of God.⁷⁰

The purpose of God of putting his Holy Spirit within his people, however, is to strengthen them to obey his laws. The Holy Spirit, through the word of God by Moses, empowers the people to obey God, and, therefore, causes them to rest, and God makes for himself a glorious name. The presence of God among the people does not enable them to

⁶⁷ Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 39, 40.

⁶⁸ Walton, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Spirit,” 67.

⁶⁹ Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 180.

⁷⁰ See Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 89.

obey or cause them to rest, but withdraws from them instead when they rebel against God (1 Sam 4:21, 22; Ezek 8:6; 10:18; 11:23). In the context of Isa 63:10, 11, 14, the people **קָרוּ** “rebel” **וְעָצְבוּ** “and grieve” the Holy Spirit of God and not the presence of God as his **פָּנָה** “face,” **כְּבוֹד** “glory,” or **מִשְׁכָּן** “dwelling.” According to Ps 78:40, **וַיִּמְרֹדוּ** “they rebelled against him” and **יַעֲזִיבוּהוּ** “grieved him” in reference to God, the Most High (v. 35).⁷¹ God sorrows **וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֶל-לְבוּ** “and grieves to his heart” (Gen 6:6) as his Spirit strives **בְּאָדָם** “in the man” (v. 3).

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit of God that is put within the people, according to Isaiah, empowers them to be obedient to the statutes and judgments of God through the word of God by Moses. God “does” in order to make his name glorious. The Holy Spirit and obedience to the laws in Isa 63:10-11, 14 correspond to the Spirit of God that God puts within the people so that they are enabled to obey his statutes and judgments in Ezekiel. God vindicates his great holy name before the nations through his people, Israel.

Micah 2:7; 3:8; 6:8

הָאָמֹר בֵּית-יַעֲקֹב הֲקָצַר רִיחַ יְהוָה אִם-אֵלֶּה מֵעַלְלִי
הֲלוֹא דַבְּרֵי יִטִּיבוּ עִם הַיָּשָׁר הַזֶּה:

“Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? Are these his doings? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?”

וְאוֹלָם אֲנֹכִי מִלְּאֲחֵי כַח אֶת-רוּחַ יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּט וּגְבוּרָה
לְהַגִּיד לַיַּעֲקֹב פְּשָׁעוֹ וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל חַטָּאתוֹ:

⁷¹ The Spirit of God is associated with God, the Most High.

“But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.”

הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מִה־טוֹב וּמִה־יְהוָה הַדּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי
אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לֵבָת עִם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

“He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?” (RSV).

The constructs relationship רִיחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” and אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” in Micah corresponds to וְאֶת־רוּחִי “and my Spirit” in Ezekiel. The noun מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” (Mic 6:8) echoes the phrase וּמִשְׁפָּטִי “and my judgments” in Ezek 36:27. The qal infinitive construct עֲשׂוֹת “to do” mirrors the phrase וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezekiel. The infinitive suggests timelessness in doing the judgment of God. The participle הוֹלֵךְ “walking” and the infinitive לָכַת “to walk” in Micah match תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk” in Ezekiel. The correspondence between Micah and Ezekiel is shown in table 15.

Table 15. Comparison between Micah 2:7; 3:8; 6:8 and Ezekiel 36:27

Micah 2:7; 3:8; 6:8	Ezekiel 36:27
רִיחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God”	וְאֶת־רוּחִי “and my Spirit”
אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God”	
מִשְׁפָּט “judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטִי “and my judgments”
הוֹלֵךְ “walking”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
לָכַת “to walk”	
עֲשׂוֹת “to do”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Short form of covenant עַמִּי “my people” (2:4, 8, 9; 3:2, 5; 6:3, 5)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעָם— לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The question of whether the רִיחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” is הִקְצַר “shortened” is rhetorical, because the works of God, מַעֲלָלָיו “his works,” are evident. God declares that his words דְּבָרַי “my words” do good to the person who is הוֹלֵךְ “walking” upright. Elsewhere, the Spirit of God is closely linked to the word of God (Isa 59:21; 40:7, 8; Hag 2:5; Pss 33:6; cf. 1:23; Job 32:18). The Spirit of God works through the word of God (Ezek 2:2; 3:24; 37:1, 4; cf. Gen 1:2, 3). The verb קָצַר “shorten” is used in Num 11:23 in connection with the hand of God and his word דְּבָרַי “my words.” In Ezek 37:1, the hand of God is closely associated with the Spirit of God.

The prophet Micah asserts that he is filled with power of the Spirit of God and judgment to declare to the people of God their transgression and sin.⁷² The prophet is courageous, because אֶת־רִיחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” is speaking through him to declare to Israel their transgression and sin. The fact that Israel has transgressions and sins implies that they are transgressing the law of God (Ps 89:31-33 [Eng 30-32]). They think about wickedness and do evil (2:1), covet fields, rob houses, and oppress man and his house (2:2). They are supposed to know judgment, but they hate good (3:1, 2) and abhor judgment (3:9); their elders judge for a bribe and their prophets divine for money (3:11). They have bad and deceitful scales, and their rich are full of חֲמָס “violence” (6:11, 12).

Not only does the prophet Micah declare to the people their transgression and sin, but also what God has shown them as good. God requires them מַשְׁפָּט “to do” עֲשׂוֹת “justice,” love חַמִּים “mercy,” and לָכַח “to walk” humbly with their God. Concerning judgment, Wessels points out that

⁷² The Spirit of God of judgment and might is attested (Isa 28:6; cf. 4:4; 11:2).

in the society in Judah, the idea of the knowledge and practice of justice was supposed to be common place especially for leaders. Micah specifically speaks to the heads of families and rulers. He alludes to those normally responsible for administering justice because it is their duty to practice justice and to ascertain that it is also administered in society. But what is the basis and content of this justice? According to Allen (1976:306) justice is closely linked with the covenant stipulations. It seems to include all the obligations the covenant people had to fulfill.⁷³

Some English versions link כֹּחַ “power” with אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God,” implying that the prophet Micah is filled with power by the Spirit of God.⁷⁴ Others translate כֹּחַ distinctly from אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה, suggesting that the prophet is filled with power besides the Spirit of God, judgment, and might.⁷⁵ However, the direct object marker אֶת is used to emphasize the רוּחַ “the Spirit of God” of judgment and might.

The prophet Micah, therefore, is filled with the power of the Spirit of God of justice and strength to declare to Israel her transgressions and sins without fear on the basis of the judgments of God. “The prophets in the OT saw themselves as filled with divine power, justice and utterance because they were filled with the SOL,” asserts Walton.⁷⁶ “The attributes of power, judgment and might come from (or with) the spirit of Yahweh.”⁷⁷ Block and Levison view the רוּחַ יְהוָה “Spirit of God” in Mic 2:7 as the mind or disposition of God, indicating that God is impatient with Israel.⁷⁸ Moreover, Levison

⁷³ W. J. Wessels, “Wisdom in the Gate: Micah Takes the Rostrum,” *OTE* 10 (1997): 129.

⁷⁴ See for example, KJV, ASV, TNK, JPS, NKJ, NLT.

⁷⁵ See for example, RSV, NIV, NAS, NRS, NIB.

⁷⁶ Walton, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Spirit of the Lord,” 61.

⁷⁷ Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2000), 377.

⁷⁸ Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 179; Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 42.

interprets רִיחַ יְהוָה “the Spirit of God” in Mic 3:8 as a permanent quality in the prophet Micah, including the qualities of justice and strength.⁷⁹ The view by Block and Levison above is expressed to buttress their perspective that the Spirit of God is the mind or disposition of God and the breath of life that God has endowed the prophet with.

The Spirit of God does not represent the mind of God or a permanent quality. The Spirit of God is an identity not limited in doing good to the one walking uprightly through the word of God. The Spirit of God cannot be taken as a permanent quality within the prophet Micah, because the purpose of the Spirit of God in filling the prophet is to declare the transgressions and sins of Israel. In order to declare the transgressions and sins of Israel, the prophet Micah needs the power of the Spirit of God (which is not inherent in himself) in order not to fear, but to be strong.⁸⁰ Therefore, the Spirit of God gives the prophet power, strength, and judgment. Elsewhere, the Spirit of God fills some people to accomplish special tasks (Exod 31:3; 35:31; cf. Num 27:18; Deut 34:9).

Comparing Mic 2:7; 3:8; 6:8, with Ezek 36:27 based on their contexts, Micah depicts the Spirit of God as not shortened or limited, because the deeds of God, through his Spirit, are evident. The words of God do good to the one who is הֹלֵךְ “walking” uprightly. The prophet Micah is full of the power of the Spirit of God of judgment and might, empowering the prophet Micah to declare the transgressions and sins of Israel, because they have broken the law of God.

⁷⁹ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 45, 47.

⁸⁰ In Ezek 2:6; 3:8, 9, God commands the prophet Ezekiel not to fear the rebellious house of Israel, for he has strengthened his forehead (mind) to declare to them the word of God.

Israel has kept the חֲקוֹת “statutes” of Omri וַתֵּלֶכְו “and walked” in the counsels of the מַעֲשֵׂה “deed” of the house of Ahab (Mic 6:16). However, through the power of the Spirit of God, the prophet declares to them what God has shown them as טוֹב “good.” They are עֲשׂוּת “to do” מִשְׁפָּט “justice,” love חֶסֶד “mercy,” and לָכַח “to walk” humbly with God. The Spirit of God is not limited in deeds. The Spirit of God “does” through the words of God, which do good to the person walking uprightly. Ezekiel suggests that the Spirit of God put within the people empowers them through the word of God by the prophet Ezekiel to keep the judgments of God and walk in his statutes. Israel has transgressed against the laws of God by not walking in his statutes and doing his judgments, וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֵי “but according to the judgments” of the nations round about (Ezek 5:6, 7; 11:12). Nevertheless, God empowers them through his Spirit to observe his laws. Therefore, the Spirit of God is not limited in his works, but, through the word of God by the prophets Micah and Ezekiel, empowers Israel to do the laws of God. Although the people have transgressed and sinned against God, they are enabled to obey the Lord.

Haggai 2:4, 5

וְעַתָּה חֹזֵק זְרֻבָבֶל! נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַחֲזַק יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק
הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וַחֲזַק כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְעֲשׂוּ כִּי־אָנֹכִי
אִתְּכֶם נָאם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:
אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַתִּי אִתְּכֶם בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְרוּחִי
עֲמִידָת בְּתוֹכְכֶם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ:

“Nevertheless, Z'rubavel, take courage now,’ says ADONAI; ‘and take courage, Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the *cohen hagadol*; and take courage, all you people of the land,’ says ADONAI; ‘and get to work! For I am with you,’ says *ADONAI-Tzva'ot*. This is in keeping with the word that I promised in a covenant with you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit remains with you, so don't be afraid!” (CJB).

The phrase **רוּחִי** “and my Spirit” in Hag 2:5 parallels the phrase **רוּחִי** “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. However, the *vav* is not present in Ezekiel. The prepositional phrase **בְּתוֹכְכֶם** “within you” in Haggai is synonymous with the prepositional phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “within you” according to Ezekiel. The phrase **וַעֲשׂוּ** “and do” in Hag 2:4 corresponds to the phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do” according to Ezekiel. The qal imperative masculine plural used in Haggai suggests an uncompleted action. The qal imperfect second-person masculine plural used in Ezekiel also indicates an uncompleted action. The action is completed when the people “do.” The Spirit of God and the **אִתְּהֶרְבָּר** “word” of God in Haggai are in parallel. The definite article **הַ** attached to **דְּבָרֶךָ** specifies the word or covenant that God “cut” with his people when he brought them from Egypt.⁸¹ The texts are compared in table 16.

Table 16. Comparison between Haggai 2:4, 5 and Ezekiel 36:27

Haggai 2:4, 5	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחִי “and my Spirit” בְּתוֹכְכֶם “within you” וַעֲשׂוּ “and do”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you” וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Short form of the covenant formula— אֱלֹהֵיהֶם “their God” (1:12, 14)	Context: Covenant formula— לִי לְעַם . . . לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

⁸¹ The phrase **כָּרַתִּי** “I cut (made)” is used in reference to making a covenant (Jer 31:33).

In Hag 2:4-5, God commands his people to build his house for his glory. Earlier, God had commanded them to build his house and they had obeyed and feared God, because he was with them (1:12-13). Here, in ch. 2:4-5, he assures them that he is still with them and the glory of the house they are building will be greater than the glory of the former house, for he blesses them from this time forward (2:9). Their obedience in building the house of God is based on *הַדְבָר* “the word” that God made with them as covenant when he brought them out of Egypt and established his Spirit in them. Kessler argues that

Haggai views the Sinai covenant as a foundational constitutive element of the community’s relationship with Yahweh (1:2-11). Here in a similar fashion Haggai draws a straight line between the people of the Exodus and the Jerusalemite community of the late sixth century. The rhetorical “you”—“the covenant that I made with *you* when *you* came out of Egypt”—clearly views the latter community as standing in direct continuity with the former.⁸²

Assis surmises, “It appears that the prophet refers here to the Sinai covenant, which God made with Israel after the Exodus. If so, the meaning of v. 5 is something like ‘[remember] the word.’”⁸³ He further argues, “The intention of Haggai’s words, then, is that the covenant which God struck with Israel at Sinai is still valid.”⁸⁴ He notes, “Haggai reassures the people that even after the destruction of the temple the covenant relationship between God and Israel remained unchanged.”⁸⁵ The “Jewish communities living after

⁸² John Kessler, “Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Verse from Early Persian Yehud,” in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd; New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 26.

⁸³ Elie Assis, “A Disputed Temple (Haggai 2, 1-9),” *ZAW* 120 (2008): 590.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 591.

the exile and return sought to restore their understanding of the divine-human relationship, evidently because they perceived the relationship as now fragile and tenuous, and they did so along the lines of the Mosaic covenant.”⁸⁶ Therefore, “upon returning to their homeland, the people immediately began performing ceremonies of covenant renewal and encouraging adherence to the law of Moses, i.e., the Sinai covenant.”⁸⁷

Compared with Ezek 36:27, based on their contexts, Haggai presents God as commanding his people to build his house, because he is with them through his Spirit within them. He encourages them to obey by reminding them of the word that he established with them when he brought them from Egypt, implying the covenant that he made with them to dwell among them. The Spirit of God within them empowers them to build the house of God through the words of God by the prophet Haggai.

In Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his laws which he gave them when he brought them out of Egypt (20:6, 9, 10, 11). He makes a covenant with them, as indicated by the covenant formula (Ezek 36:28), and restores them to the land that he gave to their ancestors. Hubbard sees the Spirit of God in Hag 2:5 as the nature of God.⁸⁸ For Block, Routledge, Hildebrandt, and Hamilton, the Spirit is the presence of God indwelling among the people.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Bautch, “An Appraisal of Abraham’s Role,” 61.

⁸⁷ Freedman and Miano, “People of the New Covenant,” 11.

⁸⁸ Robert L. Hubbard, “The Spirit and Creation,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 86.

⁸⁹ Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 181; Routledge, “The Spirit and the Future,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 359; Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 26; Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 100.

It can be argued here that the Spirit of God standing among the people in Haggai is not the nature or the presence of God as alleged by the scholars above. The presence of God does not empower them to “do” or build the temple of God; after all, they have abandoned building it. Only the Spirit of God speaking through the prophet Haggai among them would empower them to build the temple, symbolic of the presence of God.⁹⁰ According to Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai, the people “do” by the Spirit of God and not by their own power or might (Zech 4:6).

The conclusion drawn from the above comparison is that according to Haggai, the Spirit of God empowers Israel to build the temple of God. God is with them through his Spirit and the words that are essentially his covenant with them. In Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within the people to empower them to do his laws by the word of God from the prophet Ezekiel in the context of the covenant between God and Israel.

Zechariah 4:6; 7:9, 12

וַיֵּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר זֶה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־זֶרְבָבֶל לֵאמֹר
 לֹא בְחֵיל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם־בְּרוּחִי אֹמֵר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:

“Then he said to me, ‘This is the word of the LORD to Zerub’babel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.’”

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפָּט אֱמַת׃ שִׁפְטוּ וְחַסְדוֹ וְרַחֲמִים עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו:

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother.’”

וּלְבָבָם שָׁמְרוּ שְׁמִיר מְשֻׁמוֹעַ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה וְאֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
 שָׁלַח יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּרוּחֹו בְּיַד הַנְּבִיאִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים וַיְהִי

⁹⁰ Cf. Exod 33:3 where God fills Bezalel with the Spirit of God to build the sanctuary of God.

“They made their hearts like adamant lest they should hear the law and the words of which the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore, great wrath came from the LORD of hosts” (RSV).

The prepositional phrases בְּרוּחִי “by my Spirit” and בְּרוּחוֹ “by his Spirit” in Zech 4:6 parallel רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The preposition ב “by” in this context expresses agent—by the Spirit of God. The noun מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” and the qal imperative masculine plural שִׁפְטוּ “judge” in Zech 7:9 echo the phrase וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” in Ezekiel. The phrase עֲשׂוּ “do,” according to Zech 7:9, corresponds to וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezekiel. The two texts are compared in table 17.

Table 17. Comparison between Zechariah 4:6; 7:9, 12 and Ezekiel 36:27

Zechariah 4:6; 7:9, 12	Ezekiel 36:27
בְּרוּחִי “by my Spirit” בְּרוּחוֹ “by his Spirit” מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” שִׁפְטוּ “judge” עֲשׂוּ “do”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Covenant formula— לַיהוָה לֵאלֹהֵינוּ . . . לֵאלֹהֵינוּ . . . “my people . . . their God” (8:8)	Context: Covenant formula— לַיהוָה לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם . . . לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

According to Zech 4:6, דְּבַר־יְהוָה “the word of God” to Zerubbabel is that it is not by human power or strength that things are accomplished, but by the Spirit of God בְּרוּחִי

“by my Spirit.” In Zech 7:9, God commands his words to his people to do judgments, implying that they should do them by the power of the Spirit of God. However, they refuse to obey his law and the words which he sends to them בְּרוּחֹו “through his Spirit” by the hand of his prophets, and, therefore, God sends them great wrath and disperses them among the nations (Zech 7:12, 14). Although God scatters them among the nations, he saves a remnant of them to do them good (8:6, 13, 14, 15).⁹¹

Therefore, he again commands them to שִׁפְטוּ “judge” with true מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” and עָשׂוּ “do” mercy and kindness (Zech 7:9; cf. 8:16). The Spirit of God is closely associated with the words of God in Zech 4:6; 7:12, indicating that the words of God play a significant role in connection with the Spirit of God as the people do the laws of God. Boda alleges, “Judging faithfully here speaks of judging with faithful adherence to God’s law no matter who stands before the court.”⁹² Klein observes that “justice denotes the rights and duties each party possesses. These privileges arise from the shared covenant the Lord made with his people.”⁹³ “They were guilty of legalism: an external adherence to the letter of the law while disregarding the internal spirit—the true divine intent—of the law,” perceives Barker.⁹⁴ Gowan posits: “In the healthy community, that is, the people Israel as it lives according to the standards God has established for it (the Torah, 7:12),

⁹¹ The Spirit of God is not shortened, and his words do good to the person who walks uprightly (Mic 2:7).

⁹² Mark J. Boda, *Haggai, Zechariah* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004), 360.

⁹³ George N. Klein, *Zechariah* (NAC 213; Nashville, Tenn.: B&H, 2008), 220.

⁹⁴ Kenneth L. Barker, *Zechariah* (EBC 7; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1985), 645.

there will be no defrauding of widows and orphans, sojourners, and the poor.”⁹⁵

According to Hildebrandt and Block, the Spirit of God in Zech 4:6 is the presence of God.⁹⁶ This view, however, ignores the fact that the presence of God does not empower the people to obey. The people had disobeyed God despite his presence among them (Zech 1:6). According to Ezek 8:3, 6; 10:18, 19; 11:22-24, the people caused the presence of God to leave the temple and the city because of their abominations.

When Ezekiel and Zechariah are compared based on their contexts, Zechariah narrates how the laws of God are observed through the power of the Spirit of God by the words of God that the Lord sends by his prophets to his people. Nevertheless, they refuse to obey his law and words in order to do judgment. He disperses them among the nations. Nonetheless, he saves a remnant and brings them back to their land. Therefore, God commands them to do his judgments through the words of the current prophets. According to Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people to obey his judgments after scattering them among the nations, because of their disobedience to his laws. He saves them and gathers them to their land. The conclusion reached by comparing Zechariah and Ezekiel is that by his Spirit, God empowers his people through his words by the prophet Zechariah and Ezekiel to obey his laws.

Malachi 2:15, 17

וְלֹא־אָחַד עָשָׂה וּשְׂאֵר רִיחֹ לֹא וּמִהַּ הָאָחַד מִבְּקֵשׁ זָרַע

⁹⁵ Donald E. Gowan, “Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament: The Case of the Widow, the Orphan, and the Sojourner,” *Int* 41 (1987): 341-42.

⁹⁶ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 101; Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 188.

אלהים ונשמרתם ברוחכם ובאשת נעוריך אל-יבגד:

“And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth” (ASV).

הונעתם יהוה בדבריכם ואמרתם במה הונענו באמרכם
כל-עשה רע טוב בעיני יהוה ובהם הוא חפץ או איה
אלהי המשפט:

“Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?” (KJV).

The noun רוח “Spirit” in Mal 2:15 corresponds to the phrase רוחי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. In Ezekiel, רוח is modified by the possessive adjective first-person common singular י “my.” In Malachi, רוח ושאר “and a remnant of Spirit” is in construct relationship, implying that the remnant is associated with the Spirit of God, for God has created them as one. The verb עשה “he has made” in v. 15 alludes to the verbal phrase ועשיתי “and I will do” in Ezekiel. The articulate noun המשפט “the judgment” in Mal 2:17 mirrors ומשפטי “and my judgments” in Ezekiel. The definite article ה specifies that the judgment is of God. The phrase ונשמרתם “and you will keep” according to Mal 2:15 (cf. v. 16) echoes תשמרו “and you will keep” in Ezekiel.⁹⁷ The participle עשה “the one doing” evil in v. 17 contrasts ועשיתם “and you will do” in Ezekiel. Table 18 compares the two texts.

⁹⁷ The niph'al form could also be in double status—used as reflexive; see Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 388.

Table 18. Comparison between Malachi 2:15, 17 and Ezekiel 36:27

Malachi 2:15, 17	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ “Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
עָשָׂה “he has made”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
הַמִּשְׁפָּט “the judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם “and you will be kept”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “and you will keep”
עֹשֶׂה “the one doing”	וְעִשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Covenant בְּרִיתִי “my covenant” (2:4; cf. 5, 8, 10)	Context: Covenant formula–לִי לְעַם–לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

According to Mal 2:15, the text וְלֹא־אֶחָד עָשָׂה וּשְׂאָר רוּחַ לִי could be better translated “and has he not created for himself one, even the remnant of the Spirit?” God creates or makes a remnant of the Spirit for himself and they are to obey his laws through the power of his Spirit. They are kept וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם “and you will be kept” by means of their Spirit בְּרוּחְכֶם “through your Spirit”–the Spirit of God that the Lord puts within them to empower them to obey the laws of God and not to be faithless. The remnant of Israel is attested (Ezek 11:13; Isa 10:20; 46:3; Jer 31:7; Mic 2:12). Nonetheless, the remnant says that everyone who is עֹשֶׂה “doing” evil is good before the eyes of God and questions the whereabouts of the God of הַמִּשְׁפָּט “the judgment.”

