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**CREATION
IN THE PROPHETIC
LITERATURE
OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT:
AN INTERTEXTUAL
APPROACH**

INTRODUCTION

The topic of creation in Old Testament theology for most of its recent history¹ has been neglected and has often been relegated to the level of a subheading within the sections of soteriology, covenant, trinity, or any other somewhat-related topic: “Nevertheless, creation to this day has been one of the ‘proverbial step-children’ in the recent discipline of Old Testament theology.”² While Rolf Rendtorff only diagnoses the problem, Walter Brueggemann, in looking for a rationale, refers the responsibility for the peripheral position of creation in theology to the dichotomy between Israelite faith and Canaanite religion, or history and myth, that found its way into biblical theology during the earlier part of the last century through scholars like Gerhard von Rad in Europe, who suggested that creation

1. This chapter was originally published in a slightly different form in *JATS* 20, no. 1–2 (Spring 2009): 19–54. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher.

2. Rolf Rendtorff, “Some Reflections on Creation as a Topic of Old Testament Theology,” in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes. Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Eugene Ulrich et al., JSOTSup, 149 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 205.

was subservient to salvation,³ or Ernest Wright in the United States, who maintained that “Israel was little interested in nature.”⁴

A number of scholars moved beyond the paradigm created by von Rad⁵ and recognized the prominence of creation in the theological thinking of the Old Testament, both in terms of position and content.

In his work on Genesis 1 through 11, Claus Westermann places creation in history through its expression in myth and ritual. Thus, it is the primeval event, and the stories told about and enacted upon it are part of the universal traditions of humankind. The biblical authors—for Westermann it was the Yahwist and the Priestly author—adapted these stories theologically for Israel and identified them as part of God’s work of blessing, which, for Westermann, “really means the power of fertility.”⁶

In direct and intentional contrast with von Rad, the doctrine has been described by Hans Heinrich Schmid as the horizon of biblical theology. He relates creation to world order, and by comparing it with creation beliefs in other ancient Near East cultures, he arrives at the conclusion that history is the realization of this order.⁷ “Only within this horizon could Israel understand its special experiences

3. “Our main thesis was that in genuinely Yahwistic belief the doctrine of creation never attained to the stature of a relevant, independent doctrine. We found it invariably related, and indeed subordinated, to soteriological considerations.” Gerhard von Rad, “The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson, IRT, 6 (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress and London: SPCK, 1984), 62. The article was originally published in 1936.

4. G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment* (London: SCM, 1950), 71. Von Rad saw creation as a very late addition to the theological construct of the Old Testament. Brueggemann maintains that von Rad’s conclusions were framed by the sociocultural context of the 1930s with the struggle between the German Church and National Socialism, which promulgated a “blood and soil” religion that played toward Canaanite fertility religion. Concludes Brueggemann: “The work of Gerhard von Rad and G. Ernest Wright, taken up, advanced, and echoed by numerous scholars, articulated a radical either/or of history versus nature, monotheism versus polytheism, and ethical versus cultic categories.” Walter Brueggemann, “The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology,” *ThTo* 53.2 (1996): 179.

5. “OT scholarship is nearly unanimous in regarding creation faith in ancient Israel as chronologically late and theologically secondary.” See Hans Heinrich Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson, IRT, 6 (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress and London: SPCK, 1984), 103.

6. Claus Westermann, “Creation and History in the Old Testament,” in *The Gospel and Human Destiny*, ed. Vilmos Vajta (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1971), 30.

7. Schmid arrives at that conclusion by paralleling the Hebrew *šēdākā*, “righteousness,” with the Egyptian *ma’at*, or “world-order.” For a critique of his position, see Stefan Paas, *Creation and Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets*, OtSt, 47 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 10–14.

with God in history.”⁸ One wonders if Schmid is not committing the mistake of earlier biblical theologians in looking for the *Mitte* of the Old Testament and finding it in creation.⁹

Nevertheless, it appears that, in most cases, the dating of texts lies at the bottom of the question as to where to position creation within the framework of Old Testament theology. While the Bible begins with creation, biblical theologies mostly do not, since traditional critical approaches to Old Testament texts do not allow for an early dating of the *Urgeschichte* (Gen. 1–11).¹⁰ Most of these studies, von Rad’s included, have rather taken Isaiah 40 through 55—the so-called Deutero-Isaiah, dated by critical scholars to postexilic times—as a chronologically secure paradigm for creation in the Old Testament, against which other texts, including also Genesis 1 through 3, are then bench-marked.¹¹ This leads inevitably to the conclusion that creation is a late addition to the theological thinking of the Old Testament.¹² Implicit in this approach is the danger of circular reasoning, since creation texts are being dated on the basis of religious historical paradigms as late and are then used to date other creation passages accordingly:

It is obviously somewhat paralysing to realise that we form a picture of Israel’s religious history in part on the basis of certain texts

8. *Ibid.*, 12.