In the context of Mal 2:15, 17, the remnant of God has been faithless and has corrupted his covenant of life with Levi. By the covenant as the true law, Levi walked with God in peace and uprightness (2:5, 6). Therefore, God warns that he will draw near לְמִשְׁפָּט “for judgment” against the sorcerers, adulterers, those who swear falsely, oppress

the hireling, widow, orphan, sojourner, and do not fear God (3:5). God judges on the basis of הַמִּשְׁפָּט “the judgment” he has given his people to do. Therefore, he commands them to remember the law of Moses his servant and the statutes and judgments that he commanded him at Horeb for all Israel (3:22 [Eng 3:19]).

When Mal 2:15, 17 and Ezek 36:27 are compared in their contexts, Malachi shows that God has made or created for himself a remnant of the Spirit who are supposed to keep the laws of God by his Spirit in order to be faithful. However, they claim that anyone doing evil is good before the God of הַמִּשְׁפָּט “the judgment.” God warns that he will judge the evil doer, and, therefore, he commands them to remember his law which he commanded Moses, including the statutes and judgments. Ezekiel presents how God puts his Spirit within his people Israel, so that they are able to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments. He promises that out of them he will save a group as the שְׂאֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “remnant of Israel” (Ezek 11:13; cf. 6:8; 12:16; 14:22). Block sees רוּחַ in Mal 2:15 as human disposition.⁹⁸

However, it can be argued that רוּחַ is the Spirit of God for the following reasons:

1. It is God who has עָשָׂה “made” (בְּרָאֵנוּ “created us” v. 10) a remnant of רוּחַ “Spirit” for himself. God בְּרָא “creates” and עָשָׂה “makes” by his Spirit (Pss 104:30; 33:6; cf. 148:8; Job 33:4).

2. The remnant is kept through the Spirit of God which he puts in them בְּרוּחְכֶם “by your spirit.”

⁹⁸ Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 178.

3. The remnant should seek the זרע “seed” of God by being kept by the Spirit of God in them. The conclusion reached according to the above comparison is that God makes for himself a remnant of the Spirit who obeys his laws by the empowerment of his Spirit in order to be faithful to him and keep his statutes and judgments.

Writings

Psalms 51:6, 12-14 (Eng 4, 10-12)

לָךְ לְבַדְדָּךְ חָטָאתִי וְהִרַע בְּעֵינַיִךְ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק
בְּדַבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶיךָ:

“Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight–That You may be found just when you speak, *And* blameless when You judge.”

לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרֵאֵלֹהִי וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי:
אַל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אַל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי:
הַשִּׁיבָה לִי שִׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit” (NKJ).

The phrases וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ “and your Holy Spirit” and וְרוּחַ “and Spirit” in Ps 51:12-14 parallel the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. In Psalms, רוּחַ has a *vav* attached to it, but in Ezekiel, the noun is modified by the first-person common singular possessive adjective י “my,” suggesting that רוּחַ is of God. According to Psalms, וְרוּחַ is associated with נָכוֹן “fashioning,” קִדְשְׁךָ “your holiness,” and נְדִיבָה “nobility.” The prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבִּי “within me” in Psalms is analogous to the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you” in Ezekiel. In Psalms, it is modified by the possessive adjective first-person

common singular י “my,” while in Ezekiel it is modified by the second-person plural possessive adjective כֶּם “your.” The prepositional phrase בְּשֹׁפְטֶיךָ “in your judgment” in Ps 51:6 corresponds to וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” in Ezekiel. God judges on the basis of his judgments. The phrase עָשִׂיתִי “I have done” in Ps 51:6 contrasts with וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do” in Ezekiel. Table 19 presents the correspondence between Psalms and Ezekiel.

Table 19. Comparison between Psalms 51:6, 12-14 (Eng 4, 10-12) and Ezekiel 36:27

Psalms 51:6, 12-14 (Eng 4, 10-12)	Ezekiel 36:27
וְרוּחַ קָדְשְׁךָ “and your Holy Spirit” וְרוּחַ “and Spirit” בְּקִרְבִּי “within me” בְּשֹׁפְטֶיךָ “in your judgment” עָשִׂיתִי “I have done”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you” וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Short form of the covenant formula יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “the Lord God of Israel” (2 Sam 12:7)	Context: Covenant formula לִי לְעַם– לְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God (36:28)

Psalm 51:12-14 (Eng 10-12) presents clauses and phrases that are in parallel. In v. 12 (Eng 10), the clause לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא-לִי אֱלֹהִים “create for me a clean heart, O God” parallels וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי “and with a fashioning Spirit (literally, the Spirit that fashions) renew my קִרְבִּי.”⁹⁹ The *vav* וְ “and” attached to רוּחַ is a clausal *vav*, showing a

⁹⁹ Modern English versions translate this verse variously, indicating the absence of a common rendition among scholars. For example, see KJV, RSV, TNK, JPS, NLT.

close connection between the two clauses viewed as a unit.¹⁰⁰ The part לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא־לִי “create for me a clean heart” parallels תְּחַדֵּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי “renew within me” (literally, “renew [in] my קִרְבַּי”). The creation of a clean heart for David by God is equivalent to the renewal of his קִרְבַּי “inward part” by the fashioning Spirit.

Elsewhere, קִרְבַּי אִישׁ “inward part of a man” parallels לֵב “heart” (Ps 64:7); and בְּלֵב “in the heart” parallels וּבְקִרְבִּי “and in the inward part” (Prov 14:33). The inward part of the heart לֵבִי בְּקִרְבִּי “in the inward part of my heart” is attested (Ps 36:2). The phrase טַהַרְנִי “cleanse me” is used in v. 4 in connection with cleansing of the psalmist from sin. The divine name אֱלֹהִים “God” parallels רוּחַ נְכוֹן “fashioning Spirit.” The niphil participle masculine singular absolute נִכּוֹן is used with רוּחַ attributively as an adjective to qualify רוּחַ.

In Isa 45:18 (cf. Ezek 28:13), the verbs בָּרָא “create,” עָשָׂה “make,” פָּוַן “fashion,” and יָצַר “form” are used with God as the subject. God creates and fashions (Job 31:15; Deut 32:6) and his hand makes and fashions (Pss 119:73; 8:4 [Eng 3]). He פָּוַן “fashions” the לֵב “heart” of the humble (Pss 10:17; 112:7). The Spirit of God בָּרָא “creates,” עָשָׂה “makes,” and תְּחַדֵּשׁ “renews” (Pss 104:30; 33:6; Job 33:4; cf. Gen 1:1, 2). Therefore, the creating אֱלֹהִים “God” is in parallel with the רוּחַ נְכוֹן “fashioning Spirit.” God is creating by renewing and fashioning the heart of David through his Holy Spirit that is already within the psalmist.

¹⁰⁰ See Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 649; Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 179.

According to v. 13 (Eng 11), the clause אֶל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ “cast me not from your face” parallels אַל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי וְרוּחַ קָדְשְׁךָ “and take not your Holy Spirit from me.” For David, to be cast away from the face of God amounts to God taking away his Holy Spirit from him.¹⁰¹ In v. 11 (Eng 9), David pleads with God to hide his face from the sins of the psalmist. When God shines his face on a person, he is gracious and gives peace (Num 6:25, 26). He forgives sin (Ps 51:11 [Eng 9]) because sins cause him to hide his face from people (Isa 59:2; Ezek 39:23, 24). The sin of David threatens his presence in the face of God, hence the presence of the Holy Spirit of God within him.

The clause הַשִּׁיבָה לִּי שְׂשׂוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ “restore for me the joy of your salvation” parallels וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי “and support me with the Spirit of nobility.” The construct רוּחַ נְדִיבָה “Spirit of nobility” suggests that רוּחַ effects a noble character. In v. 8 (Eng 10), David urges God to cause him to feel joyful and glad. The concept of support involves the idea of leaning (Ps 71:6). God סָמַךְ “supports” both the heart of the righteous, the righteous person, and those who fall and bend respectively (Pss 112:8; 37:17; 145:14). A noble character is associated with righteousness (Prov 17:26).

According to Deut 34:9, the verb סָמַךְ “support” is used in connection with the filling of Joshua with the רוּחַ הַחֵכְמָה “Spirit of wisdom,” for Moses laid his hand on him. As regards the function of רוּחַ, Ps 51:12-14 (Eng 10-12) presents a chiasm with the emphasis on v. 13, where David pleads with God not to take his Holy Spirit from him.

The chiastic structure is presented below:

¹⁰¹ When the prophet Samuel anoints David as king of Israel, the Spirit of God comes mightily upon him from this day onward. God is with him, and the Spirit of God departs from King Saul (1 Sam 16:13, 14, 18).

A וְרוּחַ נִזְוֹן תְּהַשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי “and renew my inward part with the fashioning Spirit” (v. 12)

B וְרוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ אַל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי “and take not your Holy Spirit from me” (v. 13)

A' וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי “and support me with the Spirit of nobility” (v. 14)

God is the subject of all the verbs בָּרָא “create,” חָדַשׁ “renew,” שָׁלַךְ “cast,” לָקַח “take,” סָמַךְ “support,” and שׁוּב “restore.” In v. 13, the רוּחַ is emphasized as רוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ “your Holy Spirit.” God acts through the fashioning and ennobling of רוּחַ, his Holy Spirit. Based on his prayer, David understands that God creates a clean heart by fashioning it anew through his Spirit. He pleads with God to retain his Holy Spirit in him and support him with his Spirit that brings about a noble character of righteousness.¹⁰² Scholars have different views regarding רוּחַ נִזְוֹן “steadfast Spirit,” רוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ “your Holy Spirit,” and רוּחַ נְדִיבָה “noble Spirit.” In v. 12, רוּחַ נִזְוֹן is understood as human spirit.¹⁰³ The רוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ is viewed by Hamilton as the Holy Spirit bestowed in the New Testament.¹⁰⁴

For Estes, Walton, Grant, and Hildebrandt, רוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ is the presence of God.¹⁰⁵

Marlowe, VanGemen, and Levison argue that רוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ is the human spirit of the

¹⁰² The sin of King Saul threatens his presence before God, and, therefore, the Spirit of God departs from him (1 Sam 16:1, 14).

¹⁰³ See for example, Estes, “Spirit and the Psalmist in Psalm 51,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 128-9; Averbeck, “Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 29.

¹⁰⁴ Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 80; see also Averbeck, “Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Estes, “Spirit and the Psalmist in Psalm 51,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 130, 131; Walton, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 67; Grant, “Spirit and Presence in Psalm 139,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 30; Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 22.

psalmist.¹⁰⁶ Regarding v. 14, Hummel admits, “There it is difficult to decide whether רִיחַ in 15:14 (ET 51:12) and possibly in 51:12 (ET 51:10) should be capitalized in English (“Spirit”) as in 51:13 (ET 51:11) or whether it refers to the generated “spirit” of the believer (and translations vary).”¹⁰⁷ The view that רִיחַ in vv. 12-14 is the human spirit of the psalmist can be argued against based on the following reasons:

1. God creates and renews by his Spirit emphasized in v. 13 (Eng 11) as his Holy Spirit; for the Spirit of God creates, renews, and makes.
2. Based on his prayer, David understands that it is only through the Holy Spirit of God that his heart can be created anew, he cannot be cast away from the face of God, and he can be supported in order to not do evil before God.

Compared with Ezek 36:27, Ps 51:6, 12-14 presents God as creating anew the heart of David and supporting him through the Holy Spirit of God so that he may not do evil before God. David has sinned against God and the language used in Psalms suggests a new creation. According to v. 13 (Eng 11), the Spirit of God is already in him. Ezekiel shows that God puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his laws. The new Spirit in parallel with a new heart, according to Ezek 36:26, is emphasized as the Spirit of God in v. 27. Israel has sinned, but remembers its evil ways and loathes the iniquities and abominations which it has committed against God (Ezek 36:31). God gives them a new heart and puts a new Spirit within them by removing their heart of stone and giving them

¹⁰⁶ W. Creighton Marlowe, “Spirit of Your Holiness” (רִיחַ קְדוֹשׁ) in Psalms 51:13,” *TTJ* 19 (1998): 30; VanGemen, *Psalms* (EBC 5; rev ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2008), 438; Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 30, 31.

¹⁰⁷ Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48* (CoC; Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 2007), 1056. Estes interprets v. 14 as human spirit. Estes, “Spirit and the Psalmist in Psalm 51,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 128-9.

a heart of flesh. He cleanses them of their abominations and saves them (Ezek 36:25, 29, 31). The Spirit of God already in David parallels the Spirit of God that God puts within his people Israel to empower them to observe his laws, creating them anew through the renewing Spirit. The language used in Ezekiel implies new creation. In conclusion, the Holy Spirit of God in both David and Israel in Psalms and Ezekiel, respectively, renews, sanctifies, and sustains them to obey the laws of God.

Job 32:8, 9

אֵכֶן רוּחַ־הַיְהוָה בְּאִנּוּשׁ וְנִשְׁמַת שְׂדֵי תְבִינָם:
לְאֲדָרְבַּיִם יַחַכְמוּ וְזִקְנִים יִבְיִנוּ מִשְׁפָּט:

“But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. It is not the old that are wise, nor the aged that understand what is right” (RSV).

The word רוּחַ “Spirit,” according to Job 32:8, mirrors רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. In Job, רוּחַ is in synonymous parallelism with וְנִשְׁמַת “and breath” of the Almighty. The noun מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” in Job 32:9 corresponds to וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments.”

Table 20 compares Job and Ezekiel.

Table 20. Comparison between Job 32:8, 9 and Ezekiel 36:27

Job 32:8, 9	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ “Spirit” מִשְׁפָּט “judgment”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
Context: בְּרִית “covenant” (31:1)	Context: לִי לְעָם—Covenant formula לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

According to Job, the רִיחַ within a person paralleling the נְשִׁמָּה “breath” of the Almighty causes people to בִּין “discern” מִשְׁפָּט “judgment.” The רִיחַ יְהוָה “Spirit of God” of בִּינָה “discernment” is attested in Isa 11:2. Job discerns judgment, because the Spirit of God is in him בִּי “within me” (Job 27:3). He does not speak falsehood or deceit, but fears God and departs from evil (Job 27:4; 28:28). He is obedient to God by making a בְּרִית “covenant” with his eyes not to covet the wife of his neighbor, walk in falsehood, trust in wealth, worship idols, hate his enemies, or grab land from the owner without payment (Job 31). Like Noah, whom the Lord attests as righteous in his generation (Gen 6:9; 7:1), God also testifies that Job is blameless (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3). In Ezek 14:14, 20, God pronounces Job and Noah as righteous men in contrast with the rebellious house of Israel.

Comparing Job 32:8, 9 and Ezek 36:27 based on their contexts, Job depicts the Spirit of the Almighty in a person as the one who causes the individual to discern judgment. Job is righteous and discerns judgment, because the Spirit of God is within him. He fears God and turns from evil. Ezekiel maintains that God puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his judgments. The Spirit of God within them, therefore, makes them discern the judgments of God and obey them.

Scholars such as Hildebrandt and Levison see רִיחַ in Job 32:8 as breath of life.¹⁰⁸ However, this view overlooks the fact that breath of life cannot cause a person to discern judgments. In v. 9, רִיחַ is contrasted with the living sages with much wisdom who cannot discern judgment. Their breath, since they are already alive, cannot make them wise or discern judgment. The purpose of the Spirit of God in people is to cause them to discern

¹⁰⁸ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 56; Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 19, 66.

judgment by being able to differentiate between right and wrong and do right. The Spirit of God is closely associated with judgment.

In conclusion, therefore, the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Almighty, within a person makes him or her discern the משפּט “judgment” of God so that they can obey God through the discernment. Advanced age or greatness in wisdom does not make a person discern judgment.

Nehemiah 9:13, 20, 30

וְעַל הַר־סִינַי יָרַדְתָּ וּדְבַר עֲמֹהֶם מִשָּׁמַיִם וַתֵּתֵן לָהֶם
מִשְׁפָּטִים יְשָׁרִים וְתוֹרוֹת אֱמֶת חֲקִים וּמִצְוֹת טוֹבִים:

“Thou didst come down upon Mount Sinai, and speak with them from heaven and give them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.”

וְרוּחְךָ הַטּוֹבָה נָתַתָּ לְהַשְׁכִּילֵם וּמָנַדְתָּ לֹא־מִנְעֵתָ מִפִּיהֶם
וּמַיִם נָתַתָּה לָהֶם לְצַמְאֵם:

“Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.”

וַתִּמְשַׁךְ עֲלֵיהֶם שָׁנִים רַבּוֹת וַתַּעַר בָּם בְּרוּחְךָ בִּיד־נְבִיאֶיךָ
וְלֹא הֶאֱזִינוּ וַתִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ:

“Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them by thy Spirit through thy prophets; yet they would not give ear. Therefore, thou didst give them into the hand of the peoples of the lands” (RSV).

The verbal phrases וַתֵּתֵן “and you gave” and נָתַתָּ “you gave” in Neh 9:13, 20 allude to אֵתֵן “I will put” in Ezek 36:27. In Nehemiah, the verbal phrases are used in reference to the judgments, statutes, and the Spirit of God. In Ezekiel, אֵתֵן is used in connection

with the prepositional phrase בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “within you,” which identifies the specific location where the Spirit of God is put. The phrases וְרוּחְךָ “and your Spirit” and בְּרוּחְךָ “by your Spirit,” according to Neh 9:20, 30 echo רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezekiel. The nominal phrases חֻקִים “statutes” and מִשְׁפָּטִים “judgments” (9:13) parallel בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes” and וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments” respectively in Ezekiel. Table 21 shows the comparison between Nehemiah and Ezekiel.

Table 21. Comparison between Nehemiah 9:13, 20, 30 and Ezekiel 36:27

Nehemiah 9:13, 20, 30	Ezekiel 36:27
וְרוּחְךָ “and your Spirit” בְּרוּחְךָ “by your Spirit” נָתַתָּ “you gave” וְנָתַתָּן “and you gave” חֻקִים “statutes” מִשְׁפָּטִים “judgments”	רוּחִי “my Spirit” אֶתֵּן “I will put” בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes” וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
Context: הַבְּרִית “the covenant” (9:8, 32)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים “my people . . . your God” 36:28)

In Neh 9:13, 20, 30, God gives his people the right מִשְׁפָּטִים “judgments,” good חֻקִים “statutes,” and his good Spirit וְרוּחְךָ “and your Spirit” for instruction.¹⁰⁹ The statutes and the Spirit of God are qualified as טוֹבִים “good” and הַטוֹבָה “the good,” respectively, implying that the statutes and the Spirit are good for instruction to obedience. According

¹⁰⁹ Instructing is connected with the words of the law of God (Neh 8:13; cf. Ps 32:8).

to Deut 30:15-16, if Israel obeys the statutes and judgments that God sets before them, it is good and life for them.

In Nehemiah, God warns his people through his Spirit by the hand of his prophets to turn to his law, but they disobey it (9:26, 29). According to Isa 63:10-11, Israel rebels against God and grieves his Spirit. Thus, obedience to the statutes and judgments of God is tied to the Spirit of God that he gives them for instruction.

When Neh 9:13, 20, 30 is compared with Ezek 36:27 in their contexts, Nehemiah narrates how God gives his people right judgments and good statutes and his good Spirit to instruct them for obedience.¹¹⁰ Even though they have disobeyed God, Nehemiah leads the people to make a covenant to obey God, counting on the merciful God who keeps his covenant (9:32; 10:1 [Eng 9:32, 38]).

In Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within his people so that they can obey his statutes and judgments, despite the fact that they have profaned his name among the nations (36:22, 31, 32). He becomes their God and they are his people—a covenant formula (Ezek 36:28). Grant and Routledge attribute the good Spirit of God to divine presence.¹¹¹ According to Block, the good Spirit of God is “a synecdochic expression for YHWH himself.”¹¹² The above view can be counter-argued based on the following:

¹¹⁰ F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 230.

¹¹¹ Grant, “Spirit and Presence in Psalm 139,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 143; Routledge, “The Spirit and the Future in the Old Testament,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 358-59.

¹¹² Block, “The View from the Top,” in *Power, Presence and Promise*, 181.

1. God נתן “gave” his people his good Spirit through the prophets, including Moses (Isa 63:10, 11), for instruction in order to obey the statutes and judgments that he נתן “gave” them. The presence of God is not given through the prophets.

2. The presence of God does not instruct people relative to the laws of God. They disobeyed God despite his presence among them.

3. The fact that the Spirit and statutes of God are said to be good indicates that they are closely related, and God intends to do good to his people by instructing them through his הטובה “the good” Spirit in order to obey his טובים “good” statutes, because they give life.

4. The phrase הטובה has a definite article ה attached, suggesting that the good Spirit of God in view is specific relative to the good statutes. The conclusion drawn from the above comparison is that God gives his good Spirit to his people in order to instruct them to obey his good statutes and judgments for their own good.

Evaluation of the Texts

The selected OT intertextual texts to Ezek 36:27 explored within this chapter show a relationship between the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God as compared to Ezek 36:27, which presents a link between the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God.

The texts compare with Ezek 36:27 in the following ways:

1. The vocabulary, grammar, morphology, and syntax used in the texts parallel the vocabulary, grammar, morphology, and syntax used in Ezek 36:27.

2. The theological concept of obedience through the empowerment of the Spirit of God is reflected in the theological idea of obedience through the power of the Spirit of God in Ezek 36:27.

3. The Spirit of God is portrayed as within a person or people.

4. The Spirit of God strengthens the person or people to do what God requires them to do.

5. Obedience to the laws of God is presented in the context of a covenant as in Ezek 36:27.

Conclusion

According to the texts investigated above in comparison with Ezek 36:27, the Spirit of God empowers the people to obey God by doing what he requires them to do. The Spirit of God strengthens them to obey through the word of God. The relationship between the Spirit of God and obedience exists in the context of a covenant.

CHAPTER 5

EXTRA-CANONICAL INTERTEXTUALITY OF EZEKIEL 36:27

IN THE QUMRAN HEBREW TEXTS

In this chapter, the intertextuality of Ezek 36:27 in selected extra-canonical Qumran Hebrew texts is explored regarding the role of the Spirit of God and obedience to the statutes and judgments of God.¹ The intertextual method is chosen here as in the previous chapter (ch. 4) because (1) both Ezek 36:27 and the Qumran Hebrew texts are written in the Hebrew language; (2) the Qumran Hebrew texts share similar lexical, grammatical, and thematic vocabulary with Ezek 36:27; and (3) the Qumran Hebrew texts are viewed as existing in the intertestamental period closer to the exilic period.²

The purpose of the search is to investigate how the concept of the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God in the Hebrew texts inform and shed light on the Spirit

¹ The books consulted regarding the Hebrew texts include, but are not limited to: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (vol. 1 1Q1-4Q273; ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 1997); *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (vol. 2 4Q274-11Q31; ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 1998); *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Texts Concerned with Religious Law Part 1* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2004); *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Parabiblical Texts Part 3* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2005); *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Poetical and Liturgical Texts Part 5* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2005); *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Additional Genres and Unclassified Texts Part 6* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov; Leiden: Brill, 2005); Florentino Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (2nd ed., trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 1996); *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David G. Girth and Paul D. Wegner; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2001).

² For the definition of intertextuality and some scholarly literature regarding its current debate, see ch. 4, pp. 105-106.

of God and obedience to the divine laws in Ezek 36:27.³ The investigation is not concerned with authorship, date, transmission, or origin of the texts. The texts are not presented according to any particular order or preference.

The methods used include: summarizing the content of the Qumran Hebrew text under discussion; identifying the corresponding vocabulary with Ezek 36:27, such as words, phrases, and clauses; presenting the correspondence in a table for clarity, briefly discussing the relationship between the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God in the text; and comparing the text with Ezek 36:27 and drawing a conclusion.

Ezekiel 36:27 reads:

וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחָקִי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם

“And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations” (NLT).

The Rule of the Community

1QRule of the Community (1QS)

The **סֵרֵךְ הַיְהוּדָה** “Rule of the Community” is based on the covenant of God (**בְּרִיתוֹ** “his covenant”), the **בְּרִית חֶסֶד** “covenant of mercy,” viewed as the **עוֹלָם לְבְרִית מִשְׁפָּט** “everlasting covenant of judgment.”⁴ The members of the community are taught to seek God with all their heart and soul and do what is good and right before God, just as God

³ Although Ezek 36:27 is not quoted directly in the Qumran Hebrew Scrolls, according to Martínez, “the number of allusions to the text of Ezekiel or of reminiscences of its use to be found in the texts from Qumran is considerable. . . . This widespread use of Ezekiel already indicates that the text of the prophet had a much greater importance for the Qumran Community than the number of copies or of explicit quotations would lead us to suppose.” Florentino Martínez, *Qumranica Minora II: Thematic Studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1, 2.

⁴ 1QS V 11, 22; 1QS I 7; 1QS IX 3.

commanded through the hand of Moses and by the hand of his servants, the prophets.⁵ According to the Rule of the Community, God commanded Moses and the prophets the **חוקי אל** “statutes of God” and **משפטי צדק** “judgments of righteousness” and the members of the community are to do them. By rejecting the laws of God, a person is a sinner and unclean, and has no strength to repent. Only through the Holy Spirit of God and by humbling oneself to walk in the ways of God is the member cleansed from all iniquities and sin.

The vocabulary used in the document expressing the Spirit of God and obedience to the statutes and judgments of God spreads over more than one column. The columns provide the immediate context, whereas the whole document presents the larger context of the vocabulary. Below is the vocabulary used in the document.

גלו הנביאים ברוח קודשו “revealed to the prophets by His Holy Spirit” (col. viii) v. 16.

וברוח קודשה ליחד “and by his Holy Spirit to the community” ([col. iii] v. 7, 8; 4Q255 Frg. 2 v. 1).

ברוח קודשה ליחד באמתו יטהר מכול עוונותו “by his Holy Spirit to the community in his truth he is cleansed from all his iniquity” (col. iii) v. 7.

אל דרכי איש יכופרו כול עוונותו ברוח עצת אמת “by the Spirit of counsel of truth of God the ways of man all his iniquities are atoned for” (col. iii) v. 6.

וברוח יושר וענוותה תכופר חטתו “and by the right Spirit and humility his sin shall be atoned” (col. iii) v. 8.

⁵ 1QS I 1-3; 1QS V 7-10; Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 234.

צדקות אל במעשי גבורתו “the righteousness of God in mighty deeds” (col. i) v. 21.
 כול מעשי אמתו “all the works of his truth” (col. i) v. 19.
 חוקי אל “statutes of God” (col. iii) v. 8.
 לעשות חוקי “to do statutes” (col. i) v. 7.
 ברית לחקות עולם “covenant of everlasting statutes” (col. ix) v. 3.
 לסוד מחוקי אמתו ללכת “to turn from the statutes of his truth to walk” (col. i) v. 15.
 והתהלכ לפניו תמים והתהלכ “and walk before him blameless” (col. i) v. 8.
 להלכת תמים “to walk blameless” (col. iii) v. 9.
 משפטי צדק “righteous judgments” (col. iii) v. 1.
 עולם לברית משפט “eternal covenant of judgment” (col. ix) v. 3.
 לעשות בכול אשר צוה “to do all that he has commanded” (col. i) v. 16.
 עד הנה יריבו רוחי אמת ועול בלבב גבר יתהלכו בחכמה ואו[ן]לת
 falsehood content in the heart of man to walk in wisdom and falsehood” (col. iv)
 vv. 23, 24.
 According to 1QRule of the Community (1QS), the construct ברוח קודשו “by his
 Holy Spirit” alludes to the phrase רוחי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27.⁶ The phrases במעשי
 “by deeds” and מעשי “deeds” correspond to the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do.” In both
 texts, God is the subject. The phrases חוקי אל “statutes of God,” מחוקי “statutes,” and
 לחקות “for the statutes of” mirror the phrase בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes.” The statutes are
 identified as of God in both texts.

⁶ The possessive adjectives ה “his” and י “my” in 1QS and Ezek 36:27, respectively, reference God.

The phrases **להלכת** “to walk,” **ללכת** “to walk,” **והתהלכ** “and walk,” and **יתהלכו** “they will walk” are reminiscent of the phrase **תלכו** “you will walk.” The nouns **משפטי** “judgments” and **משפּת** “judgment” match the phrase **ומשפּטי** “and my judgments.” The infinitive construct **לעשות** “to do” corresponds to the phrase **ועשיתם** “and you will do.” In both texts, the people do the statutes of God—what he has commanded. For clarification, table 22 presents the correspondence between the Rule of the Community (1QS) and Ezek 36:27.

Table 22. Comparison between the Rule of the Community (1QS) and Ezekiel 36:27

1QRule of the Community (1QS)	Ezekiel 36:27
ברוח קודשו “by His Holy Spirit”	רוחי “my Spirit”
וברוח קודשה “and by His Holy Spirit”	
ברוח קודשה “by His Holy Spirit”	
במעשי “by deeds” מעשי “deeds”	ועשיתי “and I will do”
מחוקי אל “statutes of God” מחוקי “statutes”	בחקי “in my statutes”
לחקות “for the statutes of”	
ללכת “to walk” להלכת “to walk”	תלכו “you will walk”
והתהלכ “and walk” יתהלכו “they will walk”	
משפטי “judgments” משפּת “judgment”	ומשפּטי “and my judgments”
לעשות “to do”	ועשיתם “and you will do”
Context: בריתו “his covenant” 1QS V 11, 22	Context: Covenant formula— לי לעם — לכם לאלהים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The Community Rule (1QS) portrays God as the one who does mighty deeds or works by his righteousness and truth. The belief system of the Qumran community “was

God himself.”⁷ By his Holy Spirit, God cleanses and atones for the iniquities and sins of the people, in order for them לעשות חוקי “to do statutes” and all that he has commanded through Moses and revealed through his Holy Spirit by the prophets and see the light of life by repentance. “It is by the spirit alone that it is possible to walk in perfection of way,” asserts Deasley.⁸ The person who walks in stubbornness of heart does not have strength to convert his or her life, because the soul detests instruction of knowledge and משפטי צדק “righteous judgments.” However, if a person willingly submits to the truth of God, seeks God with all the heart and soul, walks blameless, and does good by observing the statutes and just judgments, he shall enter into the rule of the community and establish a covenant before God.

When the above Hebrew texts of the Rule of the Community (1QS) are compared with Ezek 36:27 in their contexts, the two texts show a close resemblance. According to the Rule of the Community, God is presented as the one who “does” mighty מעשי “deeds.” By his Holy Spirit, the יושר וענוותנות “right and humble Spirit” of עצת “counsel” and אמת “truth,” God cleanses and forgives the people in order to do his laws he has commanded through Moses and revealed through his Holy Spirit by the prophets.⁹

The person who walks in stubbornness of לב “heart” does not have the power to change his or her life. Nevertheless, if the person repents and submits to the covenant of

⁷ James Vanderkam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity* (New York, N.Y.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 255.

⁸ Alex R. G. Deasley, *The Shape of Qumran Theology* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 2000), 232

⁹ The Spirit of God through the prophets here in the Rule of the Community (1QS) is reminiscent of the Spirit of God that the Lord warns his people by through the prophets in Neh 9:30. The Spirit of God of עצה “counsel” is attested in Isa 11:2; cf. 30:1.

God, he has the light of life. “The almighty God established laws for his creation, whether the natural order or humanity. Obedience to the appropriate law ensures harmony, while disobedience disrupts the whole.”¹⁰ Metso argues, “The virtues of truth, righteousness, justice, humility, kindly love and circumspection were held in high regard in the community, and were expected of the members in their mutual conduct.”¹¹ Deasley notes,

There can be no doubt that the sect’s emphasis on the spirit was a distinctive feature of its teaching; indeed, it is widely conceded that the Qumran community stands out as an exception in an era which confessed that, in general, the spirit was no longer at work. Not only did they believe that the spirit was actively at work in their community; they believed that through their community alone the spirit could be received.¹²

Ezekiel depicts God as he who “does” by putting his Spirit within his people so as to strengthen them to walk in and do his statutes and judgments. The people loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominable deeds (36:31; cf. 6:9; 20:43) and God cleanses them from their uncleanness (36:25, 29) by taking away their לֵב הָאֲבָן “heart of stone” and giving them a רִיחַ הַרְשָׁה “new Spirit.” He restores a covenant relationship with them signified by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28).

Therefore, 1QRule of the Community (1QS) informs Ezek 36:27 in that God “does” by strengthening the people by his Holy Spirit to do his laws in the context of the covenant between him and the people.

¹⁰ Vanderkam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 256.

¹¹ Sarianna Metso, *The Serekh Texts* (New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 2007), 22.

¹² Deasley, *The Shape of Qumran Theology*, 230-31.

The Damascus Document

Damascus Document (CD)

The Damascus Document (CD) is concerned with the **ברית החדשה** “new covenant,” the **ברית אל** “covenant of God” in the land of Damascus, which God established with those who remained loyal to him after the Babylonian exile by the means of the prophet Ezekiel, concerning the Levites, priests, and the sons of Zadok (Ezek 44:15).¹³ The people are to return to the law of Moses with their whole heart and soul and do what is found therein.¹⁴ Those who keep the covenant of God and do not reject the statutes and judgments acquire eternal life (CD III 20). Their heart will be strong and God has much **סליחות לכפר** “forgiveness to atone” for them and they shall see his salvation (CD II 4).¹⁵ God teaches the remnant of his people by the hand of the anointed ones through **רוח קדשו** “His Holy Spirit” and through the seers of the truth.¹⁶

The vocabulary identifying the Spirit of God, statutes and judgments of God, deeds of God, and deeds of the people in the Damascus Document is sparsely distributed in the entire document. However, the immediate context is determined by the column where the vocabulary is used, whereas the larger context is provided by the whole document. The following is the relevant selected Hebrew vocabulary used in the Damascus Document (CD).

¹³ CD XX 12, 17; CD XIX 33, 34; CD I 7, 8, 10, 11; CD III 20; CD VII 5.

¹⁴ CD XV 7-10, 12; see also Hultgren, *From Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, 234.

¹⁵ CD XX 17, 18, 20, 27-34; CD III 20.

¹⁶ CD II 12.

“and he made them know through the hand
of the anointed ones by His Holy Spirit and the seers of the truth” (col. ii) v. 12.

“and they will discern the deeds of God” (col. i) v. 1.

“statutes of the covenant of God” (col. v) v. 12.

“by the statutes of the righteous covenant” (col. xx) v. 29.

“his holy statutes” (col. xx) v. 30.

“and they broke the statute” (col. i) v. 20.

“and defiling the statute” (col. ii) v. 6.

“to walk blameless in all his ways” (col. ii) v. 15.

“and by all those who are walking blameless” (col. i) v. 21.

“and righteous judgments” (col. xx) v. 30.

“by the first judgments” (col. xx) v. 31.

“and your true judgments” (col. xx) v. 30.

“and God discerned their deeds, for they sought him
with a perfect heart” (col. i) v. 10.

In the Damascus Document (CD), the construct רוח קדשו “his Holy Spirit” echoes the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27.¹⁷ The construct במעשי אל “by the deeds of God” reflects the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do.” The phrases חוקי “statutes,” בחקי “by the statutes,” חקי “statutes,” and חוק “statute” correspond to the phrase בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes.” The infinitive construct להתהלך “to walk” and participle הולכי “those who are walking”

¹⁷ The possessive adjectives ה “his” and י “my” in the Damascus Document (CD) and Ezek 36:27, respectively, refer to God.

parallel the phrase תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk.” The phrases [וּמִשְׁפָּטִין] “and judgments,”
 בְּעִשְׂפֹטֵימָם “by your judgments,” and מִשְׁפָּטֵיךָ “your judgments” match וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my
 judgments.” מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם “their deeds” mirrors the phrase וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do.” Table 23
 presents the comparison between the Damascus Document and Ezek 36:27.

Table 23. Comparison between Damascus Document (CD) and Ezekiel 36:27

Damascus Document (CD)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוח קדשו “His Holy Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
בְּמַעֲשֵׂי אֵל “by the deeds of God”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
חוקי “statutes” בחקי “by the statutes”	בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes”
חוקי “statutes” חוק “statute”	
לְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ “to walk” חוֹלְכֵי “those who are walking”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
[וּמִשְׁפָּטִין] “and judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
בְּמִשְׁפָּטֵימָם “by your judgments”	
מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם “their deeds”	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: ברית אל “covenant of God” (col. v) v. 12	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The Damascus Document (CD) presents God as doing his deeds, and the people are supposed to discern them as he discerns their deeds.¹⁸ God taught Israel through the anointed ones by his Holy Spirit in order for them to walk blameless in all his ways.

They would know righteousness and the deeds of God by walking in the statutes and

¹⁸ God exiled Israel to Babylon, delivering them into the hand of king Nebuchadnezzar. However, he visited them and left for them a remnant whom he brought back to their land, for they had turned to him with all their heart.

judgments of God, as opposed to those who broke the covenant of God by not observing his laws.¹⁹ The content of the Damascus covenant is to “return to the law of Moses with the whole heart and with the whole soul (CD XV, 9-10).”²⁰ The law of Moses plays a central role in the new covenant made in Damascus.

Compared with Ezek 36:27 in the context of the covenant between God and his people, the Damascus Document (CD) depicts God doing by working for his people.²¹ He teaches them concerning his statutes and judgments by the hand of the anointed ones and seers through his Holy Spirit so as to walk blameless in all his ways. He atones for their sins, and they see his salvation. As the remnant keeps the laws of God, their heart is strengthened.

Concerning God in Qumran, Ringgren writes,

It can also be said that he acts for the sake of his name (1QM xviii.8). . . . Here the scrolls continue a line of thought that is found already in the Old Testament, in the canonical Psalter and, above all, in the prophet Ezekiel: God does not act because he is affected by man’s fate but for his own sake, for the sake of his name or for the sake of his glory. “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, . . . but for the sake of my holy name . . .” (Ezek. 36.22). And when he acts thus, “He shows His holiness,” i.e., he

¹⁹ Cryer and Thompson observe, “According to CD, the covenant has its origin in God, in whose nature and will it is grounded, and in whose promise covenant-validity rests.” Fredrick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson, *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 290; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 72.

²⁰ Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 80.

²¹ Hultgren argues, “Thus in the Damascus covenant’s theological explanation of its history, God himself raised up the covenant (from the remnants of the exile), in order to allow the faithful within Israel to return to the law of Moses with whole heart and with whole soul and thus to be restored, as God had promised through the prophets. One can say that God established the Damascus covenant, and through it the opportunity to observe perfectly the law of Moses, precisely so that he could fulfill his own promises of restoration given to Israel through the prophets. Fundamentally, the very existence of Damascus covenant is the (gracious) means by which God was to uphold his own faithfulness to Israel.” Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, 421-22.

upholds the inviolability of his nature, guards his honor. Similar expressions are very numerous in Qumran, particularly in the Thanksgiving Psalms.²²

In Ezekiel, God “does” by putting his Spirit within his people to strengthen them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. God saves and cleanses them from their uncleanness (36:25, 29). He restores the covenant relationship between him and Israel signified by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28). The Damascus Document (CD) sheds light on Ezek 36:27 in that God works through his Holy Spirit to empower his people to walk in his statutes and judgments and do them.

Liturgical Texts

Words of the Luminaries (4Q504)

In the Words of the Luminaries, although Israel broke the covenant of God and God dispersed them among the nations, he remembers his covenant that he made with them when he brought them from Egypt (col. xviii 10). The covenant that God made with Israel at Horeb is based on the **החוקים והמשפטים** “statutes and judgments” of God (col. xi 16, 17).

God has compassion upon them by pouring upon them and favoring them with his Holy Spirit and has **שמה להשיב אל לבבם לשוב** “put to their heart to repent” and obey his voice, according to the law he commanded by the hand of Moses (col. xviii 12-16). He has cleansed them from their sins by forgiving them for his sake (col. xix 13). God performs wonders before the nations so that Israel might repent with all their heart and all

²² Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (exp. ed.; ed. James H. Charlesworth; trans. Emilie T. Sander; New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1995), 51.

their soul for God to plant his law in their heart (ולטעת תורתכה בלבנו “and plant your law in our heart”) (col. xv 13, 14).²³

The Luminaries pray that God would **עשה** “do” by forgiving them according to his great power, in order that his great power and abundant compassion might be known (col. xv 8). They plead with God to forgive their sins and strengthen their heart to “do” **חזק** (strengthen our heart to do”) and **ללכת** “to walk” in his ways (col. v 5-8, 12-13).

The vocabulary used is dispersed over the document, and, therefore, the immediate context can be determined by where the vocabulary is used, whereas the entire document provides for the larger context. Below is the selected vocabulary of the Words of the Luminaries:

יצקחה את רוח קודשכה עלינו “you have poured upon us your Holy Spirit” (col. xviii) v. 16.

ידענו (בא)שר (חנו)את[נו] (רוח) קודש רחמנו “we know that you have favored us with the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us” (col. v) v. 5.

אנא אדני עשה נא כמוכה כגדול כוחכה “please Lord, do according to your great power” (col. xv) v. 3.

אתה עשיתה את כול אלה “you have done all these” (col. xix) v. 5.

את נפלאותיכה אשר עשיתה לעני גוים “wonders which you have done in the eyes of the nations” (col. xv) v. 13.

אדוני כעשותכה נפלאות “O Lord, just as you have done wonders” (col. xix) v. 11.

להתבונן בכל חוקני “to discern through all the statutes” (col. iii) v. 3.

²³ The planting of the law in the heart of Israel is reminiscent of God putting his law within them and writing it upon their hearts (Jer 31:33).

לה]המשפטים והחוקים “concerning all the statutes and judgments” (col. xi)

v. 17.

לה]לכת בדרכיכה “to walk in your ways” (col. v) v. 13.

מ]שפטיו “his judgments” (col. 1) v. 21.

לעשות חזק לבבו לעשות “strengthen our hearts to do” (col. v) v. 12.

בם אשר יעשה אותם ה]אדם וחי במ “which a man does shall have life through them” (col. iii)

v. 17.

According to the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504), the constructs רוח קודשכה “your Holy Spirit” and ק]ודש “Holy Spirit” parallel the phrase ריחי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27.²⁴ In 4Q506, ק]ודש “Holy” has the definite article ה (הקודש), specifying the Holy Spirit of God which he has poured upon them. The phrases עשה “do,” עשיתה “you have done,” and כעשותכה “just as you have done” are a resemblant of the phrase ועשיתי “and I will do.”

The phrases חוקי “statutes” and החוקים “the statutes” echo the phrase בחקי “in my statutes.” The infinitive לה]לכת “to walk” corresponds to the phrase תלכו “you will walk.” The phrases והמשפטים “and (the) judgments” and מ]שפטיו “his judgments” match the phrase ומשפטי “and my judgments.” The infinitive לעשות “to do” and the verb יעשה “he will do” mirror the phrase ועשיתם “and you will do.” Table 24 presents the correspondence between the selected words of the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504) and Ezek 36:27.

²⁴ God pours upon them his Holy Spirit, and, therefore, he favors them with the Holy Spirit.

Table 24. Comparison between Words of the Luminaries (4Q504) and Ezekiel 36:27

Words of the Luminaries (4Q504)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוח קודשכה “your Holy Spirit”	רוחִי “my Spirit”
קודש (רוח) “Holy Spirit”	
הקודש (רוח) “the Holy Spirit” (4Q506)	
עשה “do” עשיתה “you have done”	ועֲשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
כעשותכה “just as you have done”	
חוקי “statutes” החוקים “the statutes”	בחֻקֵי “in my statutes”
ללכת “to walk”	תלכו “you will walk”
והמשפטים “and (the) judgments”	ומשפָּטַי “and my judgments”
משפטיו “his judgments”	
לעשות “to do”	ועֲשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: Covenant בריתכה כיא אותנו בחרתה לכה “in your covenant, for you chose us for yourself” (col. xvi) v. 10	Context: Covenant formula- לִי לְעַם-לְאֱלֹהִים “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

According to the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504), God is portrayed as the one who “does” on the basis of his great power. He pours his Holy Spirit upon the people and favors them with the Holy Spirit. He forgives and purifies their sins and performs wonders in the eyes of the nations. He does wonders in the eyes of the nations so that his people can repent, his law can be planted in their hearts, and they can obey his voice in the context of his covenant.

The Luminaries plead with God to forgive the iniquities and sins of the people and to חזק “strengthen” their heart ללכת “to walk” and לעשות “to do” his laws by discerning the statutes which God gave them through the hand of Moses. The Luminaries admit that it is God who has strengthened their heart. Hultgren maintains that “God had promised through the prophet Ezekiel that when he purified Israel and delivered it from exile, the

people themselves would be a ‘pleasing aroma’ of sacrifice.”²⁵ Lorein views the (רוח קודש “Holy Spirit” which God favors the Luminaries with as human spirit.²⁶ I argue that the רוח קודש (רוח “Holy Spirit” which God favors the Luminaries with is the Holy Spirit of God based on the following:

1. In 4Q506, קודש “Holy” has the definite article ה, which specifies the רוח קודש “your Holy Spirit” which God pours upon them.
2. God pours his Holy Spirit to strengthen the hearts of the Luminaries to obey.
3. The Spirit of God within a person makes one discern judgments (Job 32:8).
4. There is no reference to human spirit in the construct רוח קודש (רוח).
5. According to the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504) concerning obedience to the laws of God, אשר יעשה אותם ה[אדם והי במ, “when a man does them shall have life through them.” Here, the person himself or herself (specified by the definite article ה) does the law of God without the strength of the Holy Spirit of God. The Luminaries seem to quote Ezek 20:11, 13, 21, where human strength is in view when obeying the statutes and judgments of God. Schiffman argues that the Dead Sea sect “saw humanity as inherently sinful and lowly, and it believed that only through God’s mercy and the practices of the sect could that lowliness be in any way mitigated.”²⁷ For Hultgren,

In accordance with his faithfulness, God raises up a (remnant) covenant people from within Israel. In his goodness God brings this covenant people to turn with all their heart and with all their soul to God, to the study of the law of Moses, and to the doing

²⁵ Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, 318.