9. See, for example, Rudolf Smend who considers the doctrine of election to be pivotal in Old Testament theology. Smend, *Die Mitte des Alten Testaments: Gesammelte Studien, Bd. 1* (Munich, Germany: Chr. Kaiser, 1986). Recent theologies of the Old Testament have moved away from this approach. Hasel comments: “An OT theology which recognizes God as the dynamic, unifying center provides the possibility to describe the rich and variegated theologies and to present the various longitudinal themes, motifs, and ideas. In affirming God as the dynamic, unifying center of the OT we also affirm that this center cannot be forced into a static organizing principle on the basis of which an OT theology can be structured.” Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 142.

10. Blenkinsopp summarizes the traditional view of source criticism regarding Genesis 1 through 11: “According to the documentary critics this [Gen. 1:1–2:3] is the first paragraph of the P source. With very few exceptions . . . , these critics have read the early history of humanity [Gen. 1–11] as a conflation of an early J and a late P source.” Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 60.

11. Comments Paas: “The reason why an inquiry into creation in the Old Testament often begins with Deutero-Isaiah is obvious. About the dating of the Psalms and even the stories of the beginning there is much less agreement.” Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 14.

12. With reference to von Rad’s 1936 article, Brueggemann comments: “It was in this article . . . that von Rad asserted that ‘the doctrine of creation’ was peripheral to the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament was not, at least until very late, at all interested in creation per se.” Brueggemann, “The Loss and Recovery of Creation,” 178.

which, in turn, with the help of the picture obtained by historical research, we subsequently judge with respect to “authenticity” and historical truth.¹³

The ineffectiveness of such a dating scheme that is rendered even less reliable as a result of being informed by a particular school of thought with regard to Israelite religious history¹⁴ means that a more adequate approach to the topic of creation in the Old Testament should depart from a contextual reading of the texts in question in the various bodies of Old Testament literature.

The prophetic literature of the Old Testament provides a rich tapestry for such a reading, since the implicit nature of prophecy in the Old Testament is reformative in nature, in other words, referring back to the historic deeds of YHWH in the past (creation, exodus, conquest, and so on) and, thus, motivating a return to Him in the respective present. While there are studies that have touched on the subject of creation in individual prophetic books,¹⁵ there is need for a more synthetic treatment of the issue under question.¹⁶

13. Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 29.

14. “But today the problems of dating the texts as well as the problem of the age of creation traditions in Israel are more controversial than ever.” Rendtorff, “Some Reflections on Creation,” 208.

15. See, for example, Walter Brueggemann, “Jeremiah: *Creatio in Extremis*,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 152–70; Richard J. Clifford, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and its Cosmogonic Language,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 1–17; Stephen L. Cook, “Creation Archetypes and Mythogems in Ezekiel: Significance and Theological Ramifications,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1999*, SBLSP, 38 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999), 123–46; Andrew A. da Silva, “Die funksie van die skeppingstradisie in die boek Jeremia,” *HvTSt* 47.4 (1991): 920–29; Michael DeRoche, “Zephaniah I 2–3: The ‘Sweeping’ of Creation,” *VT* 30.1 (1980): 104–9; id., “The Reversal of Creation in Hosea,” *VT* 31.4 (1981): 400–9; Michael Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23–26 and Job III 3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” *VT* 21.2 (1971): 151–67; Julie Galambush, “Castles in the Air: Creation as Property in Ezekiel,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1999*, SBLSP, 38 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999), 147–72; Thomas W. Mann, “Stars, Sprouts, and Streams: The Creative Redeemer of Second Isaiah,” in *God Who Creates*, 135–51; David L. Petersen, “Creation in Ezekiel: Methodological Perspectives and Theological Prospects,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1999*, SBLSP, 38 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999), 490–500; Gerhard Pfeifer, “Jahwe als Schöpfer der Welt und Herr ihrer Mächte in der Verkündigung des Propheten Amos,” *VT* 41.4 (1991): 475–81; Dominic Rudman, “Creation and Fall in Jeremiah X 12–16,” *VT* 48.1 (1998): 63–73; Gene M. Tucker, “The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals,” in *God Who Creates*, 215–25; Steven Tuell, “The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Genesis 2:10–14,” in *God Who Creates*, 171–89; and Robert R. Wilson, “Creation and New Creation: The Role of Creation Imagery in the Book of Daniel,” in *God Who Creates*, 190–203.