²⁶ Geert W. Lorein, “The Holy Spirit at Qumran,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 374.

²⁷ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 157.

of the law with perfection. He does this in order that through this covenant people God might keep his promise to restore Israel.²⁸

Compared with Ezek 36:27, the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504) presents God as the one who acts by his great power through his Holy Spirit, which he pours upon the people. He performs wonders before the nations so that his people can repent and plant his law in their hearts. He strengthens their hearts to walk in his ways and do his statutes and judgments and discern them in the context of his covenant with them. In Ezek 36:27, God is depicted as he who acts by putting his Spirit within his people to strengthen them to walk in his statutes and judgments and do them. He gives them a new heart (36:26) and cleanses and saves them from their uncleanness and iniquities (36:25, 29, 33), for they are aggrieved by their iniquities and abominations (36:31). He restores his covenant with them indicated by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28). The Words of the Luminaries (4Q504), therefore, highlights Ezek 36:27 by presenting God as he who “does” through his Holy Spirit to empower his people so that they can observe his laws in the context of his covenant with them.

Poetic Texts

The Hymns (1QHymns)

In The Hymns, the psalmist praises God for his compassion and mercies through which the spirit of flesh is forgiven, for God has cleansed the psalmist from all his sins (col. iv 9-11; col. v 4). The psalmist prays that God may **הזיק** “strengthen” his heart and engrave his laws in the heart in order **להתהלך** “to walk” and **ולעשות** “also to do” good,

²⁸ Hultgren, *From the Damascus Document*, 460.

including what God loves (col. iv 22, 24; col. viii 27). God strengthens the psalmist through his Holy Spirit ([ודשך] וּלְהַחֲזִק בְּרוּחַ “and to strengthen by your Holy Spirit”) to adhere to the truth of the covenant (col. viii 15). Not only is the psalmist strengthened through the Holy Spirit of God, but he also is purified and knows God through the Holy Spirit. He appeases God through the Spirit which God has put within him בְּרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה ([בִּי] “by the Spirit which you have put within me”) (col. viii 19-21; col. xx 12). God “does” for his sake through forgiveness, compassion, and mercy by atoning for sins of the psalmist through his Holy Spirit. God delights in the psalmist through his Holy Spirit (col. xvii 32). Therefore, the psalmist pledges never to change the judgments of God (משפטיך “your judgments”) for a bribe and urges the righteous not to violate אל משפטי אל “the judgments of God” (col. vi 1). The vocabulary used in The Hymns is distributed all over the document, providing for the larger context. The immediate context can be determined relative to where the vocabulary is used. Below is the selected vocabulary:

[בִּי] בְּרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה “by the Spirit which you have put within me” (col. viii) v. 20.

יָדַעְתִּיכָה אֵלַי בְּרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה בִּי
within me” (col. xx) v. 11.

[וְדִשְׁךְ] וּלְהַחֲזִק בְּרוּחַ “and to strengthen myself by your Holy Spirit” (col. viii) v. 16.

תַּגְבַּרְתָּה גּוֹרְלוֹ עִם רֹחַ קוֹדֶשְׁךְ “you have empowered his lot with your Holy Spirit” (col. vi)
v. 13.

לְטַהַרְנִי בְּרוּחַ קוֹדֶשְׁךְ “to cleanse me with your Holy Spirit” (col. viii) v. 21.

וּתְחַוְּנֵנִי בְּרוּחַ רַחֲמֶיךָ “and you have favored me with the Spirit of your compassion” (col.
viii) v. 17.

מת [לאהוב] א] דעה “you have favored me with the Spirit of knowledge to love the truth” (col. vi) v. 25.

וברוח קודשכה תשעשעני “and you have rejoiced in me by your Holy Spirit” (col. xvii) v. 32

חסד [לעש]ות עם עבדך] חסד “to do mercy with your servant” (col. viii) v. 17.

בני “for the sake they will all know his deeds of power and his great compassion upon all children” (col. xii) v. 32.

חסד [לעש]ות בי] חסד “to do mercy with me” (col. viii) v. 17.

מ]עשיך הכול “all your deeds” (col. viii) v. 17.

מ]עשי צדקה “righteous deeds” “for you have done all these” כא אתה עשיתה את כו]ל אלה] (col. xii) v. 31.

אל “and the way of man is not founded except by the Spirit God has formed for him” (col. xii) v. 31.

תבל “and you have strengthened your statutes in their hands to do judgments on the earth” (col. vi) vv. 5, 6.

תהלתך בכול אשר אהבתה “to walk in all that you love” (col. iv) v. 24.

משפטיך “your judgments” (col. vi) v. 20.

תיד “and to keep your commandments” (col. viii) v. 22.

תיד “and to do good in your eyes” (col. iv) v. 24.

In the 1QHymns, the constructs רוח קודשך “your Holy Spirit,” ברוח קודשך “by your Holy Spirit,” and the phrase ברוח “by the Spirit” echo the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The preposition ב attached to the noun רוח is of agent, signifying that God “does” through the Spirit, his Holy Spirit. The verb נתתה “you have put” parallels the verb אָתַן “I

will put.” The prepositional phrase **בי** “within me” echoes the prepositional phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** “within you.” The infinitive **לַעֲשׂוֹת** “to do” mirrors the phrase **וְעָשִׂיתִי** “and I will do.” In both texts God is the subject of the verb **עָשָׂה**. The phrase **חֻקֶיךָ** “your statutes” equates with the phrase **בְּחֻקֵי** “in my statutes.” The infinitive construct **לְהֵלֵךְ** “to walk” corresponds to the phrase **תֵּלְכוּ** “you will walk.” The phrase **מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ** “your judgments” and the noun **מִשְׁפָּט** “judgment” reflect the phrase **וּמִשְׁפָּטַי** “and my judgments.” The phrase **וּלְשׁוּמְרָיו** “and to keep” matches the phrase **תִּשְׁמְרוּ** “you will keep.” The phrase **וּלְעֲשׂוֹת** “and to do” and the infinitive construct **לַעֲשׂוֹת** “to do” match **וְעָשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do.” The people are the subject of the verb **עָשָׂה**. Table 25 compares the two texts.

Table 25. Comparison between The Hymns (1QHymns) and Ezekiel 36:27

The Hymns (1QHymns)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוח קודשך “your Holy Spirit”	רוחִי “my Spirit”
ברוח קודשך “by your Holy Spirit”	
ברוח “by the Spirit”	
נתתה “you have put”	אתֵן “I will put”
לַעֲשׂוֹת “to do” מעשיו “his deeds”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
מעשיך “your deeds” עשיתה “you have done”	
חוקיך “your statutes”	בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes”
לְהֵלֵךְ “to walk”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
משפטיך “your judgments” משפט “judgment”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
ולשומרי “and to keep”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep”
לַעֲשׂוֹת “and to do” ולעשות	וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Context: בריתך “your covenant” (col. viii)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The Hymns (1QHymns) portray God as the one who does works of righteousness. He puts his Holy Spirit within the psalmist for strength to do the statutes and judgments of God by walking in the ways of God and loving the truth. He cleanses and purifies the psalmist to hate sin and do good in the eyes of God. Thus, God “does” mercy with the psalmist through his Holy Spirit, and the Luminary knows God through the Holy Spirit put within. Ringgren observes that “in contrast with God’s omnipotence the writings from the Dead Sea emphasize man’s weakness and insignificance, and this is especially so in the Thanksgiving Psalms.”²⁹

Compared with Ezek 36:27, The Hymns (1QHymns) presents God as the one who puts his Holy Spirit within the psalmist for strength and cleansing to purify the Luminary from sin in order to do and keep the statutes and judgments of God in the context of the covenant of God. Deasley contends that “the God of the covenant was a holy God, who, in consequence, could be content with nothing less than a holy people. This was true of the first covenant (Exodus 19:5f, 24:3, 5-8) as of the renewal covenant (Ezekiel 36:25-7).”³⁰

According to Ezekiel, God puts his Spirit within the people to strengthen them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. He cleanses them from their uncleanness and iniquities (36:25, 29, 31) in the context of the covenant indicated by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28). The Hymns (1QHymns) informs Ezek 36:27 in that it shows that God works within the psalmist and

²⁹ Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, 94.

³⁰ Deasley, *The Shape of Qumran Theology*, 189.

the people through his Holy Spirit to strengthen them to do his statutes and judgments in the context of a covenant.

Liturgical Texts

1QRule of the Blessings

According to the Rule of the Blessings, the blessings are directed towards those who are **יראני אל** “fearing God,” **עושי** “doing” his will, **שומרי** “keeping” his commandments, **והולכום** “and walking” in all the ways of his truth, and strengthened in his holy and eternal covenant (col. I 1-3). The Instructor pronounces blessings that God may favor them **ברוח קודש** “with the Holy Spirit,” eternal covenant, and **במשפט צדק** “with righteous judgment” (col. ii 26). God would lift his face towards the whole community (col. ii 22-28).

Blessings are also pronounced upon the sons of Zadok, the priests whom God chose to strengthen the covenant, distribute all **משפטי** “his judgments” to the people, and teach them according to the commandment of God (col. iii 22-23). The priests have held fast to the covenant of God, righteously observing **חוקיו** “his statutes,” and **ויתהלכו** “even walking” just as he chose (col. iii 24).

The vocabulary used in the Rule of the Blessings is spread over the columns of the document, providing the immediate context where the vocabulary is used and the larger context overall. The selected vocabulary is presented below:

יתן[לכה רוח עצ]ה וגברות עולם רוח דעת ויראת אל “may he give you the Spirit of counsel and everlasting strength, Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God” (col. v) v. 25.

ד] “and favor you with the Holy Spirit and mercy” (col. ii) v. 24.

“and in righteousness seek all his statutes” (col. iii) v. 24.

“and walking blameless” (col. i) v. 2.

“and to walk before him blameless in all his ways” (col. v)
v. 22.

“and walk as he chose” (col. iii) v. 24.

“all his judgments are truth” (col. iv) v. 27.

“and prove all his judgments and teach them among
his people” (col. viii) v. 23.

“keeping his commandments” (col. i) v. 1.

“those who fear God, doing his will” (col. i) v. 1

According to the 1QRule of the Blessings, the construct **ברוח קודש** “by the Holy Spirit” and the noun **רוח** “Spirit” correspond to the phrase **רוחִי** “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The verb **יתן** “he may give” parallels the verb **אֶתֵּן** “I will put.” The preposition **ב** is of agent. God favors the people through the Holy Spirit. The phrase **חקיו** “his statutes” matches the phrase **בְּחֻקֵי** “in my statutes.” The phrases **והולכים** “and walking,” **ויתהלכו** “and walk,” and the infinitive construct **ולהתהלך** “and to walk” resemble the phrase **תֵּלְכוּ** “you will walk.” The phrases **מִשְׁפָּטָיו** “his judgments” and **במשפטיו** “by his judgments” reflect the phrase **וּמִשְׁפָּטַי** “and my judgments.” The phrase **שומרי** “keeping” mirrors the phrase **תִּשְׁמְרוּ** “you will keep.” The phrases **עושי** “doing” and **מעשיכה** “your deeds” equate with the phrase **וַעֲשִׂיתֶם** “and you will do.” Table 26 compares the two texts.

Table 26. Comparison between 1QRule of the Blessings and Ezekiel 36:27

1QRule of the Blessings	Ezekiel 36:27
ברוח קודש “by the Holy Spirit”	רוחי “my Spirit”
רוח “Spirit”	
יתן “he may give”	אתן “I will put”
חקיו “his statutes”	בחקי “in my statutes”
והולכים “and walking”	תלכו “you will walk”
ולהתהלך “and to walk”	
משפטיו “his judgments”	ומשפטי “and my judgments”
במשפטיו “by his judgments”	
שומרי “keeping”	תשמרו “you will keep”
עושי “doing” מעשיכה “your deeds” (col. ii) v. 27	ועשיתם “and you will do”
Context: בריתך “your covenant” (col. v) v. 23	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם לְאֱלֹהִים לְכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

In the Rule of the Blessings, the Instructor depicts God as the one who favors the people with the Holy Spirit, righteous judgments, God himself, truth, blessings, mercy, eternal covenant, and, also, their works. The Instructor pronounces blessings upon the people for God to give them the Spirit of counsel, everlasting might, knowledge, and the fear of God.

The Holy Spirit gives counsel, eternal strength, and knowledge, and causes fear of God to walk in the statutes of God, keep his judgments, and do them in the context of the covenant of God. The רוח יהוה “Spirit of God” of עצה “counsel” and might, רוח יהוה “and might,” “knowledge,” ויראת יהוה “and the fear of God” is attested (Isa 11:2). Lorein considers the Holy Spirit in the Rule of the Blessings as “the spirit of the high priest, which needs

to be holy.”³¹ On the contrary, I argue that the Holy Spirit in the Rule of the Blessings is the Holy Spirit of God based on the following:

1. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God of counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of God (cf. Isa 11:2), which God is to give to the people.

2. The Holy Spirit comes from God and not from the high priest, like righteous judgment, God himself, truth, mercy, and eternal covenant of which God favors the people with. God gives them the Holy Spirit for counsel, strength, knowledge, and fear of God in order to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them.

3. The fact that the Holy Spirit is associated with strength and the laws of God implies that God empowers the people through his Holy Spirit to do the divine laws.

4. The Instructor seems to be quoting Isa 11:2 regarding the Spirit of counsel, everlasting strength, knowledge, and fear of God.³²

5. The people cannot obey the laws of God by their own power without being strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God.

Compared with Ezek 36:27, 1QRule of the Blessings portrays God as he who favors the people with Holy Spirit, righteous judgments, God himself, truth, blessings, mercy, and eternal covenant.³³ God favors them so that they will keep his commandments, do his will, and walk blameless before him in his statutes in the context of his covenant.

³¹ Lorein, “The Holy Spirit at Qumran,” in *Presence, Power and Promise*, 389.

³² *The Dead Scrolls Reader Part 5*, 433.

³³ In order to keep the eternal covenant, the people need the eternal strength of the Holy Spirit, with which God favors them.

The priests, the sons of Zadok, are associated with the laws and the covenant of God, including the responsibility of teaching the people the ordinances of God. “Ezekiel, too, defines the righteous man (צַדִּיק) as one who ‘follows my statutes, and is careful to observe my ordinances (וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי שֹׁמֵר), acting faithfully (לַעֲשׂוֹת אֱמֶת)’ (Ezek 18:9),” notes Scott.³⁴

Ezekiel 36:27 presents God as the one who puts his Spirit within his people to strengthen them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them in the context of the covenant between him and the people, signified by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28). In the restoration to their land, God gives the sons of Zadok, the priests, the responsibility of being in charge of the sanctuary and judging the people with the judgments of God (Ezek 44:15, 16, 24). Therefore, 1QRule of the Blessings highlights the Spirit of God and obedience as found in Ezek 36:27.

Liturgical Texts

4QFestival Prayers (4Q509)

The Festival Prayers is based on the Day of Atonement, a festival of the mercies of God and the time of return, which God established for the people as חוק עולם “an everlasting statute” (4Q508 Frg. 2) vv. 2-3. God, by his goodwill at the end (of time), chose a people for himself, because he remembered his covenant (בריתכה) “your covenant” [4Q509 Frgs. 97-98; col. i] vv. 6, 7). He וְהַתְּנֵם “also gave them” to set them apart holy for himself (4Q509 Frgs. 97-98; col. i v. 7). God renewed his covenant for the people in

³⁴ Ian W. Scott, “Sectarian Truth: The Meaning of אמת in the *Community Rule*,” in *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Canadian Collection* (ed. Peter W. Flint, Jean Duhaime, and Kyung S. Baek with Twenty-Five Contributions by Scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 319.

vision of his glory and words of his Holy Spirit (רוח) קודשכה “your Holy Spirit”), which are the works and writing of his hands (4Q509 Frgs. 97-98) vv. 8-9.³⁵ Below is the selected vocabulary from 4QFestival Prayers:

“and you renewed your covenant by the vision of your glory and words of your Holy Spirit” (col. i) vv. 8, 9.

“and you gave them to set apart holy for yourself from all the peoples” (col. i) v. 6.

“by the works that your right hand has written” (col. i) v. 10.

“and everlasting deeds” (col. i) v. 10.

“an everlasting statute” (4Q508 Frg. 2) vv. 2-3.

“to do your word” (col. i) vv. 3, 4.

According to 4QFestival of Prayers, the construct (רוח) קודשכה “your Holy Spirit” matches the phrase רוחי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27.³⁶ The phrases ב[מעשי “by the works” and ומעשי “and deeds” parallel the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do.” The phrase ות(תנ)ם “and you gave them” mirrors the phrase אֶתֵּן “I will put.” The phrase וחוקיך “and statutes” corresponds to the phrase בְּחֻקֵי “in my statutes.” The qal infinitive construct (לעשו)ת “to do” equates with the phrase וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do.” Table 27 compares the two texts.

³⁵ The works and writing of the hand(s) of God allude to the law of God, the ten words (commandments) God wrote with his finger on the two tablets of stone (Exod 31:18; 32:15, 16).

³⁶ In the 4QFestival of Prayers (4Q509), the word קדש is associated with the Spirit of God, as well as making the people holy. The verb נתן is used in Ezek 36:27 and 4QFestival of Prayers in connection with the Spirit of God and making the people holy respectively. In Ezekiel, the object of the verb is רוחי “my Spirit,” but in 4Q509 the object is “to set apart holy for yourself from all the peoples.” Clearly, this implies that the people are made holy, separated from the other peoples through the Holy Spirit of God. Israel is holy when they remember and do the laws of God (Num 15:40).

Table 27. Comparison between 4QFestival Prayers (4Q509) and Ezekiel 36:27

4QFestival of Prayers (4Q504)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוּחַ קוֹדֶשְׁכֶּה “your Holy Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
בְּ[מַעֲשֵׂי “by the works” וּמַעֲשֵׂי “and deeds”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
וְתַתְּנֵם “and you gave them”	אֶתֶּן “I will put”
וְחֻקֵּי “and statutes”	בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes”
Context: בְּרִית־תְּכֶה “your covenant” (col. i) v. 7	Context: לִי לְעַם—לְעַם לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

In 4QFestival of Prayers (4Q509), God is presented as the one who gives and does. He renews his covenant through his Holy Spirit by setting apart people for himself from all the peoples in order to be holy. The people are to do his words and the statutes in the context of the renewed covenant. The “community of the new covenant is a haven where one can live perfectly according to God’s laws.”³⁷

In comparison with Ezek 36:27, 4QFestival of Prayers (4Q509) portrays God as he who “does” eternal deeds. He gives the people his Holy Spirit and the statutes to separate them holy from all the peoples for himself in order to do his words in the context of his renewed covenant. Ezekiel 36:27 depicts God as the one who puts his Spirit within his people so as to strengthen them to observe his statutes and judgments. God restores his covenant between him and Israel, suggested by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God (36:28).

³⁷ Daniel K. Falk, “Religious Life at Qumran,” in *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 261.

Wisdom Poems

4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521)

The 4QMessianic Apocalypse is concerned with the Messiah of God **למשיחו** “his Messiah” and holy commandments (4Q521 Frag. 2 col. ii v. 1). The Spirit of God **רוחו** “his Spirit” hovers upon the poor, and God strengthens the faithful with his power (4Q521 Frag. 2 col. ii v. 6). The Lord **יעשה** “will do” what he has spoken (4Q521 Frag. 2 col. ii v. 11). The statute of God is called **חק** “statute” of his mercy (4Q521 Frag. 2 col. ii v. 1), and there are those who are **העושים** “doing” good before the Lord (4Q521 Frag. 5 col. ii v. 4). The Messiah will honor the pious on the throne of his kingdom, free prisoners, give sight to the blind, straighten the crooked, heal the wounded, revive the dead, proclaim good news, satisfy the poor, lead the exiled, and enrich the hungry (4Q521 Frag. 2 col. ii vv. 7, 8, 12, 13). The following vocabulary is selected from the document:

וּעַל עֲנוּיָם רוּחוֹ תִרְחַף וְאֲמוּנִים יַחֲלִיף בְּכַחוֹ “and His Spirit will brood over the poor and the faithful ones will strengthen in his power” (Frag. 2 II) v. 6.

יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדוֹנִי כְּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר “the Lord will do what he has spoken” (Frag. 2 II) v. 11.

יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדָנִי לִי “the Lord will do to him” (Frag. 5 I) v. 4.

יִרְאוּ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֲדוֹנֵי הָאָרֶץ “. . . [ראו] את כל אשר עשה אדוני הארץ” “see all this he has done, the Lord of the earth” (Frag. 7 + 5 II) v. 1.

וְאֵת חֻק חֶסֶד יִרְדְּךָ “and statute of your mercy” (Frag. 2 III) v. 1.

הַעוֹשִׂים אֶת הַטוֹב לִפְנֵי אֲדוֹנָי “those who are doing good before the Lord” (Frag. 7 + 5 II) v. 4.

וּפְרֵי מַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב “and fruits of good deeds” (Frag. 2 II) v. 10.

According to 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521), the phrase רוחו “his Spirit” parallels the phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The verbs יעשה “he will do” and [עשה] “he has done” reflect the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do.” The noun חק “statute” echoes the phrase בְּחֻקָּי “in my statutes.” The participle העושים “those doing” and the noun מעשׂה “deeds” mirror the phrase וְעַשִׂיתֶם “and you will do.” Comparison between 4QMessianic Apocalypse and Ezek 36:27 is made in table 28.

Table 28. Comparison between 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) and Ezekiel 36:27

4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוחו “His Spirit”	רוּחִי “my Spirit”
יעשה “he will do” [עשה] “he has done”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
חק “statute”	בְּחֻקָּי “in my statutes”
העושים “the ones doing” [מעשׂה] “deeds”	וְעַשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
Covenant: בריית “covenant” (Frag. 10) v. 2	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

The 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) portrays God as one who does what he has spoken. His Spirit broods over the poor and the faithful to strengthen them with his power. God will do (work) for the anointed one, and the Messiah will heal the wounded, resurrect the dead, proclaim good news to the poor, and feed the hungry.³⁸ Novakovic

³⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 95.

argues that “since no other human figure is mentioned in the text except God’s Anointed, he must be the one who will actually execute these deeds on God’s behalf.”³⁹ Heaven and earth will listen to the Messiah, and all that is in them will not turn away from the commandments of the holy ones. The people are presented as doing good before God, and their deeds are good. The statute which the people are to do is called the statute of the mercy of God.