16. Exceptions include Hendrik A. Brongers, *De Scheppingstraditie bij de profeten* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1945); Wolfram Hermann, “Wann wurde Jahwe zum Schöpfer der Welt?,” *UF* 23 (1991): 165–80; Petersen, “The World of Creation in the Book of the Twelve,” in *God Who Creates*, 204–14; Hans J. Zobel, “Das Schöpfungshandeln Jahwes im Zeugnis der Propheten,” in *Alttestament-licher Glaube und biblische Theologie: Festschrift für Horst Diet-*

The present study will, therefore, provide a survey of creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Book of the Twelve, and Daniel), although the order of presentation will be rather more chronological than canonical.¹⁷ Based on this survey, we may be able to determine if the Old Testament prophets based their understanding of creation on the model as presented in Genesis 1 through 3 or if their cosmology allowed for alternative models of creation.

METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Two points need attention before evaluating the evidence of creation in the Old Testament prophets. The first is the question of intertextuality, based on the above-mentioned observation that much of the prophets' messages are intrinsically evocative of earlier texts, creating points of reference to events in the course of Israel's history but, at the same time, applying them to their present contexts.¹⁸ The second issue relates to the first and refers to the question of how one can identify references to creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality has recently come into focus in biblical scholarship,¹⁹ although it appears to be rather elusive when being subjected to an

rich Preuss zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Jutta Hermann and Hans J. Zobel (Stuttgart, Germany: Kohlhammer, 1992), 191–200; and most recently, Paas, *Creation and Judgement*. The present study is indebted to Paas's doctoral dissertation, which was originally defended in 1998 and updated in 2004. The author studies creation motifs in three eighth-century BC prophets (Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah), leaving out Micah, since according to Paas, his writing lacks creation terms (15). The strength of Paas's study lies in his methodological approach, which is reflected to some extent in this study.

17. References to creation may appear in a variety of forms within the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. For a delimitation of creation markers in the text, see the discussion that follows under "Creation Markers."

18. See, for example, the divine announcement found in Ezekiel during the Babylonian exile, which is reminiscent of creation, even though in the context of restoration: "I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 36:11). Scripture quotations in this chapter are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

19. The introduction of the term has been attributed to Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press,

attempt at finding a universal definition of the concept. A number of approaches have been included under this umbrella term, but I would define intertextuality broadly as references between texts that can occur on multiple levels,²⁰ while its boundaries are often determined by the view of the composition of Scripture that the author employing the term has. Intertextuality links texts in a way that creates new contexts and, in this way, new meanings of old texts.²¹ At times, intertextuality also puts various texts on a complicated timeline and, thus, gives rise to chronological considerations, which have been out of focus to some extent from biblical studies in the vogue of literary criticism.²²

1980). Some significant contributions regarding intertextual theory in biblical studies during the last couple of years include Brevard S. Childs, "Critique of Recent Intertextual Canonical Interpretation," *ZAW* 115.2 (2003): 173–84; Paul R. Noble, "Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions," *VT* 52.2 (2002): 219–52; Gary E. Schnittjer, "The Narrative Multiverse Within the Universe of the Bible: the Question of 'Borderlines' and 'Intertextuality,'" *WTJ* 64.2 (2002): 231–52; Robert W. Wall, "The Intertextuality of Scripture: The Example of Rahab (James 2:25)," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, ed. Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 217–36; Richard L. Schultz, "The Ties That Bind: Intertextuality, the Identification of Verbal Parallels, and Reading Strategies in the Book of the Twelve," in *Society of Biblical Literature 2001 Seminar Papers*, SBLSP, 40 (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 39–57; Gershon Hepner, "Verbal Resonance in the Bible and Intertextuality," *JSOT* 96 (2001): 3–27; Craig C. Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*, ed. Craig C. Broyles (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001), 157–75; Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Old Testament in the New Testament. Essays in Honour of J. L. North*, ed. Steve Moyise, JSNTSup, 189 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14–41; John Barton, "Intertextuality and the 'Final Form' of the Text," in *Congress Volume Oslo, 1998*, ed. André Lemaire and M. Sæbø, VTSup, 80 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 33–37; and Patricia Tull, "Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures," *CurBS* 8 (2000): 59–90.