When the 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) is compared with Ezek 36:27, the 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) presents God as doing what he spoke by strengthening the people by his Spirit and his power to do good deeds and the statute of his mercy before him in the context of the covenant. The 4QMessianic Apocalypse informs Ezek 36:27 by showing that God strengthens the people by his Spirit in order to do the statute of the mercy in the context of a covenant.

Wisdom Poems

4QInstruction (4Q416 4Q417 4Q418 4Q19)

According to 4QInstruction (4Q416 4Q417 4Q418 4Q19), God “does,” for he is unique in every deed, and **מעשיו** “his deeds” are mighty (4Q416 Frag. 2 col. iv v. 1; 4Q418 Frags. 43, 44, 45 col. i v. 10). The people are to “do” (**יעשה** “he will do” **תעשו** “you will do”) in accordance with **המשפטים** “the judgments” by the hand of Moses and the priests, because the priests keep the **ברית** “covenant” (4Q419 Frag. col. i v. 1). They are to walk (**תהלכו** “you will walk”) in the deeds of God (**מעשהו** “his deeds”) (4Q418

³⁹ Lidija Novakovic, “4Q521: The Works of the Messiah or the Signs of the Messianic Time?,” in *Qumran Studies: New Approaches; New Questions* (ed. Michael Thomas Davis and Brent A. Strawn; foreword by James A. Sanders; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 214.

Frag. 2 col. 1 v. 19) and differentiate between good and evil **כמשפט רוחו** “according to the judgment of His Spirit” (4Q418 Frags. 43, 44, 45 v. 14).⁴⁰

The people are instructed to walk with God (4Q416 Frag. 2 col. i v. 3) and declare their judgments **משפטיכה** “your judgments” like a just ruler (4Q417 Frag. 1 col. iv. 13) and **לשמרי דב[ר]** “to keep his word” (4Q418 Frags. 43, 44, 45 v. 12). They are exhorted not to forsake their judgment, not to embitter their holy spirit, but to investigate the judgment of God and walk blameless in all their deeds, becoming a **עבד ברוח** “servant with Spirit” (4Q417 Frag. I col. ii v. 22). The **החוק** “statute” has been engraved for them (4Q418 Frags. 43, 44, 45 col. 1 v. 11). Below is the selected vocabulary from 4QInstruction (4Q416 4Q417 4Q418 4Q19).⁴¹

רוחו “according to the judgment of His Spirit” (Frag. 2 I) v. 18.

רוח [קודשכה אל תמר] “you shall not rebel against your holy spirit” (Frag. 1 II) v. 8.

ל[מר] [ל] “you shall not rebel against him” (Frag. 1 II) v. 11.

רוח “to Enosh with the people of the spirit” (Frag. 2 I) v. 16.

רוח “and give inheritance to the man with the spirit” (Frag. 43, 44, 45)

v. 13.

מעשיו “and his mighty deeds” (Frag. 2 I) v. 13.

לאל “statute of God” (Frag. 2 I) v. 15.

ת החוק “for the inscription of the statute comes” (Frag. 43, 44, 45 [4Q418])

v. 11.

⁴⁰ The Spirit of God gives a person the ability to discern judgment (Job 32:8, 9).

⁴¹ 4QInstruction (4Q416 4Q417 4Q418 4Q19) carries similar information.

וְחֹקְיָיִכָּה אֵל תִּרְחַק “and you shall not abandon your statutes” (Fragments. 1 II) v. 11.

וְהִתְהַלַּכְתָּ כְּמִצְוֵי הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּיךָ “and walk according to the appointment of his deeds” (Fragments. 2 I) v. 19.

וְהִתְהַלַּכְתָּ בְּכֹל מִצְוֵי הַמַּעֲשִׂים “and walk blameless in all his deeds” (Fragments. 2 I) v. 12.

אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ עַל פִּי כֹל הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים “which you shall do according to the word of all the judgments” (419 Fragments. 1) v. 1.

צַדִּיק בְּמִשְׁפָּטוֹ “righteous in his judgment” (Fragments. 1 I) v. 16.

דַּבֵּר כְּמִשְׁפָּטֵיכָה כְּמִשְׁפָּטֵי הַצַּדִּיק “speak your judgments as a righteous ruler” (Fragments. 1 I) v. 13.

לְשִׁמְרֵי דְבָרָיו “to keep his word” (Fragments. 43, 44, 45 [4Q418]) v. 12.

אֵלֵיכֶם בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה וְאֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה “to you by the hand of Moses and that he shall do” (419 Fragments. 1) v. 2.

יַעֲשֶׂה כִּיֵּא מֵה הוּאָה יְחִיד בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה “he will do, for how unique he is in every deed” (Fragments. 1 I) v. 16.

עַד [עַד] עֲשׂוֹתָהּ מִצְוֹתָיו “until you have done his commandments” (Fragments. 1 II) v. 16.

בְּרִצְוֹנוֹ תַּחֲזִיק בְּוִדְתּוֹ “by his will you shall strengthen his service” (Fragments. 1 II) v. 16

According to 4QInstruction, the phrase רִחְוֵי [ר] “his Spirit” parallels the phrase רִחְוֵי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27. The phrases מַעֲשֵׂי “his deeds,” מַעֲשֵׂהוּ “his deed,” and מַעֲשֵׂי “his deeds” correspond to the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do.” The phrase מַחֲקוֹק לֵאל “statute of God” parallels the phrase בְּחֻקֵּי “in my statutes.” The phrases וְהִתְהַלַּכְתָּ “and walk” and תִּלְכּוּ “you will walk.” The prepositional phrase הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים “the judgments” echoes the phrase וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments.” The infinitive construct לְשִׁמְרֵי “to keep” matches the phrase תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep.” The

phrases **יעשה** “he will do,” **תעשו** “you shall do,” and **עשותכה** “you have done,” mirror the phrase **ועשיתם** “and you will do.” Table 29 illustrates the correspondence.

Table 29. Comparison between 4QInstruction (4Q416 417 418 419) and Ezekiel 36:27

4QInstruction (4Q416 417 418 419)	Ezekiel 36:27
רוחו “His Spirit”	רוחי “my Spirit”
מעשיו “his deeds”	ועשיתי “and I will do”
מעשיו “his deeds”	
מחוקק לאל “statute of God”	בחקי “in my statutes”
והתהלכו “and walk”	תלכו “you will walk”
המשפטים “the judgments”	ומשפטי “and my judgments”
לשמרי “to keep”	תשמרו “you will keep”
יעשה “he will do”	ועשיתם “and you will do”
Context: ברי[ת] אל “covenant of God” (4Q419)	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

In the 4QInstruction, God is associated with mighty deeds, statute, and Spirit of judgment. The people are instructed to walk blameless in all his deeds, do all the judgments and word according to the judgment of his Spirit, and differentiate between good and evil. They are advised to do the commandments of God and not to rebel against God. They should not rebel against their holy spirit or abandon their statutes, but declare their judgments as a righteous ruler, thereby becoming the people of the Spirit.⁴² God

⁴² The Spirit, statute, and judgments of God are presented as the holy spirit, statutes, and judgments of the people. The verb **תמר** “rebel,” used with the construct **רוח[ת] קודשכה** “your holy spirit,” is also used with the phrase **ל[ו]** “him.” According to Isa 63:10, the verb **קרו** “they rebelled” against **קדשו רוח** “his Holy Spirit” is used.

will strengthen them in his will and wisdom for his service. When 4QInstruction is compared with Ezek 36:27, it presents God as the one who does mighty deeds, and the people are instructed to walk blameless in all his deeds. They should do according to the Spirit of God of judgment and do all his commandments and keep his word. They are to strengthen themselves in his will for his service in the context of the covenant. Ezekiel 36:27 portrays God as he who puts his Spirit within his people to strengthen them, so that they can walk and keep his statutes and judgments and do them in the context of the covenant between him and the people, signified by the covenant formula—you will be my people and I will be your God. Therefore, 4QInstruction informs Ezekiel by depicting God as the one who strengthens the people by his Spirit to observe his laws in the context of the covenant between God and Israel and the covenant between God and the Qumran community.

Summary

The Qumran Hebrew texts explored above use similar vocabulary found in Ezek 36:27 as regards the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God. Table 30 summarizes the parallel vocabulary used in the Hebrew scrolls and Ezek 36:27.

Conclusion

In the extra-canonical Qumran Hebrew texts, the concept of the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God as found in Ezek 36:27 is evident. The vocabulary used in the texts parallels the vocabulary attested in Ezek 36:27. In the Hebrew texts and Ezek 36:27, God is portrayed as the one who “does” through his Holy Spirit to strengthen the people so as to observe his statutes and judgments.

Table 30. Summary of the Comparison between the Vocabulary Used in Qumran Hebrew Selected Texts and Ezekiel 36:27

Qumran Hebrew Texts	Ezekiel 36:27
רוח קודשך “your Holy Spirit” רוחו “His Spirit”	רוחִי “my Spirit”
רוח קודשכה “your Holy Spirit”	
נתתה “you have put” יתן “he may give”	אֶתֶּן “I will put”
ות(ת)ם “and you gave them”	
יעשה “he will do” עשה “he has done”	וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do”
עשה “do” עשיתה “you have done”	
לעשות “to do” מעשיו “his deeds”	
מעשיך “your deeds”	
חוקי אל “statutes of God” חקיו “his statutes”	בְּחֻקֵי “my statutes”
חקי קדשו “his holy statutes” חק “statute”	
חוקיך “your statutes” החוקים “the statutes”	
בחקי “by the statutes” מחוקי “statutes”	
מחוק לאל “statute of God”	
והתהלכו “and walk” תהלכו “walk”	תֵּלְכוּ “you will walk”
להתהלך “to walk” והולכים “and walking”	
להתהלך “to walk” ללכת “to walk”	
הולכי “those who are walking” ללכת “to walk”	
להלכת “to walk” וההלכ “and walk”	
יתהלכו “they will walk”	
משפטיך “your judgments”	וּמִשְׁפָּטַי “and my judgments”
משפטי “judgment” משפט “his judgments”	
משפטי “judgments” במשפטי “by his judgments”	
המשפטים “the judgments”	
לשמרי “to keep” שומרי “keeping”	תִּשְׁמְרוּ “you will keep”
ולשומרי “and to keep”	
יעשה “he will do” תעשו “you shall do”	וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
עושי “doing” עושי “those doing” העושים	
Context: ברית “your covenant” ברית “covenant”	Context: Covenant formula—לִי לְעַם—לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם . . . “my people . . . your God” (36:28)

CHAPTER 6

THE THEOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S LAW IN EZEKIEL 36:27

The discussion presented in this chapter is based on the exegesis undertaken in chs. 2 through 5. It deals with the theology of obedience to the statutes and judgments of God and the role of the Spirit of God in observing the divine laws in Ezek 36:27. The immediate context (vv. 22-32) is taken into consideration. The discussion is presented according to the progression of the direct discourse of God in the immediate context with the inclusion **לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה** “it is not for your sake (that) I am doing (it)” (vv. 22, 32) and its emphasis on v. 27.

The chiasm of Ezek 36:22-32 presents God as vindicating his great holy name through his people, Israel, with an emphasis on v. 27, whereby God puts his Spirit within them in order for them to obey his laws. The emphasis shows that, through his Spirit, God is merciful, gracious, forgiving, faithful, patient, and loving, for he is acting for the sake of his holy name—characterized by mercy, grace, forgiveness, faithfulness, patience, and love. God vindicates his holy name through Israel in the eyes of the nations when his people remember their evil ways and deeds and loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominable deeds (vv. 23, 31). He **קָבַץ** “gathers” Israel from among the nations and brings them to his land and increases its yield and produce so that they should not suffer

רָעַב “hunger” again among the nations (vv. 24, 30).¹ God טָהַר “purifies” Israel from their uncleanness (vv. 25, 29) and renews them with his הָרַשׁ “new” Spirit, thereby restoring his covenant relationship with them (vv. 26, 27, 28). Hildebrandt summarizes the restorative acts of God as follows:

The intervention of Yahweh in the circumstances of God’s people involved gathering the people to their own land (Ezek 36:24), purifying and cleansing them from defilement (36:25), and replacing the “heart of stone” with a “new heart” and a “new spirit.” The intent of this is clearest in verse 27 which indicates that Yahweh’s Spirit would be given in order to motivate the recipients to follow his decrees and keep his laws. Yahweh would actively participate in man’s obedience and as a result vindicate his name (36:36).²

Scholars including Schwartz, Greenberg, Joyce, Ganzel, Bowen, and Peterson, among others, view the restoration of Israel as based on a unilateral action of God for the purpose of vindicating his holy name irrespective of the will of his people, Israel.³

¹ רָעַב “hunger” is one of the sore acts of God in judging Israel (Ezek 5:12, 16, 17; 6:11, 12; 12:16; 14:13, 21; 17:15; cf. 36:29).

² Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 96.

³ For example, Schwartz maintains that “YHWH thus has no alternative but to bring them to their land by force and in fury, against their will and against their expectations.” Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View of Israel’s Restoration,” 59. He argues that, for God, the “first time he bestowed them he was naive enough to imagine that he could obtain this fealty in the form of voluntary, grateful acknowledgment of his beneficence; later he hoped to receive it in the form of repentance inspired by the ordeal of destruction and exile. After the exile, he bitterly realizes that the only way to get his people to serve him is by force.” (ibid., 65). For Schwartz, “instead of a new covenant, Ezekiel envisions YHWH bringing about forced compliance with the old one (11:19-20; 36:26-27), since willing compliance proved utterly unreliable, YHWH thus releases himself from his dependence on human cooperation” (ibid., 60). According to Schwartz, God uses force, because he wants to satisfy his egocentric desire for his holy name and obtain obedience from the people, something he has so long desired in the past history (ibid., 67).

Greenberg contends that “the dispersed would be gathered and brought to their land while still in their unregenerate state. The rehabilitation of God’s reputation cannot depend on the chancy repentance of the stony hearted people. There they would be purged of their pollution—absolved from their guilt—by a unilateral act of God. Then the root of their evil-doing, their obstinate heart would be altered to yield to God’s will that would henceforth animate it. As a result of their enforced obedience they would never again be uprooted from their land, but would reside in it forever as God’s covenant people. All this would come about not out of any regard for or merit of Israel but for the glorification of God’s name.” Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 735. He asserts, “The restoration would not be gracious divine response to human yearning for reconciliation (as in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah). It would be an imposition on wayward Israel of a constraint necessary for saving God’s reputation” (ibid., 737).

However, Cook has the opinion that the “condition of the Jews’ return to inhabit Canaan is faith and obedience to Jahveh’s commandments.”⁴ Alexander sees the restoration of Israel to her land not as a reference “to the return to Canaan under Zerubbabel but to a final and complete restoration under the Messiah in end times.”⁵

The above view that God unilaterally and forcefully restores his people, Israel, regardless of their will overlooks the following:

1. According to vv. 22, 32, God is acting for the sake of his holy name and commands Israel to be ashamed and humbled of their ways. His acts suggest that he is dealing with his people according to the character of his name of mercy, grace, forgiveness, love, faithfulness, and forbearance (Exod 34:6, 7; Deut 5:10; Ps 78:38; Isa 48:9; Neh 9:17; Dan 9:9, 19; Jer 32:18, 19) as they respond to his restorative acts.

2. God vindicates his holy name through his people, Israel, in the eyes of the nations, implying that Israel is not passive in the vindication of the holy name of God, but participatory (v. 23). According to Ezek 6:8, 9; 12:16; 36:31 (cf. Jer 51:50), Israel זָכַר “remember” God and confess their evil ways and bad deeds and are aggrieved of their

Joyce postulates that the initiative of God has overridden the responsibility of Israel (Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 127). According to Ganzel, “God at first wanted the returnees to eliminate idolatry, but their willingness to acquiesce compels him to perform this task himself, by replacing their hearts.” Ganzel, “The Descriptions of the Restoration of Israel in Ezekiel,” 203. Bowen vehemently argues that in “Ezekiel there was no confession, humbling, no making amends. Israel does nothing. God acts unilaterally toward Israel to ensure that Israel will never again disobey God’s law.” Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 223. For Peterson, “there appears to be no mention of the exiles’ repentance but only Yahweh’s unilateral declaration that he will restore them for the sake of his name (36:22)” (Brian Neil Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context: Ezekiel’s Message Understood in Its Historical Setting of Covenant Curses and Ancient Near Eastern Mythological Motifs* (Eugene, Oreg.: Pickwick, 2012), 228.

⁴ G. A. Cook, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), 392.

⁵ Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 922.

iniquities and abominations among the nations, indicating an act of repentance (Deut 30:1-10; 1 Kgs 8:46-51; Neh 1:8-9; Dan 9). God commands them to be ashamed and humbled (Ezek 36:32). He commands them to repent and have life by casting away their transgressions and receive (literally “do”) for themselves a new heart and new Spirit (Ezek 18:23, 30, 31, 32; 33:11).

3. God is performing the acts of restoration through his Spirit emphasized in v. 27. By his Spirit, God קָבַץ “gathers” (Isa 34:16), נָהַג “leads” (Ps 143:10), יָרַח “purifies” (Isa 4:4), חָדַשׁ “renews” (Ps 104:30), and נִיחַ “settles” (Isa 63:14; Ezek 37:14).

The above arguments for the acts of God through his Spirit and the response of Israel to the merciful, gracious, faithful, patient, loving, and forgiving deeds of God are elaborated below under the following headings, namely: the initiative of God, the empowerment of the Spirit of God, the response of Israel to the initiative of God, and the statutes of God and the covenant theology.

The Initiative of God

As demonstrated in ch. 2, Ezek 36:27 is the emphasis or high point of the chiasm in vv. 22-32, the immediate context of v. 27. The high point emphasizes the restorative acts of God, stressing the Spirit of God put within God’s people, Israel, in order to observe God’s laws. The direct discourse of God starts and concludes with the inclusion **לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה** “it is not for your sake that I am doing” (vv. 22, 32). The divine “I” is emphasized twice in v. 27. The main verb אֲנִי “I will put” in the main clause and the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” in the first dependent clause have God as the subject, implying that God takes the initiative of putting his Spirit within his people to empower

them to obey his laws. Thus, God acts by putting his Spirit within his people, Israel. He “does” so that they can “do.”

Including the two occurrences in v. 27, the divine “I” occurs twenty-four times in the chiasm (once v. 22; thrice v. 23; thrice v. 24; twice v. 25; four times v. 26; thrice v. 28; four times v. 29; once v. 30; once v. 32). Compared to the restoration chapters (33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39), Ezek 36 has the highest concentration of the occurrence of the divine “I” of fifty-four times. This frequency indicates that the divine acts of God concerning his people, Israel, are emphasized in the chapter.⁶ “The LORD will execute all these actions for the sake of His holy name.”⁷ Lemke points out that the “emphasis is more on God’s initiative and action.”⁸

Wright argues,

The repeated *I will* is emphatic. All that will happen will be the work of God himself. Though the word ‘grace’ is not used here, the whole passage is a portrait of sovereign grace at work, for it is all founded in the wholly unmerited initiative of God. The catalogue of divine activity encompasses every aspect of Israel’s loss and need. It addresses their situation as deportees far from their land (24); the defilement of themselves and their land (25, 29a); their congenial disobedience to the laws of God (26-27); and their disgrace among the nations (28-30). And for each of these desperate realities, it provides an answer.⁹

⁶ The following data show the distribution of the occurrences of the divine “I” in chs. 33-39: ch. 33 (15 times): vv. 2, 6, 7, 8(2x), 11(2x), 13, 14, 20, 27(2x), 28, 29(2x); ch. 34 (45 times): vv. 8, 10(3x), 11(4x), 12(2x), 13(4x), 14, 15(4x), 16(6x), 20(3x), 22(2x), 23, 24(4x), 25(2x), 26(2x), 27(3x), 29, 30, 31); ch. 35 (21 times): vv. 3(3x), 4(2x), 6(2x), 7(2x), 8, 9(2x), 11(4x), 12(2x), 14, 15(2x); ch. 36 (54 times): vv. 5, 6(2x), 7(2x), 9(2x), 10, 11(4x), 12, 15, 18, 19(2x), 21, 22, 23(3x), 24(3x), 25(2x), 26(4x), 27(2x), 28(3x), 29(4x), 30, 32, 33(2x), 36(6x), 37(2x), 38); ch. 37 (34 times): vv. 5, 6(5x), 12(3x), 13(3x), 14(5x), 19(3x), 21(3x), 22, 23(3x), 25, 26(4x), 27, 28); ch. 38 (15 times): vv. 3, 4(3x), 16(2x), 17, 19, 21, 22(2x), 23(4x); ch. 39 (39 times): vv. 1, 2(4x), 3(2x), 4, 5, 6(2x), 7(3x), 8, 11, 13, 17, 19, 21(3x), 22, 23(2x), 24(2x), 25(3x), 27(3x), 28(4x), 29(2x).

⁷ Ashley S. Crane, *Israel’s Restoration: A Textual-Comparative Exploration of Ezekiel 36-39* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 74.

⁸ Lemke, “Life in the Present,” 177.

⁹ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 292.

God acts by putting his Spirit within his people, Israel, in order to strengthen them to obey his laws (v. 27).¹⁰ The act is emphasized by the phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” in the first dependent clause. In this context, the verb עָשָׂה “do” means to act with effect.¹¹ As the subject of the verb, God acts to the effect that his people, Israel, obey his laws לְמַעַן “for the sake” of his holy name (Ezek 20:9; Jer 14:7; Dan 9:19).¹² God effects their obedience by putting his Spirit within them to empower them to obey his laws. Israel must receive “a transfusion of the divine spirit without which the human impulse to action, to change, cannot be sustained.”¹³ “Yahweh’s Spirit would be given in order to motivate the recipients to follow his decrees and keep his laws. Yahweh would actively participate in man’s obedience and as a result vindicate his name.”¹⁴

When God acts for the sake of his holy name, it does not mean that he is egocentric or doing for self-interest, concerned only with proving his holiness and greatness irrespective of the will of his people, Israel, as suggested by some scholars above. The prepositional phrase לְמַעַן, in this context, can be translated “for the sake” or “on the account of.” Although the phrase is not used with the name of God here, but negatively with Israel, it is positively implied in connection with the holy name of God by the use of the adversative conjunction כִּי “but.”

¹⁰ Biggs, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 116.

¹¹ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, “עָשָׂה,” BDB, 793-95.

¹² לְמַעַן “for the sake” of the name of God is used with עָשָׂה “do” (Ezek 20:9; Jer 14:7; Dan 9:19).

¹³ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel Interpretation*, 168.

¹⁴ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology*, 96.

In Ezek 20:44, the phrase is used with the name of God and the qal infinitive construct **בַּעֲשׂוֹתִי** “when I act” in reference to Ezek 36:22, 32. Elsewhere, the phrase is used with the name of God in the context of forgiveness (Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 44; Pss 25:11; 79:9; Isa 48:9, 11), salvation or deliverance (Pss 106:8; 109:21; 143:11), and leading and restoring (Ps 23:3). According to the character of his holy name, God is merciful, gracious, forbearing, loving, forgiving, and faithful (Exod 34:6, 7; Neh 9:17; Ps 78:38; Isa 48:9, 11; Deut 5:10; Jer 32:18).

In restoring his people, Israel, God acts on the basis of his character of mercy, grace, forbearance, love, forgiveness, and faithfulness. By not acting for the sake of Israel, God is not acting on the basis of their righteousness; after all, they have profaned his holy name among the nations. When the nations say that Israel are the people of God, but they went out of his land (Ezek 36:20), God’s character of mercy, grace, forbearance, love, forgiveness, and faithfulness is at stake. When the nations acknowledge that Israel are the people of God but went out of his land, not only do they insinuate that God is unable to keep his people in his land, but also that he is incompetent in maintaining his covenant relationship with his people, Israel—a short form of the covenant formula. God restores Israel by gathering them from among the nations to his land and causes the land to be fruitful so that they do not suffer hunger anymore among the nations (Ezek 36:24, 30), for they are soon coming home (Ezek 36:8).

God gathers them because he is interested in their peace and wants to give them hope (Jer 29: 10-14), for they say that their hope is lost (Ezek 37:11). “The Juhadite do experience punishment but do survive in exile and do have a chance to go home,”

observes Goldingay.¹⁵ Crane notes, “In Ezekiel 36 there is a strong motif of a new entering or possessing the land, a restored land that is fruitful and ready to receive its inhabitants.”¹⁶

In order to restore his people to his land, God dispossesses the nations round about which have acquired the land for themselves (36:2, 5, 7; 35:10-15; cf. 11:23; 43:2). The land is desolate, but God plants it as the garden of Eden (Ezek 36:3, 24-26; Isa 51:3). As God no longer hides his face from his people, Israel (Ezek 39:29), he also turns his face towards his land (Ezek 36:9).¹⁷ God acts for the sake of his name by being faithful to the covenant relationship with Israel in giving his land to their fathers (Ezek 36:25; 37:25).

The nations that perceive God as too weak to protect Israel (when they say that Israel are the people of God and yet they went out of his land [Ezek 36:20]) cannot advance the argument anymore, because they see that God is holy and powerful to make the land fruitful and restore Israel to his land. The nations, therefore, acknowledge God as Yahweh. God is not concerned only with the external or physical restoration of Israel to his land, but also with the internal or spiritual transformation of his people by cleansing and saving them from all their uncleanness and idols (Ezek 36:25, 29; cf. 37:23).¹⁸ God טָהַר “cleanses” and סָלַח “forgives” them of their iniquity, through which they have sinned

¹⁵ John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel* (vol. 1; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003), 713.

¹⁶ Crane, *Israel's Restoration*, 174 footnote 101.

¹⁷ Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 253.

¹⁸ God cleanses and purifies by רָיַח (Isa 4:4).

and transgressed against him (Jer 33:8).¹⁹ “God is more than willing and eager to forgive and forget previous transgressions and to grant pardon to any penitent sinner,” remarks Lemke.²⁰ God sprinkles clean water upon them—a language drawn from the cleansing with water of *תְּהִי* “impurity” found in Num 19:9. According to Num 19:9, the water of impurity is sprinkled upon Israel for the removal of *חַטָּאת* “sin,” especially in connection with the defilement of a person coming into contact with a corpse.²¹ In Ezek 36:17-18, Israel has defiled their land with the blood, as uncleanness of *תְּהִי* “the impurity,” which they have poured upon it because of their idols according to their deeds and ways.

The land is said to devour human beings and bereave its nation of children (Ezek 36:13, 14). When Israel sacrifice their firstborn to idols (Ezek 20:26, 31; 23:37, 39), eat flesh with blood (Ezek 33:25), bury their kings in close proximity to the sanctuary of God (Ezek 43:7, 9), or slander and take bribes to shed blood (Ezek 22:9, 12), they come into contact with corpses and, thereby, defile themselves with idols and blood. As God restores Israel to their land which they have defiled by pouring blood upon it and coming into contact with dead bodies, he cleanses them from all their defilement so that they can offer to him holy offerings (Ezek 20:40).²² The cleansing is indented to deliver Israel

¹⁹ Here Jeremiah uses the words *טָהַר* “cleanse” and *סָלַח* “forgive,” but Ezekiel uses *טָהַר* “cleanse” and *יָשַׁע* “save” (Ezek 36:25, 29).

²⁰ Lemke, “Life in the Present,” 168-69.

²¹ The definite article used with *תְּהִי* suggests specificity of uncleanness associated with the impurity of blood (cf. Ezek 20:10). Gane comments, “The word for ‘lustration’ here is *niddah* (cf. 31:21), which elsewhere usually refers to menstrual impurity (Lev. 12:2, 5; 15:19-20, 24-26, 33; 18:19) but can also be used as a metaphor for moral impurity (20: 21).” Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004), 661.

²² God gathers and renews the face of the ground through his Spirit (Isa 34:16; Ps 104:20; cf. Isa 32:15).

from their sins.²³ “The cleansing needed, however, would require a drastic change of the exile’s inward disposition. Yahweh will keep his covenant promises, given in Deuteronomy 30:6-8, to remove their ingrained attitudes of disobedience and idolatry at their source.”²⁴ According to the Qumran Hebrew texts, God cleanses a person בְּרוּחַ קוֹדֵשׁ “with the Holy Spirit” as stated,

Meanwhile, God will refine, with his truth, all man’s deeds, and will purify for himself the configuration of man, ripping out all spirit of deceit from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness from every irreverent deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and from the defilement of the unclean spirit. In this way the upright will understand the knowledge of the Most High.²⁵

For Fredenburg, the cleansing occurs before God restores Israel to his land. He argues that God sprinkles clean water on them “as they prepare to reenter their land. . . . It was Israel’s uncleanness and defiling of the land that caused to send her off of it (vv. 18-19); thus her cleansing is an essential component of her return.”²⁶ “For ceremonial cleansing to be more than ritual, it was essential that the people repent and acknowledge their past iniquity about which God would remind them.”²⁷ According to Bowen, “the restoration of both people and productivity to the land is closely linked with Israel’s obedience.”²⁸

²³ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel Interpretation*, 166-67.

²⁴ Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 320.

²⁵ Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 7.

²⁶ Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 319.

²⁷ Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 922.

²⁸ Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 223.

Furthermore, the internal transformation, which God does for his people, Israel, involves creating them anew for himself. Through the רִיחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ “new Spirit” put within them, emphasized as רִיחִי “my Spirit” in v. 27, God renews their hard and cold unresponsive heart of stone and creates for them a soft and warm responsive heart of flesh (v. 26), and, therefore, they become his people and he their God (v. 28). Their לֵב “heart” and eyes are going after their idols (Ezek 20:16, 24), and God wants to lay hold of their hearts that are estranged from him through their idols (Ezek 14:5).

For Zimmerli, “the fruit of this new gift (a new heart of flesh for the stony one) will be the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh. In such an event the foretold reality of the covenant will once again become a full reality for Israel by divine gift.”²⁹ Blenkinsopp observes, “The result of this new initiative is an enabling of the will expressed in the observance of the life-giving commandments; then, at last, the covenant will be a reality: ‘You will be a people for me and I will be God for you’—a formula of frequent occurrence in Ezekiel (11:20; 14:11; 34:31; 37:23).”³⁰ “The restoration will involve more than resettlement. God will restore Israel spiritually as well—renewing, enlivening, and enabling them (see 11:19; 18:31; 36:26-27).”³¹

By outwardly restoring and inwardly transforming Israel for the sake of his holy name, God vindicates his great holy name through them before the eyes of the nations (Ezek 36:23, 31). Hummel points out that the “wording here, literally, ‘through you to

²⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 262-63.

³⁰ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel Interpretation*, 168.

³¹ Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 253.

their eyes,' implies Yahweh's merciful activity through his people in the eyes of the astonished nations."³² "Israel is the means by which God has chosen to 'cause his name to be hallowed' (v. 23)."³³

God vindicates his great holy name through his people, Israel, by forgiving their sins; and with his great power dispossesses the nations which have acquired his land for themselves, renews the land by making it productive, restores Israel to his land, and sets up his sanctuary among them, thereby dwelling among them. Both Israel and the nations come to know that Yahweh is God.

When the nations see Israel obey their God and his laws and their restoration to their land, they realize that God is great and powerful and has no intention of destroying them, but saving them (Deut 28:9, 10). The nations see that Israel went into captivity because of their own sins, but now, God has forgiven their sins (Ezek 39:23; 14:23; 6:10). "When God forgives Jerusalem's ways, she will understand that God is indeed faithful."³⁴ Schafroth observes, "God was willing to actively participate in His people's struggle for obedience and as a result vindicate His name."³⁵

God is sanctified through Israel by dispossessing the nations which have acquired his land (Ezek 35:11; cf. 35:10-15; 36:2, 3, 5, 7). By restoring his land to Israel, God confirms and shows that he is faithful to the covenant he swore to their fathers, Abraham,

³² Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 1055.

³³ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 166.

³⁴ Margaret Odell, "The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59-63," *JSOT* 56 (1992): 112.

³⁵ Schafroth, "An Exegetical Exploration of Spirit," 68.

Isaac, and Israel, that he will give it to them as an inheritance (Exod 32:13; cf. Ezek 36:28; 37:24). It is not because Israel is righteous that God restores them to their land, but because the nations round about have magnified themselves against God by possessing his land, although God was there, and, therefore, God dispossesses them of it (Ezek 35:10; cf. Deut 9:4-6).³⁶

Israel cannot drive the nations out of their land, only God can, by his great power. Since the nations question the ability of God to keep Israel in his land (Ezek 36:20), God is vindicated before the eyes of the nations when they see God dispossess the nations of his land and restore it to Israel (Ezek 28:27). “The restoration of Israel to their own land is described in terms that echo the original exodus in which God had taken Israel ‘out’ of Egypt and brought them into the promised land. God will accomplish a new exodus and a new conquest.”³⁷

God vindicates his name through Israel by making their land productive on their behalf so that they do not suffer רָעָב “hunger” and shame among the nations, for they are soon coming home (Ezek 36:8, 12, 29, 30, 34, 35; 34: 29). Israel acknowledges Yahweh as their God, because he has renewed their land after desolating it when they defiled it by shedding blood on it (Ezek 34:30; 36:17). The nations know that Yahweh is God, because he has transformed the desolate land into one like the garden of Eden (Ezek 36:35, 36). “According to prevailing ancient Near Eastern perceptions, and specifically

³⁶ As God brings Israel out of Egypt to give them the land of Canaan, he drives out the nations occupying it, not because of the righteousness of Israel, but because of the wickedness of the nations and to confirm the word that he swore to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give the land to them (Deut 9:4-6).

³⁷ Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 293.

according to the terms of Yahweh's covenant with his people, the productivity of the land is a natural outgrowth of the normalization of relationships among God, people, and land."³⁸

God vindicates his great holy name through Israel when he physically restores them to their land (Ezek 20:41; 28:25; 39:27). It is God who exiles his people from his land, risking his holy name to be profaned through them, and it is God who restores them to his land, vindicating his name through them. "God will defend the holiness of the divine name by restoring Israel to the land."³⁹ Clements argues, "God himself will act to ensure that future restoration and renewal of Israel. It will not be dependent on the good behavior and good intentions of the people, but rather, will be based on the sovereign power of God's holiness to act to uphold the honor and reputation of so great a name."⁴⁰

The claim by the nations that Israel are the people of God, but they went out of his land (Ezek 36:20) cannot be sustained anymore by the nations, because they see that God has restored his people to his land. Israel also will know that Yahweh is God when he restores them to their land (Ezek 37:14). Alexander rightly observes, "The nations would observe this marvelous transformation in Israel and see the Lord as the only gracious and loving God, for Israel was not deserving of restoration."⁴¹ Duguid writes that "this act through which God's power is demonstrated involves not merely bringing Israel back physically to the land but also a total change in their nature. His people must be

³⁸ Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 358.

³⁹ Clements, *Ezekiel*, 162.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴¹ Alexander, *Ezekiel*, 922.

redeemed not merely outwardly but inwardly effectively.”⁴² “Ezekiel further indicated that the restoration of the land must involve Yahweh’s action from first to last. Yahweh’s will permitted the loss of the land. Yahweh’s hand accomplished loss of the land. Consequently Yahweh’s will and Yahweh’s hand must restore it.”⁴³ God vindicates his holy name through Israel when he sanctifies them by setting his sanctuary in their midst (Ezek 37:28; cf. Lev 26:11, 12).

The רִיחַ “Spirit” is associated with the sanctuary when God abandons it (Ezek 8:3, 6; 11:23, 24) and when he restores it (Ezek 43:5).⁴⁴ Israel caused God to abandon his sanctuary and had it profaned by their enemies, because Israel served idols (Ezek 8:3, 5, 6; 9:3; 11:23; 44:7). God commands them to put away their idolatry so that he may dwell in their midst (Ezek 43:9). The nations shall know that Yahweh is God when he sanctifies his people by setting his sanctuary in their midst (Ezek 37:28), and Israel shall nevermore defile the sanctuary by their idols (Ezek 43:7). “Ezekiel believed that God was present with the elect by means of his *kābôd*.”⁴⁵

In conclusion, therefore, God acts for the sake of his great holy name by showing mercy, grace, love, forbearance, faithfulness, and forgiveness to Israel, not because they are righteous, for they have profaned his great holy name among the nations, but out of

⁴² Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 415.

⁴³ Swanson, *The Role of Covenant in Ezekiel’s Program of Restoration*, 112.

⁴⁴ Ezekiel is being conducted בְּמַרְאֵה בְּרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים “in vision through the Spirit of God” (Ezek 11:24; cf. v. 5; 37:1).

⁴⁵ John T. Strong, “God’s *kābôd*: The Presence of Yahweh in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 94.

his holy character. He vindicates his great holy name through Israel before the eyes of the nations by outwardly restoring Israel to his land and spiritually transforming them anew for himself.

The Empowerment of the Spirit of God

The purpose of God of putting his Spirit in the קָרַב “within” his people, corresponding to their לֵב “heart” (Pss 64:7; 36:2; Prov 14:33; Jer 4:14; 31:33), is to empower them to observe his laws and maintain the life they have gotten through the Spirit, for God “does” through his Spirit. Dumbrell correctly points out that “the insertion of divine nature into man seems to be the emphasis here.”⁴⁶ The heart or mind of the people is לֵב הָאֲבָנִים “the heart of stone” (Ezek 36:26) and is אֲמֵלָה “weak” (Ezek 16:30) to respond to the laws of God on their own power.

Israel laments that their transgressions and sins are against them and, through them, they are wasted away and have no חַי “life” (Ezek 33:10). They say that they are cut off, their bones are dry, and their hope is destroyed (Ezek 37:11). The question raised by their condition is: How does God strengthen their weak mind, soften their hard heart, forgive their transgressions and sins, and give them life? God strengthens the weak mind of his people by his Spirit through his word דְּבַרִי “my words” sent through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:7; cf. v. 4; 3:4, 10, 11). The word of God that goes out of his mouth does not return to him empty, but it accomplishes his purpose and prospers what he sent it for, because he performs his word (Isa 55:11; 45:23; 44:26; 46:10; 48:3).

⁴⁶ W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 1984, repr., 2002), 19.

Thus, God accomplishes his act of empowering his people, Israel, through his word which is accompanied by his Spirit. According to Ezek 36:27, God wants to strengthen his people, Israel, so as to obey his laws. In order to observe the laws of God, Israel must choose, out of their free will, to obey since God does not force them to obey him. Their decision whether to hear or to cease to hear is made in their mind as they hear the word of God sent through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:4, 5, 3:4, 7, 10, 11). The word of God is made effective in their mind and heart by the Spirit of God inspiring the prophet Ezekiel.

The prophet Ezekiel provides a model as to how God strengthens his people, Israel, by his word through his Spirit. First, the רוּחַ “Spirit” enters Ezekiel, fallen on his face as though dead, as God speaks to him and causes him to stand on his feet.⁴⁷ Second, God commands Ezekiel to receive the words of God in his heart בְּלִבְכֶּךָ “into your heart” and hear with his ears and go and speak to the people, whether they hear or cease to hear (Ezek 3:4, 10, 11).

In Ezek 37:1, 4-5, God brings the prophet Ezekiel to a plain full of dry bones בְּרוֹחַ יְהוָה “by the Spirit of God” to prophesy to them to hear דְּבַר־יְהוָה “the word of God.” “As Lutheran theology classically emphasizes, the Spirit (רוּחַ) works through God’s word and so enters Ezekiel when God speaks,” observes Hummel.⁴⁸ He argues that “references to

⁴⁷ Fallen on his face, Ezekiel is symbolically dead. However, when he hears a voice speaking, commanding him to stand up (Ezek 1:28; 2:1), רוּחַ “Spirit” enters within him and causes him to stand on his feet and he hears the one speaking to him (Ezek 2:1, 2). Although God commands Ezekiel to stand up as if on his own strength, the Spirit that enters within him causes him to stand. Likewise, when God commands Israel to obey his laws, as if on their own strength, although they lament that they have no life, his Spirit within them empowers them to observe the laws.

⁴⁸ Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48* (CoC; Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 2007), 75.

the utterances of God's Word connect the operation of the Holy Spirit with the divine Word."⁴⁹ Commenting on the scroll that God gives Ezekiel to eat, Davies writes, "These words are not merely encountered: their authenticity and authority are unmistakable, for they came directly from the hand of God."⁵⁰

Elsewhere, the Spirit of God is closely associated with the word of God (Isa 59:21; Hag 2:5; Pss 33:6; 147:18; cf. Prov 1:23; Job 32:18). The פָּצֵי "forehead" of the prophet Ezekiel is synonymous with his לֵב "mind" (Ezek 3:7; cf. Deut 6:6, 7; 11:18; Exod 13:9). When God strengthens the mind of the prophet Ezekiel against the words of rebellious Israel, he fortifies his mind through his Spirit by his word to resist their words. The Spirit of God makes the word of God effective in the mind and ears of the prophet for obedience.

The heart of Israel is weak (Ezek 16:30) and needs to be strengthened to obey the laws of God against their own words, in which they are saying that they want to be like the nations of the earth and serve wood and stone (Ezek 20:32). Their heart needs to be strengthened against the words of their false prophets who are prophesying out of their own mind and walking after their own spirit, claiming that God has spoken to and sent them, whereas he has not (Ezek 13:2, 3, 6, 7; cf. Jer 16-18, 21-22, 25-26; 14:15, 16).

As Ezekiel speaks the word of God to Israel, the Spirit of God makes the word effective for them to hear it and receive it in their mind, strengthening their mind to make the right decision for obedience. "Only a miracle of grace, a new initiative beyond the

⁴⁹ Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 84.

⁵⁰ Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 51.

demonstrated moral capacities of the individual, could effect an inner transformation.”⁵¹

The mind of Israel is also negatively depicted as hard and stony with respect to hearing the word of God (Ezek 3:7; 36:26). However, God wants to soften their minds to be receptive to his Spirit and word and obey his laws. For Hummel, “that is, like the flesh (meat) on a body, the new heart will be impressionable and malleable—yielding to God, his will, and his Spirit who works through his Word.”⁵² Tuell correctly argues that “before we can come to God, before we even desire God’s presence, God comes to us, empowering our obedient response.”⁵³

The heart is interchangeable with the mind (Ezek 13:2; 38:10; Jer 23:16, 20; 44:21). Like the prophet Ezekiel, Israel is supposed to hear the word of God, come alive, and do it (Ezek 2:4, 5; 3:7). However, since לִבָּם “their mind” is going after their gain, they love to hear the word but do not do it (Ezek 33:30-32). They are not אֲבִימ “willing” to hear, because their forehead is hard and their לֵב “mind” headstrong (Ezek 3:7).

“Yahweh needs to write Moses’s Teaching on the people’s mind, or circumcise their mind, or give them a new, fleshly mind (Deut 30:6; Ezek 36:26).”⁵⁴ God puts his Spirit in the קִרְב “inward part” of his people to affect their heart or mind, for the קִרְב of a person is synonymous with the לֵב “heart” or “mind” (Pss 64:7 [Eng 6]; 36:2 [Eng 1]; 51:12 [Eng 10]; Prov 14:33; Jer 4:14).

⁵¹ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 167.

⁵² Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 231.

⁵³ Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 119.

⁵⁴ Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 714.

The Spirit of God makes the word of God effective in the heart or mind of the people in order for them to be willing to hear and do it in the context of obedience to the divine laws. Routledge rightly assesses, “Ezekiel associates renewal with the work of *the Spirit* (Ezek 36:26-27; cf. 2:28).”⁵⁵ For Lemke, “God will effect a profound renewal and reorientation in the hearts and minds of his people so that they will want to, and be empowered to walk in God’s ways.”⁵⁶ “This new, inward, enabling to meet God’s requirements . . . points to the means by which God will bring about the inward renewal of his people, and so will motivate and empower them to live according to his *decrees* and *laws*.”⁵⁷

Clements argues that

the message of the power of the divine spirit to energize and renew the minds and hearts of people come so completely to the fore. Renewal and hope are gifts of grace, not of human achievement! What is needed is a sense of human emptiness, rather than of human potential since that emptiness can be filled by the grace and power of God.⁵⁸

God puts his Spirit within his people to empower them with life, וְחַיִּיתֶם “and you will have life” (Ezek 37:14). The people are portrayed as dead, having no life, cut off, their bones dry, wasting away, and their hope destroyed, because they lament that their transgressions and sins are against them (Ezek 33:10; 37:11). The statutes of God are חֻקֵּי הַחַיִּים “statutes of life” (Ezek 33:15), and if Israel obeys them through the

⁵⁵ Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008), 325.

⁵⁶ Lemke, “Life in the Present,” 177.

⁵⁷ Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 27.

⁵⁸ Clements, *Ezekiel*, 163.

empowerment of the Spirit of God, they maintain life. However, their spirit is to be like the nations of earth to serve wood and stone, but God says that that will not happen (Ezek 20:32; cf. 11:5).⁵⁹

Their false prophets are prophesying from their own mind and walking after רוּחָם “their spirit” (Ezek 13:2, 3; cf. Jer 23:16). They claim that they are proclaiming the word from God, expecting the word to stand, but God who fulfills his word has not spoken or sent them (Ezek 13:6, 7). “Implanting God’s Spirit in believing Israelites will produce a new relationship between Israel and God: You will be my people, and I will be your God (cf. 11:20; 14:11; 37:23, 27).”⁶⁰

According to Robson,

Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s רוּחַ are intimately related. Here, too, divine initiative and sovereignty, expressed in the action of רוּחַ, are held together with human responsibility, expressed in the ongoing need for repentance. The response to their helpless complaint, “How shall we live?” (33:10), was met there by the call to repent (33:11). The response to the complaint, “Our bones are dried up” (37:11), is that Yahweh will put his spirit *qua* breath in them (v. 14). The two passages provide complementary perspectives. The initiative lies with Yahweh. It is he who commands Ezekiel to address הָרוּחַ while the reformed bodies are still not alive.⁶¹

Therefore, the Spirit of God empowers the people to obey the laws of God through the word of God which he sends by the prophet Ezekiel and gives them חַיִּי “life.”