20. See discussion that follows under "Creation Markers."

21. Nielsen differentiates between three phases of intertextual readings: (1) the author's intention, (2) the editorial and canonical intentions, and (3) the postbiblical traditions and reader response. Kirsten Nielsen, "Intertextuality and Hebrew Bible," in *Congress Volume Oslo, 1998*, 18, 19. However, for Nielsen it almost appears impossible to reconstruct phase two, while other scholars like Antje Labahn recognize the innerbiblical chronological dimension of intertextuality. See Labahn, "Metaphor and Inter-Textuality: 'Daughter of Zion' as a Test Case: Response to Kirsten Nielsen 'From Oracles to Canon'—and the Role of Metaphor," *JSOT* 17.1 (2003): 51.

22. Representative for this tendency is the statement by Cooper: "We are left . . . with only two sensible and productive ways of reading: (1) reading in a strictly canonical context, and (2) reading from an ahistorical or literary-critical point of view." He then opts for the latter view: "Let the text assume a timeless existence somewhere between the author and the reader. . . . The text, severed from its historical moorings, will cooperate with us and enrich us if we allow it to." Alan M. Cooper, "The Life and Times of King David According to the Book of Psalms," in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism*, ed. Richard E. Friedman (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 130, 31.

The following timeline will form the baseline of my reading of the Old Testament prophets, which will serve as the chronological framework in which the usage of creation texts in the prophetic books has to be read.²³

Eighth Century BC	Seventh Century BC	Sixth and Fifth Century BC
Jonah	Nahum	Ezekiel
Amos	Habakkuk	Obadiah
Hosea	Zephaniah	Daniel
Micah	Joel	Haggai
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Zechariah
		Malachi

With the help of this rough timeline, I hope to be able to demonstrate how the theological thinking during the period, reflected in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, has been progressively shaped by a continuous hermeneutic of returning to this pivotal point of origin—creation.

This also implies that I regard the prophetic literature of the Old Testament as subsequent to the *Urgeschichte* (Gen. 1–11), a point that can be argued both on a literary and historical level²⁴ but that will hopefully become even more apparent when it can be demonstrated how the prophets were constantly looking back at creation. Thus, Genesis 1 through 3 becomes the point of reference

23. Without entering into detailed discussions of dating the individual prophetic books, I group them broadly according to centuries. If further details on the dating are necessary, they will appear under the relevant sections that follow.

24. The emergence of literary analysis (or criticism) attests to the increasing frustration with traditional historical-critical dating schemes, especially with regard to the Pentateuch. “The shift [from historical toward literary or narrative criticism] derived in part from a dissatisfaction with the so-called assured results of biblical criticism. On the one hand, there was a growing sense that the achievements of historical criticism were anything but ‘assured.’” L. Daniel Hawk, “Literary/Narrative Criticism,” in *DOTP*, 537. This has, by no means, been the assertion of evangelical scholars only but has been the response from across the entire academic spectrum: “Wer in der gegenwärtigen Situation versucht, eine Aussage über den neuesten Stand der Pentateuchforschung zu machen, der kann nur Enttäuschung verbreiten: Weitgehend anerkannte Auffassungen über die Entstehung des Pentateuch gibt es nicht mehr, und die Hoffnung auf einen neuen Konsens in der Pentateuchkritik scheint es [sic] zur Zeit nur noch als ‘Hoffnung wider allen Augenschein’ möglich zu sein.” Hans-Christoph Schmitt, “Die Hintergründe der neuesten ‘Pentateuchkritik’ und der literarische Befund der Josefsgeschichte Gen 37–50,” *ZAW* 97.2 (1985): 161. Sailhamer has been prominent in demonstrating the narrative progression and unity of the Pentateuch, which in turn, provides the canonical point of reference for the prophets. See John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992); id., “The Canonical Approach to the OT: Its Effect on Understanding Prophecy,” *JETS* 30.3 (1987): 307–15.