The Spirit of God strengthens their weak mind and softens their hard heart to have new

⁵⁹ The idols of the nations have no life in them, and those who make and trust in them are like the idols—having no life (Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18).

⁶⁰ Charles H. Dyer, *Ezekiel* (BKC; ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1985), 297.

⁶¹ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 231.

desires, motives, and purposes of obeying the laws of God. God “does” through his Spirit so that his people can “do” his laws.

The Response of Israel to the Initiative of God

Israel obeys the laws of God, because God acts to effect their obedience by putting his Spirit within them to empower them to observe his laws. Putting his Spirit within the people is the emphasized act of God in his restorative deeds found in the chiasm of Ezek 36:22-32. The people are aware of their hopeless situation, because they lament that their transgressions and sins are upon them and they are cut off, are wasted away, have lost hope, have no life, and their bones are dry (Ezek 33:10; 37:11). The phrase “cut off,” voiced by the Israelites, “refers to their absence among the living. The use of the word elsewhere in the Old Testament often applies to one who is dead and buried—cut off from all intercourse with the living (e.g., Ps 88:3-5; Lam 3:54-55).”⁶² The inclusio **לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם** “I am not doing for your sake” (Ezek 36:22, 32) underscores the fact that God is doing on the account of his great holy name, characterized by mercy, grace, forbearance, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness (Exod 34:6, 7; Jer 32:18; Dan 9:9, 19, 20; Deut 5:9, 10; Num 14:18-20).

God responds to the predicament of his people, Israel, by commanding them to be humbled and ashamed of their ways (Ezek 36:32), **שׁוּבוּ** “repent” of all their transgressions, **וַעֲשׂוּ** “and do” for themselves a **לֵב חָדָשׁ** “new heart” and a **רוּחַ חַדְשָׁה** “new Spirit,” because he does not desire them to die, but have **חַי** “life” (Ezek 18:30-32). Davis

⁶² Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 327.

observes that “their outcry is the first indication that Israel has begun to perceive the extent of its own wretchedness, and YHWH charges the prophet to respond with a rare appeal for repentance 33:11; cf. 18:30-31.”⁶³ By commanding his people to be ashamed and repent, God implies that he is ready to forgive them of their transgressions and sins.

Although words such as סָלַח “forgive,” חַן “grace,” חֶסֶד “goodness,” or גָּאֵל “redeem” are not attested in the book of Ezekiel, other terms are used, suggesting that God forgives his people. God כִּפֶּה “atones” for all that they have done (Ezek 16:63).⁶⁴ He רַחַם “has mercy” on them (Ezek 39:25) when they נָשָׂא “lift” all their treacherous acts (Ezek 39:25, 26).⁶⁵ He יִשַׁע “saves” and טָהַר “cleanses” them from their uncleanness (Ezek 36:25, 29; 37:23).⁶⁶ There is נַחַם “comforting” for Jerusalem and her people (Ezek 14:22, 23; 16:54). The words רַחֻם “merciful,” חַנּוּן “gracious,” חֶסֶד “goodness,” נָשָׂא “forgiving,” and סָלַח “forgiving,” among others, describe the attributes of the holy name of God (Exod 34:6, 7; Neh 9:17; Dan 9:9, 19). Peterson cautions,

The absence of particular words of compassion does not negate Yahweh’s demonstration of his undying love. Yahweh demonstrated his love for his people by

⁶³ Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 57.

⁶⁴ Atoning for their sins is reminiscent of God atoning for Israel in the day of atonement (Lev 16:11, 16, 30).

⁶⁵ Although the word רַחַם is attested in Ezek 39:25, scholars such as Tuell, among others, argue that it was added later by editors (see Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 247; Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context*, 228 footnote 4).

⁶⁶ Scholars such as Tuell argue for the absence of the mercy and love of God in the book of Ezekiel when he contends that there “is no mention here or elsewhere in Ezekiel, of God’s love or mercy (the sole exception, that the reference to God’s compassion in 39:25, likely belongs to an editor rather than to the prophet.” Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 247. Block sees no connection between the restoration of Israel and their repentance, but God acting solely for the sake of his holy name when he writes, “Israel’s restoration is not motivated by their repentance or merit; Yahweh acts for the sake of his sacred name.” Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 359.

restoring all that the people held dear, viz., temple, land, and king, along with abundance, provision, and prosperity. . . . These are hallmarks of Yahweh’s love which were present at the inception of the covenants with Abraham and the nation at Sinai.⁶⁷

When Israel rebelled against God in the past, God acted for the sake of his name (וַאֲעֲשֶׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמִי) “and I acted for the sake of my name”) and not according to their righteousness by being merciful and forgiving them so that his name would not be profaned among the nations (Ezek 20:8, 9, 13, 14, 21, 22; cf. Num 14:16; Exod 32:7-14; Deut 9:4-6). According to Ezek 36:17-23, not only does Israel rebel against their God, but they also profane his great holy name among the nations where they have been exiled. Nevertheless, God says that he is acting for the sake of his holy name and not on their account, suggesting that he is going to have mercy, grace, forbearance, faithfulness, love, and forgiveness for them even though they have profaned his holy name among the nations. Ortlund maintains that “they are commanded to be ashamed and disgraced as they are restored purely for YHWH’S sake, in spite of their wicked past (v. 32).”⁶⁸

God’s purpose of exiling his people among the nations is to שָׁבַה “break” their heart of idolatry (Ezek 6:9; cf. Lev 26:41) and win them over to himself (Ezek 14:5), for God is near and does not despise לִנְשַׁבְּרֵי לֵב “a broken heart” (Pss 34:19 [Eng 18]; 51:17).⁶⁹ In his judgments to Israel, God says that he will leave for them escapees who will זָכַר “remember” him בְּגוֹיִם “among the nations” and loathe their evils and confess the

⁶⁷ Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context*, 229.

⁶⁸ Ortlund, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel,” 6.

⁶⁹ Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View of Israel’s Restoration,” 65. God gives life to the contrite in heart through the רוּחַ “Spirit” (Isa 57:15, 16).

abominations which they have done (Ezek 6:8, 9; 12:16; 36:31; cf. Jer 51:50). Not only does Israel זָכַר “remember” their God בְּגוֹיִם “among the nations,” but they also זָכַר “remember” their ways and deeds when God restores them to his land שָׁם “there” (Ezek 20:43; 16:61, 63).

Therefore, Israel remembers God and confesses their deeds both in exile and in their land. When Israel זָכַר “remembers” God, their remembrance is closely linked with their שׁוּב “repenting,” whereby God רָחַם “has mercy” upon them and כִּפֶּה “atones” for them (Ps 78:34, 35, 38). By repenting, Israel is obeying the command of God to repent and to be ashamed (Ezek 18:30; 33:11; 36:32).⁷⁰ Their repentance and forgiveness are anticipated when they are in exile and while in their land as well. God gives Israel initial grace through his Spirit among the nations and culminates the grace through his Spirit when Israel is in their land. Their repentance in their land progresses and deepens as they remember how God has forgiven them in their past exile among the nations.⁷¹

In conclusion, Israel positively responds to the initiative of God and the empowerment of the Spirit of God. As they accept the Spirit of God that the Lord puts within them and are willing to hear his word sent by the prophet Ezekiel, they repent of their sins and transgressions. God, therefore, forgives them not only when they are in exile, but also when he restores them to his land.

⁷⁰ George Wesley Buchanan, “The Covenant in Legal Context,” in *The Concept of the Covenant in Second Temple Period* (ed. Stanely E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 30.

⁷¹ Scholars such as Schwartz, Ortlund, Odell, and Lapsley view the remorse of Israel as taking place only when they are restored in their land: Schwartz, “Ezekiel’s Dim View of Restoration,” 46, 47; Ortlund, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel,” 6, 8, 15, 16; Odell, “The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59-63,” 111-12; Lapsley, “Shame and Self-Knowledge: Positive Role of Shame in Ezekiel’s View of the Moral Self,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (ed. Margaret Odell and John T. Strong; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 153, 155-59.

The Statutes and Judgments of God and the Covenant Theology

The statutes of God are חֲקוּת הַחַיִּים “statutes of life” (Ezek 33:15), and if Israel obeys them through the empowerment of the Spirit of God that God puts within them, the people maintain the life they have gotten as a result of the Spirit of God having been put within them (Ezek 37:14). The definite article הַ attached to חַיִּים specifies the life imparted by the Spirit of God רוּחִי “my Spirit.” The emphasis placed on בְּחֻקֵי “my statutes” and מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments” as the laws of God, differentiates them from the laws of the fathers of Israel (Ezek 20:18) and those of the nations round about (Ezek 5:7; 11:12).

The two phrases are used together twenty times in the book of Ezekiel.⁷² The statutes and judgments of God are the praxis or practical aspect of the principles of the ten words or commandments of love to God and humanity (Exod 20:1-17), for “the Decalogue provides the essence of norms expanded in 20. 22-23. 33.”⁷³ “True faith in God must be accompanied by practical commitment that shows itself in right living. This is expressed in the law, but the principle goes back to the covenant with Abraham (e.g., Gen. 18:19).”⁷⁴ The ten commandments are called the דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית “words of the covenant” (Exod 34:28). The definite article הַ prefixed to בְּרִית specifies the ten commandments as the covenant of God, בְּרִיתוֹ “his covenant” (Deut 4:13). Furthermore,

⁷² 5:6 (2x), 7; 11:12, 20; 18:9, 17, 19, 21; 20:11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24.

⁷³ Preston Sprinkle, *The Book of the Covenant: A Literary Approach* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Series 174; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 27.

⁷⁴ Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 239.

the ark in which they are put is called the ark of the covenant (Num 10:33; 14:44; Deut 8:10; 31:9, 25, 26). Both the ten words and the statutes and judgments are the words which God spoke and made a covenant with Moses and Israel (Exod 34:27, 28; Deut 5:1-6, 31).

The external differences between the ten commandments and the statutes and judgments pertain to:

1. God directly speaking the ten commandments to the people (Exod 20:1; Deut 5:22)
2. The ten commandments specified as ten words (Exod 34:28)
3. God writing the ten commandments with his finger on two tables of stones (Exod 31:18; 32:15, 16; 24:12)
4. God giving Moses the two tables containing the commandments (Exod 31:18; 32:15, 16; 24:12; Deut 5:22)
5. The ten commandments deposited in the ark of the covenant (Exod 25:16; 40:20; 1 Kg 8:9)
6. God directly speaking his judgments to Moses (Exod 21:1; Deut 4:14; 5:31; 6:1)
7. Moses writing the statutes and judgments in the book called the book of the covenant (Exod 24:4, 7)
8. The book of the law, which Moses writes, being deposited beside the ark of the covenant containing the ten commandments, suggestive of the fact that the statutes and judgments draw their praxis from the ten commandments—the covenant of God (Deut 31:9, 24-26).

The term מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments” (Ezek 36:27) implies a case decision based on the judgments God spoke to Israel through Moses.⁷⁵ In their restoration, the Levites must judge according to the judgments of God (Ezek 44:24), the princes must עָשׂוּ “do” מִשְׁפָּט “justice” (Ezek 45:9), and all the חֻקֹּת “statutes” of the house of God must be obeyed (Ezek 44:5). God gives Israel the חֻקֹּת “statutes” of the altar, sacrifice, and his house (Ezek 43:18; 46:14; 44:5; cf. 43:11).

For Peterson, “the stressing of the statutes (חֻקֹּת) of the house of the Lord (43:11, 18; 44:5) appears to have close affinity with the Law/Torah of the Lord in a general sense. In rigidly following the commands of the Lord, the priests will be able to teach and instruct the covenant community in the holiness and otherness of the Lord (44:24).”⁷⁶ Woodall argues that the “whole law—in its spiritual, social, and moral enactments—stemmed from the dictates of the Ten Commandments (20:1-7), which were concerned with how people should relate first of all to God and then to their fellow men.”⁷⁷ Marshal points out that “scholars see the connection between the Book of the covenant and the covenant.”⁷⁸ Obedience to the statutes and judgments of God through the strength of the Spirit of God culminates into a restoration of the covenant relationship between God and his people, Israel, signified by the covenant formula, “you will be my

⁷⁵ Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 92, 93.

⁷⁶ Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context*, 296.

⁷⁷ Chris Woodall, *Covenant: The Basis of God’s Self-Disclosure* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 22.

⁷⁸ J. W. Marshall, *Israel and the Book of the Covenant: An Anthropological Approach to Biblical Law* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1993), 13.

people and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:27, 28; 37:14, 24, 26, 27; cf. Lev 26:3, 9) in the context of the land he gave to their fathers.

The covenant formula occurs six times in Ezekiel (11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27; 34:30) and numerous in its short form, “your God” or “my people.” The term *בְּרִית* occurs seventeen times in Ezekiel.⁷⁹ Eleven times out of the seventeen, the term is associated with God and five times linked to the king of Babylon and Judah.⁸⁰ Four times God calls the covenant *בְּרִיתִי* “my covenant.”⁸¹ Once, it is associated with Jerusalem.⁸²

As a young nation, God brings Israel out of Egypt and enters *בְּבְרִית* “into a covenant” with them (Ezek 16:8; Ps 105:7-11; cf. Exod 19-31). However, Israel breaks the *בְּרִית* “covenant” (Ezek 16:59, 60; 44:7; Jer 31:32; cf. Exod 32). Fredenburg relates that “Yahweh’s single-minded purpose in establishing covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David is summed up in the covenant formula, ‘They will be my people, and I will be their God’ (Exod 6:7; 19:5-6).”⁸³ “God entered into a covenant relationship with Israel through Moses, and it is with that belief that many Old Testament texts operated.”⁸⁴ The covenant of God with his people, Israel, is the covenant of *חַיִּים* “the life” (Mal 2:5; Isa

⁷⁹ 16:8, 59, 60 (2x), 61, 62; 17:13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26 (2x); 44:7.

⁸⁰ Associated with God (16:8, 59, 60 (2x), 62; 17:19; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26 (2x); 44:7) and the kings of Judah and Babylon (17:13, 14, 15, 16, 18).

⁸¹ 16:60, 62; 17:19; 44:17.

⁸² 16:61.

⁸³ Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*, 316.

⁸⁴ John Barton, “Covenant in Old Testament Theology,” in *Covenant as Context: Essays in Honor of E. W. Nicholson* (ed. A. D. H. Mayes and R. B. Salters; Oxford, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003), 32.

55:3).⁸⁵ Israel laments that they do not have life (Ezek 33:10), and, therefore, God puts his Spirit within them to have life (Ezek 37:14) by enabling them to observe the statutes of life (Ezek 33:15) and restore the covenant of **הַחַיִּים** “the life.”⁸⁶

As God entered into judgment with the fathers of his people, he too enters into a covenant with the exiles by bringing them under the bond of **הַבְּרִית** “the covenant” (Ezek 20:37) and **כָּפַר** “forgives” them (Ezek 16:63). “Forgiveness for their past faithlessness provided the basis for the new covenant . . . a forgiveness freely given by Yahweh.”⁸⁷ Block offers the insight that “Yahweh’s efforts to rehabilitate his reputation will go far beyond merely reuniting people and land; he will also revitalize the relationship between himself and his people.”⁸⁸

The covenant is also a covenant of **שָׁלוֹם** “peace” (Ezek 34:25; 37:26). Israel does not have peace, because God sends to them four sore acts of judgments of sword, famine, beasts, and plague (Ezek 5:12; 14:21; 17:15-17) for disobeying his laws (Ezek 5:6, 7; 11:12). The false prophets promise peace, but God says that there is no peace (Ezek 13:10; cf. 22:28).

Empowered by the Spirit of God, Israel is capable of obeying the divine laws, and, therefore, God reverses the four sore acts of judgment of sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence. He breaks the bars of captivity and leaves for them those who have escaped

⁸⁵ The definite article specifies the life in view. In Deut 30:15-20, God sets before Israel life and death and urges them to choose life, because obedience to the statutes and judgments means life.

⁸⁶ The Spirit of God is closely associated with the word and the covenant of God with Israel (Isa 59:21; Hag 2:5).

⁸⁷ Swanson, *The Role of Covenant*, 126.

⁸⁸ Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-28*, 354.

there in the land nevermore to be prey to the nations and beasts (Ezek 6:8; 12:16; 34:28; 33:27).⁸⁹ “The covenant of which the prophet speaks is the original covenant, which God will recall in spite of all that has transpired.”⁹⁰ Block aptly writes that “in their salvation they will wake up to the remarkable grace of God, who has taken wretched sinners and restored them to full covenant relationship with himself.”⁹¹

Therefore, the statutes and judgments are the praxis of the ten commandments. Obeyed through the power of the Spirit of God, Israel maintains life gotten through the Spirit of God, and, thereby, God restores the covenant of life and peace with them.

In summary, the act of God of putting his Spirit within his people, Israel, according to Ezek 36:27, in order to empower them to obey his laws is emphasized in its immediate context—the chiasm of Ezek 36:22-32. The high point (v. 27) represents the emphasis of the act of God in transforming Israel for obedience. The phrase רוּחִי “my Spirit” signifies the Holy Spirit of God, a personal being capable of acting or operating independently.⁹² Through his Spirit, God effects the obedience of his people, Israel, because he acts on the account of his great holy name, characterized by his mercy, grace, forbearance, faithfulness, love, and forgiveness through his Spirit. The phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” in the first dependent clause emphasizes the main verb אֶתֵּן “I will put” in

⁸⁹ Julie Galambush, “This Land Is My Land: On Nature as Property in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *‘Every City Shall Be Forsaken’: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 330; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 75.

⁹⁰ Tova Ganzel, “The Description of the Restoration of Israel in Ezekiel,” *VT* 60 (2010): 204.

⁹¹ Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 359.

⁹² See the discussion on רוּחִי “my Spirit” p. 25 above.

the main clause. It has its direct object as **את אשר-בחקי תלכו ומשפטי תשמרו ועשיתם** “so that you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do (them),” implying that God strengthens Israel to observe his laws by putting his Spirit within them.

God “does” so that his people can “do.” The qal form **ועשיתי** suggests that God does not arbitrarily force (cause) Israel to obey his laws or restore them to their land without their will. Instead, he strengthens them to observe them by putting his Spirit within them to enable them to observe the laws. The emphasis on v. 27 indicates that God addresses the core problem of his people, Israel, that is, their disobedient heart or mind while in exile and in their land. The phrase **בקרבתכם** “within you” signifies their heart, for the **קרב** of a person is synonymous with the **לב** “heart” (Pss 64:7 [Eng 6]; 36:2; Prov 14:33; Jer 31:33; 4:14). God reverses their disobedience, and hence their captivity, by empowering their heart and will with his Spirit to obey his laws and return to build his sanctuary and the city of Jerusalem. The Spirit of God makes the word of God, which the Lord sends through the prophet Ezekiel, effective in the hearts of Israel for them to willingly obey, for the Spirit of God is closely associated with the word of God (Ezek 2:1, 2, 4, 5, 7; 11:5; 37:1, 4, 5). Through the word of God, the Spirit of God renews and strengthens the mind of the people for new desires, purposes, and motives of obeying the divine laws. Their spirit of wanting to be like the nations and serve wood and stone is replaced with the Spirit of God for obedience.

The statutes and judgments are the praxis or practical aspects of the principles of the ten commandments of loving God and their fellow human beings. The laws are **חקות** **החיים** “the statutes of life” (Ezek 33:15), and if the people obey them through the

empowerment of the Spirit of God, they maintain the life of which they lament that they do not have (Ezek 33:10) but God desires them to have (Ezek 33:11; 18:23, 32). The laws also are closely linked to the covenant between God and his people, Israel, and when Israel obeys or rebels against them, they keep or break the covenant.

God acts for the sake of his great holy name, suggesting that he vindicates it through Israel by כַּפֵּר “forgiving” (Ezek 16:63) and רַחַם “having mercy” on them (Ezek 39:25), according to the character of his name of mercy, grace, compassion, love, forbearance, faithfulness, and forgiveness (Exod 34:6, 7). He renews their heart for himself by the רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ “new Spirit” he puts within them (Ezek 36:26, 28), cleanses them from their uncleanness (Ezek 36:25, 29), and gathers them to their fruitful land (Ezek 36:24, 30). By spiritually transforming Israel and physically renewing his land, God, therefore, vindicates his name through them before the eyes of the nations, despite the fact that they have profaned it among the nations (Ezek 36:23, 31).

According to the inclusion לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה “I am not doing for your sake” (Ezek 36:22, 32), God is sparing, spiritually transforming, and physically restoring Israel to their land on the basis of his character of mercy, grace, faithfulness, goodness, love, forbearance, and forgiveness, and not on the account of their righteousness. Not only does God command them to be ashamed of their ways (v. 32), but also to repent of their transgressions (Ezek 18:30-32).

In conclusion, God acts according to his character of mercy, grace, love, faithfulness, forbearance, and forgiveness by effecting obedience in Israel by putting his Spirit within them in order to empower them to obey his statutes and judgments through

repentance, despite the fact that they have profaned his holy name among the nations. Through his Spirit, God spiritually transforms inwardly his people, Israel, by giving them a new heart and cleanses them from their uncleanness and physically renews his land like the garden of Eden, thereby vindicating his great holy name through them in the eyes of the nations.

Summary and Conclusion

In the research undertaken above, I have investigated further the Spirit of God and obedience to the laws of God in Ezek 36:27 in the context of the restoration of Israel from the Babylonian exile through exegetical, intratextual, intertextual, and theological approaches. Scholars are at variance regarding the identity of the Spirit of God, the nature of the statutes and judgments of God, the time of the fulfillment of the prediction, and the role of Israel in the process of restoration.

Scholars variously identify רוּחִי “my Spirit” as: the force or power of God, breath of God, presence of God, an identity in close relationship with God, mind of God, and Holy Spirit. The חֻקֵי “my statutes” and בְּשֻׁפְטַי “my judgments” are differently viewed as: covenant of God, word of God, cultic and civil laws, apodictic and casuistic laws, and the entire law of God. Moreover, scholars are not in harmony as to the time when God puts his Spirit within his people, Israel, for obedience. The time of the fulfillment is believed to take place: during the establishment of the Christian church, in the future eschatology by the literal nation of Israel, in the millenium by the literal nation of Israel, and in the time of the prophet Ezekiel. God is viewed as taking a unilateral action in order to cause

Israel to obey his laws, and Israel is passive. In the research, I have addressed the following issues raised in the introduction:

1. The identity of the Spirit of God
2. The nature of the statutes and judgments of God
3. The precise relationship between the Spirit of God and Israel in observing the laws of God
4. The probable time when God puts his Spirit within his people, Israel.
5. What God “does” in order that Israel “does,” as signified by the inclusion וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” and וְעָשִׂיתֶם “and you will do”
6. The role of Israel in the process of restoration
7. The rationale behind the act of God of putting his Spirit “within” Israel in the context of the covenant between God and Israel.

Scholars generally view Ezek 36 as belonging to the group of chapters in Ezekiel dealing with the restoration of Israel (33-48). Chapter 36:22-32 forms a literal sub-unit with the inclusion לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה “I am not doing for your sake.” The messenger formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱדַבְרֵנִי “thus says the Lord God” (v. 22) marks the beginning of the sub-section, and the declaration formula נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֱדַבְרֵנִי “declares the Lord God” (v. 32) marks its end. The direct discourse of God has a literal chiasmic structure with the emphasis or high point in v. 27, whereby God puts his Spirit within his people, Israel, to obey his laws.

Ezekiel 36:27 comprises the main clause and two dependent clauses joined by a relative conjunctive *vav*. The direct objects רִיחִי “my Spirit,” חֻקֵי “my statutes,” and

מִשְׁפָּטַי “my judgments” are placed in the beginning in the Hebrew word order for emphasis. The phrase וְעָשִׂיתִי “and I will do” has אֶת אֲשֶׁר-בָּחַקִי תֵלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם “you will walk in my statutes and keep my judgments” as its object. The phrase has a coordinate relationship with the verb אֶתֵּן “I will put” in the main clause by the use of the relative conjunction *vav* and emphasizes אֶתֵּן. The verb עָשָׂה is used here as an act of effect. God “does” or “acts,” that is, he puts his Spirit within his people in order to effect obedience as regards his people, Israel.

In the context of Ezek 36:27, I have argued that:

1. רוּחִי “My Spirit” is the Holy Spirit of God—a personal being as opposed to the impersonal force, presence, breath, or mind of God.
2. The קֶרֶב of Israel is their hearts or mind.
3. God “does” or acts to effect obedience on the part of his people, Israel, through his Spirit, and, therefore, empowers them to observe his laws.
4. The purpose of God of putting his Spirit in the hearts of his people is to renew and strengthen their stony and weak hearts by his word sent through the prophet Ezekiel.
5. The role of Israel is active in confessing their sins and loathing themselves.
6. The time of fulfillment of the prediction is both in exile and their land, with the emphasis on the homeland, Israel.
7. The statutes and judgments of God are the praxis or practical aspects of the principles of the ten commandments of love to God and fellow human being that God gave to Israel.

The phrase רִיחִי represents the Spirit of God based on the following:

1. The noun רִיחַ, qualified as רִיחַ קָדְשִׁי “my Holy Spirit” in the direct discourse of God, is not attested in Ezekiel or OT. However, it is qualified as רִיחַ קָדְשְׁךָ “your Holy Spirit” (Ps 51:13 [Eng 11]) and רִיחַ קָדְשׁוֹ “his Holy Spirit” (Isa 63:10, 11), in reference to the Holy Spirit of God in the indirect discourse where someone else other than God is speaking. This leads to a logical conclusion that רִיחִי “my Spirit” in Ezek 36:27 is the Holy Spirit of God, since the speech is a direct discourse of God.

2. The Spirit of God acts and operates independently by being associated with verbs of action such as: עָצַב “grieve” מָרָה rebelled against” (Isa 63:10, 11; Ps 106:33), נִחַם “quieted” (Zech 6:8), דִּין “judges” (Gen 6:3); מָלֵא “fills” (Exod 31:3; 35:31), אָמַר/דָּבַר, “speaks” (Ezek 11:5; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Kgs 2:16; 2 Chr 18:23), שָׁלַח “sends/be sent” (Pss 51:13 [Eng 11]; 104:30; Isa 48:16; Zech 7:12), נָשַׁב “blows” (Ps 147:18; Isa 40:7; Exod 15:10), נָחָה “guides” (Ps 143:10), שָׂכַל “makes wise” (Neh 9:20), עוֹד “testifies” (Neh 9:30), שִׁים/נָתַן “be put” (Isa 63:11; Ezek 36:26, 27; 11:19; עָשָׂה/בָּרָא “creates” (Pss 104:30; 33:6; Job 33:4), חָיָה “gives life” (Ezek 37:14; Job 33:4; Isa 57:15, 16); נָשָׂא “lifts” (Ezek 3:14; 11:24; cf. 45:3; 2 Kgs 2:16), נָפַל “falls” (Ezek 11:5), רָאָה “shows” (Ezek 11:24; 37:14), נִחַם “rests/causes to rest” (Num 11:25, 26; Isa 11:2; 63:14), חָדַשׁ “renews” (Ps 104:30), סוּר “departs” (1 Sam 16:14), קָבַץ “gathers” (Isa 34:16), צָלַח “mightily” comes עַל “upon” (Judg 14:6, 19; 1 Sam 16:13); נוֹס “drives” (Isa 59:19), פָּעַם “impels” (Judg 13:25), לָבַשׁ “broods” (Gen 1:2), יָצַק “be poured” (Isa 44:3), עָמַד “stands” (Hag 2:5), לָבַשׁ

“clothes” (Judg 6:34; 1 Chr 12:19; 2 Chr 24:20), בִּין “causes discernment” (Job 32:8), and שָׁפַךְ “be poured” (Ezek 39:29; Joel 3:1, 2 [Eng 2:28, 29]).

3. The Spirit of God is an independent agent through whom God executes his acts—signified by the use of the preposition בַּ “by” of agent (Job 26:13; Neh 9:30; Isa 11:4; Exod 15:10; Ezek 37:14; Zech 4:6).

4. The Spirit of God causes or brings about חֵכְמָה “wisdom,” בִּינָה “discernment,” עֵצָה “counsel,” הֵעֵת “knowledge,” גְּבוּרָה “strength,” יְרֵאת יְהוָה “fear of God,” and מִשְׁפָּט “judgment” (Isa 11:2; 28:6; cf. 4:4; 29:24; Job 20:3; 32:8).

5. The Spirit of God gives life (Ezek 37:14; Job 33:4; Isa 57:15, 16).

6. God puts or gives his Spirit to empower his people to do his laws and accomplish special tasks (Gen 41:37-41; Exod 31:3; Isa 42:1-4; 63:14; Mic 3:8; Hag 2:4, 5; Zech 4:6; 7:9, 12; Job 32:8, 9; Neh 9:20).

God puts his Spirit within his people, Israel, because:

1. לֵב represents their heart or mind. The קֶרֶב of a person is synonymous with לֵב “heart” or “mind” (Pss 64:7; 36:2; Prov 14:33; Jer 4:14; 31:33). The second-person possessive adjective plural כֶּם “your” suffixed to בְּקֶרֶב references individual heart and emphasizes individual responsibility in the context of a covenant between God and Israel.

2. The לֵב “heart” of Israel is stony (Ezek 36:26; 11:19) and hard (3:7), unresponsive to the word of God. God wants to renew their hearts with his Spirit (Ezek 36:26) and transform their hearts into hearts of flesh that are warm and soft, willing to obey.

3. The לֵב “heart” of Israel is אַמְלָה “weak” (Ezek 16:30) by going after their idols (Ezek 11:21; 33:31).

4. The רוּחַ “spirit” of Israel is to be like the nations round about to serve wood and stone, but God says that that will never happen (Ezek 20:32).

5. Israel laments that they have no חַי “life” (Ezek 33:11), but God wants to give them חַי “life” by putting his Spirit within them (Ezek 37:14).

Scholars such as Hamilton translate בְּקִרְבְּכֶם “among” or “amidst,” implying that God spatially sets his presence among or amidst his people, Israel. This view is challenged by the fact that the purpose of God of putting his Spirit within his people is to strengthen them to observe his laws—signified by the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר “that,” introducing a final clause “so that.” The impersonal presence of God cannot empower Israel to obey the laws of God, for Israel caused the presence of God dwelling among them to abandon the sanctuary by introducing idols in the sanctuary (Ezek 8).

The bestowal of the Spirit of God within Israel occurs right away as long as the people are אָבָה “willing” to שָׁמַע “hear” the word of God (Ezek 3:7), זָכַר “remember” God and קִוֵּט “loathe” themselves (Ezek 6:9; 36:31), שׁוּב “repent” of their transgressions (Ezek 18:30), סָפַר “confess” their abominations בְּגוֹיִם “among the nations” (Ezek 12:16), and עָשָׂה “do” for themselves a לֵב חָדָשׁ “new heart” and a רוּחַ חָדָשׁ “new Spirit” based on the following:

1. God says that Israel will זָכַר “remember” him and their evil ways and deeds, קִוֵּט “loathe” themselves, and סָפַר “confess” their abominations בְּגוֹיִם “among the nations” (Ezek 6:8, 9; 12:16; 36:31).

2. Presently God commands them to **שוב** “repent” (Ezek 18:31) and be **בוש** “ashamed” and **כָּלַם** “humbled” (Ezek 36:32).

3. Israel went into exile because of their iniquity (Ezek 14:23; 39:23) by **טִמְאָה** “defiling” their land with blood and idols (Ezek 36:17, 18), but God cleanses them from their **טִמְאָה** “uncleanness” and **יִשַׁע** “saves” them from their sins (Ezek 36:25, 29; 37:23). By restoring Israel to their land without cleansing them and their land of uncleanness, God would be overlooking their transgressions and sins which they committed against him, and the purpose of exiling them in order to **שָׁבַר** “break” their **לֵב** “heart” (Ezek 6:9) would be a futile exercise.

4. Not only is Israel portrayed as **זָכַר** “remembering” their ways and **קִוֵּט** “loathing” themselves in exile **בְּגוֹיִם** “among the nations,” but also when they are in their land (Ezek 20:43; 16:61), because God has **כִּפֶּר** “atoned” for them (Ezek 16:63). The act of Israel of remembering their evil ways and loathing themselves is progressive, not only occurring in exile among the nations, but also deepening when restored to their land.

5. The purpose of God of putting his Spirit within his people, Israel, is to give them **חַי** “life” (Ezek 18:9, 17, 21, 23, 27, 28; 33:14-16; 37:14) and empower them for immediate obedience to his laws (Ezek 11:19, 20; 36:27). The statutes and judgments of God are the praxis or practical aspects of the principles of the ten commandments or words of loving God and humanity. God spoke the statutes and judgments to Moses, and Moses wrote them in the book of the covenant (Exod 21:1; 24:4, 7; Deut 4:14, 45; 5:31; 6:1). Moses put the book of the covenant beside the ark of the covenant containing the ten commandments, suggesting that the statutes and judgments are based on the ten

commandments. The term **מִשְׁפָּט** denotes case decisions based on the judgments of God that the Lord gave to Moses.

The theology of Ezek 36:27, therefore, can be summarized thus: God takes the initiative, God “does” or acts through his Spirit, Israel responds to the initiative of God by remembering their God and loathing themselves of their evil deeds which they have committed against him, and the statutes and judgments of God are the practical aspects of the principles of the ten commandments which Israel performs. God takes the initiative by:

1. Restoring Israel to his land that he gave to their fathers. The nations where Israel was exiled question the ability and character of God by saying, “These are the people of God and they went out of his land” (Ezek 36:20). As the nations see God restore Israel by his great power to his land, faithfully restore his covenant relationship with them, forgive their sins, and establish his sanctuary in their midst, God is vindicated through Israel before the eyes of the nations, for the nations come to know that Israel went into exile because of their own sins, but God has saved them (Ezek 39:23).

2. Cleansing and saving Israel from their transgressions and sins. Israel laments that their transgressions and sins are against them, they are wasting away, and have no life (Ezek 33:10). The cleansing is for the removal of sins and is reminiscent of cleansing with the **מַי־נְדָח** “water of impurity” (Num 19:9, 20, 21).

3. Giving them a new heart and new Spirit. Israel has a stony, hard, and weak heart (Ezek 36:26; 3:7; 16:30), but God desires to give them a heart of flesh—responsive to his laws. Therefore, God restores his covenant relationship with his people, Israel.

4. Putting his Spirit within the hearts of his people, Israel, in order to strengthen them to obey his laws. He acts for the sake of his great holy name of mercy, grace, love, forbearance, faithfulness, and forgiveness to vindicate it through Israel in the eyes of the nations. He does not act on the basis of the righteousness of Israel, for they have profaned his great holy name among the nations.

5. Dispossessing the nations who have acquired his land for themselves and magnified themselves against him although he was in the land (Ezek 35:10-15; 36:2, 3, 5, 7). Israel cannot drive out the nations from their land on their own strength; when God dispossesses the nations of his land, both Israel and the nations acknowledge the great power of God.

6. By renewing his land like the garden of Eden and increasing its produce for his people, Israel, so that they do not suffer hunger again among the nations (Ezek 36:29; 34:29).

7. Giving them life, because Israel is lamenting that they are cut off, wasted away, their hope lost, their bones dried, and, therefore, have no life (Ezek 33:10, 11; 37:11).

God acts through his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a personal being empowering Israel to observe the laws of God by renewing their cold and hard hearts to warm and soft flesh hearts responsive to the laws of God with new desires, purposes, and motives for obedience (Ezek 36:26; 11:19, 20; Ps 51:12-14 [Eng 10-12]). Their heart is weak (Ezek 16:30) and divided in loyalty—serving God and idols as well (Ezek 23:38, 39; cf. 14:7; 20:31; Josh 24:14, 23). Their spirit is to serve wood and stone (Ezek 20:32). However, God wants to give them one heart to serve him alone (Ezek 11:19; Jer 32:39). Therefore, the Holy Spirit softens and strengthens their hard and weak hearts through the word of

God, enabling them to will and keep his laws, for in their own strength they cannot will to obey (Ezek 33:31, 32; 3:7). God creates through his Spirit and word (Pss 104:30; 33:6). The Holy Spirit cleanses their transgressions and sins, for God purifies through the Spirit (Isa 4:4; Ps 51:9, 12-14 [Eng 7, 10-12]).

Israel is unclean by shedding blood on their land by violence, oppression, bribery, and sacrificing to idols. God cleanses them and their land and gathers them through his Spirit, for God renews the face of the ground and gathers them through his Spirit (Ps 104:30; Isa 34:16; 32:15, 16; 44:3, 4). God, therefore, restores his covenant relationship with his people, Israel, based on obedience through the power of his Holy Spirit, for God gave his laws through his Spirit (Isa 63:11-14; Neh 9:13, 14, 20, 30). Moreover, the Spirit of God gives them life (Ezek 37:14), for the Spirit of God revives (Isa 57:15, 16).

Israel would respond to the initiative of God made through the Spirit of God by:

1. Willingly accepting to be convicted by the Holy Spirit through the word of God to obey the laws of God (Ezek 2:4, 5, 7; 3:4, 10, 11; 37:4, 5), for the Spirit of God is closely linked with the word of God (Ezek 2:2; 37:1, 4, 5; Isa 59:21; Hag 2:5; Ps 33:6; Gen 1:2, 3).

2. Repenting of their transgressions and sins which they have committed against God. The fact that God commands them to **שׁוּבוּ** “repent” and cast away their transgressions and do for themselves a new heart and a new Spirit suggests that God is willing to forgive them, for he does not want them to die, but have life (Ezek 18:23, 27, 30-32; 33:11). Although the word **סָלַח** “forgive” is not used in Ezekiel, other words such as **כִּפֶּר** “atone” (16:63; 45:15; 43:20), **רָחַם** “have mercy” (39:25), **יִשַׁע** “save” (36:29;

37:23), and נָשָׂא “lift” (39:26) are attested. Some scholars argue that God takes a unilateral action to restore Israel to his land, because he is doing for the sake of his holy name and concerned only with vindicating it in the eyes of the nations. They advocate that Israel is passive, for Israel does not repent. The argument by scholars overlooks:

1. That God commands Israel to be ashamed of their ways and repent and do for themselves a new heart and a new Spirit (Ezek 18:32; 36:32), for he desires them to have life through his Spirit (Ezek 37:14), because they lament that their transgressions and sins are upon them and have no life (Ezek 33:11). It would be a contradiction for God to command Israel to be ashamed and repent and at the same time unilaterally restore them to his land without their shame and repentance. The rhetorical question: “Why will you die” (Ezek 33:11; 18:31) that God poses to Israel suggests that death is imminent unless they humble themselves and repent.

2. That God exiled his people, because they shed blood on their land and served idols (Ezek 36:17-19; 7:23). God does not restore Israel without cleansing them and their land from the uncleanness of idols, for by exiling them, God intends to break their heart, which goes after their idols, and win it over to himself (Ezek 6:9; 14:5, 6).

3. That Israel repents in exile, because God says that he will leave for them persons who have escaped among the nations and there the remnant will זָכַר “remember” God and סָפַר “confess” their abominations and acknowledge that Yahweh is God (Ezek 36:31; 6:8, 9; 12:16). God חָמַל “spares” them לְמַעַן “for the sake” of his holy name, despite the fact that they have profaned it among the nations (Ezek 36:21). Their repentance among the nations is anticipated (Lev 26:29-45; Deut 4:27-31; 30:1-10; 1 Kgs

4:46-53; Neh 1:1-10; Dan 9). Not only does Israel repent among the nations, but also when God restores them to his land (Ezek 16:61, 63; 20:42, 43).

4. That God does not force Israel to return to his land or obey his laws irrespective of their free choice. He does not impose his Spirit and his covenant relationship with them without their willingness to participate; otherwise, he would have forced them to obey his laws while in their land prior to exiling them to Babylon.

The statutes and judgments of God are the practical aspects of the principles of the ten words or commandments. The principles are based on loving God and fellow humans from the heart (Deut 6:5; 10:12, 13; Lev 19:18), in the context of the covenant between God and Israel. Instead of doing the statutes and judgments of God, Israel has done according to the judgments of the nations of the earth (Ezek 5:6, 7; 11:12) and like the laws of their fathers by sacrificing to idols (Ezek 20:18; 27-31, 39). However, in their restoration, Israel is supposed to do the חֲקוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ “statutes of the altar” (Ezek 43:18), חֲקוֹת עוֹלָם תָּמִיד “statutes of perpetual sacrifice” (Ezek 46:14), and חֲקוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה “statutes of the house of God” (Ezek 44:5). The Levites must judge with the judgments of God, בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי “with my judgments” (Ezek 44:24) and the princes must עָשׂוּ “do” מִשְׁפָּט “justice” (Ezek 45:9; cf. Mic 6:8).

In the process of restoring his people, Israel, God is acting or doing for the sake of his great holy name to vindicate his holy character of grace, mercy, love, forbearance, faithfulness, and forgiveness (Exod 34:6, 7) through them despite the fact that Israel has profaned it among the nations. The nations ridicule the name of God by saying that Israel are the people of God and yet they went out of his land (Ezek 36:20), implying that the

holy character of God is at stake. The actions of God are emphasized or stressed by the frequent use of the personal pronoun “I” (Ezek 36:22-32), suggestive of the fact that God is the sole initiator of the restoration process. The vindication of the great holy name of God through Israel is effected through the spiritual and physical actions of God.

On the spiritual dimension, God transforms the hearts of his people, Israel, by renewing and empowering them by his Spirit to be obedient to his laws. Regarding the renewal by the Spirit of God, VanGemenen rightly posits that “the Spirit renews human beings and internalizes God’s law so that they will experience a new freedom (36:26-27).”⁹³ God transforms Israel by cleansing and saving them from their uncleanness and idolatry (Ezek 36:25, 29) and atones (forgives) for them for all that they have done (Ezek 16:63). It was idolatry, bloodshed, and injustice that caused the wrath of God to come upon Israel and to be exiled among the nations (Ezek 8; 22; 36:17-19; 39:24). By being obedient to the laws of God through the Spirit of God, Israel reflects the character of God as they are gracious, merciful, forbearing, faithful, and forgiving in dealing with each other and treating the foreigners among them. Therefore, the character of God is vindicated through them. Not only does Israel acknowledge God as their Lord, but the nations also know that it is God who sanctifies Israel (Ezek 37:27, 28).

On a physical dimension, God gathers Israel from among the nations and brings them to their land (Ezek 36:20:41-42; 20:41; 36:24; 37:14, 21). By restoring Israel to the land that he gave to their fathers, God, through his people, vindicates his character of faithfulness to the covenant between him and Israel (Ezek 36:28).

⁹³ VanGemenen, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), 333.

The name of God is further vindicated through Israel when God transforms his desolate land into a fruitful land like the garden of Eden (Ezek 34:26-27, 29; 36:8-15, 29-30, 33-36), dispossesses the nations who have acquired it for themselves (Ezek 36:5, 7; 35), and sets his sanctuary among them (Ezek 37:27, 28). God's grace, mercy, and love are vindicated through the transformation of the land on behalf of Israel, reminiscent of God's creative power through his Spirit (Gen 1; Ps 33:6; Job 36-41). Sweeney asserts, "In classical priestly fashion, the rationale for restoration of the land is the restoration of the holiness of the divine Name, i.e., YHWH will act to resanctify the land in the aftermath of its defilement. The restored Eden-like land then becomes a testimony to the nations of the world that YHWH has spoken and acted (see Ezek 36:26)."⁹⁴ The power of God is evident when he drives out the nations and dwells among them through his sanctuary so that Israel can dwell securely (Ezek 34:25, 28). The name of God dwells in his sanctuary (1 Kgs 8:20; 9:3).

God acts through his Spirit with the purpose of restoring his covenant relationship with his people, Israel, signified by the covenant formula, "you shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezek 36:28; cf. 11:20; 37:27). God's relationship with his people was broken when Israel broke his covenant (Ezek 16:59; 17:19; 44:7). God's covenant relationship with his people is restored when God acts on the account of his great holy name by putting his Spirit within their hearts to renew and strengthen them so that they can obey his laws.

⁹⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 162.

In conclusion, God works through his Spirit. He puts his Spirit within the heart of his people, Israel, in order to give them life and empower them to obey his laws with immediate effect. The Spirit of God renews and strengthens their heart through the word of God as long as they are willing to hear and do it. God acts for the sake of his holy name characterized by his mercy, grace, love, forbearance, faithfulness, and forgiveness to vindicate it through them in the eyes of the nations by restoring them to his land, forgiving their transgressions and sins, making his land productive, dispossessing the nations which have acquired his land for themselves, and establishing his sanctuary in their midst. Israel responds to the acts of God, which God initiates through his Spirit, by repenting while in exile (Ezek 6:8, 9; 12:16; 36:31; cf. Jer 51:50) and on their land (Ezek 16:63; 20:43; 39:25-27; cf. 14:22-23). Therefore, God does not unilaterally restore Israel irrespective of their will, but Israel participates fully in the initiative of God through the Spirit of God. God does not impose his Spirit on anyone in order to force them to obey his laws.

Further research is recommended to investigate:

1. How the Spirit of God influences Israel to obey the laws of God in the post-exilic period
2. The role of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the laws of God in NT, with particular reference, but not limited to: Matt 28:19-20; John 14:15-17; Acts 5:32; Rom 8:1-11; 15:18, 19; 2 Cor 3:2-11; Phil 2:12, 13; Heb 6:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2, 22-23
3. The nature of the laws of God in the NT or Covenant

4. In the book of Ezekiel (5:6, 7; 11:12), how the statutes and judgments of God that the Lord gave to his people, Israel, are comparable to the judgments of other nations which Israel has acted according to.

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