to which the prophets return when they employ creation terminology and motifs.²⁵

CREATION MARKERS

In order to recognize intertextual creation markers, our criteria have to be sufficiently broad, thus, moving beyond a purely semantic level, but also narrow enough to connect us positively with the creation account of Genesis. A broad range of devices that often belong to totally different discourses are invoked by scholars in order to identify creation in the prophets: allusion, tradition, motif, theme, imagery, metaphor, and so on.²⁶ It is probably safe to divide these into three main groups: (1) lexical, (2) literary, and (3) conceptual. In the following, I will present examples taken from the prophetic literature of the Old Testament from each group that reconnect in some way with Genesis 1 through 3.

Lexical Creation Markers

Semantic field: Lexical markers in the prophets depart from the semantic field, centering around the theologically most specific lemma *bārāʾ*, “to create” (e.g., Isa. 40:26; Amos 4:13).²⁷ It further includes *yāṣar*, “to form, shape” (e.g., Isa. 45:18); the rather generic *ʿāśā*, “to make, do,” and its derivatives (see, e.g., Isa. 45:18; Jer. 10:12; Jon. 1:9); and the more solemn *paʿal*, “to do, produce” (e.g., Isa. 45:9, 11), to mention only the most prominent ones that also appear in the prophets.²⁸ However, all these words also describe activities beyond creation as found in Genesis 1 through 3, which is an indicator of how the reflection on creation served as a departure point for the creation of new meanings.²⁹

25. For a discussion on the difference between creation terminology and motif, see Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 58–60.

26. See Petersen, “Creation in Ezekiel,” 490, 91.

27. In the *Qal* and *Niphal*, the subject of *bārāʾ* is always YHWH, and, thus it serves as the *terminus technicus* for divine creation, though it is used interchangeably with the roots mentioned below. See Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “ברא,” in *NIDOTTE*, vol. 1, 731, 32.

28. For a more exhaustive treatment, cf. *ibid.*, vol. 1, 729–31.

29. See, for example, Isaiah 4:5: “Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy.”

Word pairs: Word pairs, like the merism *šāmayim* or *'eres* (“heaven or earth”) (Isa. 37:16) and *hōšek* or *'ôr* (“darkness or light”) (Isa. 42:16; 45:7), represent strong reference markers to creation.³⁰

Quotes: An author often interrupts the flow of his argument with a quote in order to authenticate, substantiate, or expand the argument. Apart from direct quotes, which are usually introduced by a static formula (e.g., Dan. 9:13), we also find inverted quotes of the creation account, such as Ezekiel 36:11, where the order of verbs from the original Genesis 1:28 is reversed, in order to call attention to the connection between the theology of creation and re-creation (i.e., restoration after the exile).³¹

Allusions: Allusions create less intense lexical reference markers but are widely used in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. An allusion is an incomplete or fragmented reference to another text and, thus, is less easily recognizable and more prone to misinterpretation.³² Nevertheless, when the prophet says in Zephaniah 1:3, “I will sweep away both man and beast; I will sweep away the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea,” the allusion to creation is made by reversing the order of creatures as they have been listed in Genesis 1, making a theologically significant statement of reversing creation and separating from the Creator.³³

Literary Creation Markers

Metaphors: The prophets use a number of metaphors for God, and some of them can be used as creation markers.³⁴ The use of the *Qal* participle of *yāšar* in reference to YHWH as a potter in Isaiah 45:9 serves as a good example for the creation subtext of this metaphor.³⁵

30. According to Houtman, the word pair “heaven and earth” in the Old Testament usually points to YHWH’s attributes as Creator (past) and Lord of creation (present). “Man gewinnt den Eindruck, daß JHWH’s ‘Schöpfer-sein’ und sein ‘Herr-sein’ untrennbare Aspekte des Erlösungswerkes JHWH’s sind, das sich in der Schöpfung des Kosmos offenbarte und sich seither in vielerlei Gestalt innerhalb des Kosmos manifestiert.” Cornelius Houtman, *Der Himmel im Alten Testament: Israels Weltbild und Weltanschauung*, OuSt, 30 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1993), 96.

31. See Petersen, “Creation in Ezekiel,” 494.

32. Broyles, “Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon,” 167.

33. DeRoche, “Zephaniah I 2–3,” 106.

34. For a discussion of the usage of metaphors for the divine, see Martin G. Klingbeil, “Metaphors that Travel and (Almost) Vanish: Mapping Diachronic Changes in the Intertextual Usage of the Heavenly Warrior Metaphor in Psalms 18 and 144,” in *Metaphors in the Psalms*, ed. Pierre J. P. van Hecke and Antje Labahn, BETL, 231 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2010), 115–35.

35. See also Isa. 29:16; 41:25; 64:8; Jer. 18:4, 6; 19:1; and Zech. 11:13.

Poetry: I have shown elsewhere that the authors of the Hebrew Bible used poetry in order to communicate important theological contents.³⁶ Interestingly, most of the contexts in which creation texts are found in the prophets are poetic in nature. While in itself it would not be a sufficiently strong marker, the usage of poetry indicates the presence of a theologically important theme.³⁷

Conceptual Creation Markers

Motifs: Although YHWH as a king is another metaphor that could be mentioned in terms of creation,³⁸ in a broader sense, kingship can serve as a motif alluding to creation. Kingship in Israel had to do with building and maintaining the divinely created world order. While YHWH is the builder of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (Jer. 24:6), He is also the builder of Eve in Genesis 2:22, whereas in both instances, the lexical creation marker *bānâ*, “to build,” is used.³⁹

Typologies: Typologies preserve the historicity of events or personalities from the past and transcend them theologically into the present.⁴⁰ Creation as a historical event is used in the prophetic literature as a type for present and future restoration, and the concluding chapters of Isaiah use the reference to creation as a type for the re-creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65:17).

It becomes apparent that there is a wide range of creation markers, which the prophets employed in their writings to refer to the *Urgeschichte*. Some of them are easily discernible, while

36. Martin G. Klingbeil, “Poemas en medio de la prosa: poesía insertada en el Pentateuco,” in *Pentateuco: inicios, paradigmas y fundamentos: estudios teológicos y exegéticos en el Pentateuco*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil, SMEBT, 1 (Libertador San Martín, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2004), 61–85.

37. For a study of poetry in prophetic literature, see, for example, David N. Freedman, “Another Look at Biblical Hebrew Poetry,” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis, JSOTSup, 40 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987), 15, 16; Lawrence Boadt, “Reflections on the Study of Hebrew Poetry Today,” *Conj* 24.2 (1998): 163. Stephen A. Geller, “Were the Prophets Poets?” in *The Place Is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*, ed. Robert P. Gordon, SBTLL, 5 (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 154–65.

38. The king as builder and maintainer of the world order is an allusion to creation. See Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 69–72.

39. Kingship in Israel is also related to judgment and functions as a creation motif. When the prophets refer to judgment, they do so in the context of cosmological creation language (see e.g., Isa. 1:2; Jer. 2:12). See *ibid.*, 87, 88.

40. Davidson defines typology as the “study of persons, events, or institutions in salvation history that God specifically designed to predictively prefigure their antitypical eschatological fulfillment in Christ and the gospel realities brought about by Christ.” Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series, 12 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2000), 83.

others only establish loose links, which creates a certain sliding scale on which intertextual relationships can be constructed. The point that needs to be made at this stage is the frequency with which this hermeneutic procedure was used, indicating that the prophets built their theology around pivotal themes, such as the creation motif.

CREATION IN THE PROPHETS

In the following, we will evaluate the prophetic literature of the Old Testament against the above mentioned markers. As already indicated above, we will follow a rough chronological sequence, based on our intertextual considerations, since the establishment of a timeline is fundamental in evaluating the theological usage and development of creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Obviously, an attempt to present an exhaustive account of creation in sixteen books of varied length, which account for almost one-third of the Old Testament, is destined for failure from the outset. Therefore, the only realistic approach will be a panoramic flight over the prophetic books, where we will try to differentiate the intertextual creation patterns from high above—an overview rather than a detailed study.

EIGHTH-CENTURY BC PROPHETS

Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah belong to the group of eighth-century BC prophets. This represents an impressive mix of messengers and messages. Jonah directed his prophecies toward the international arena,⁴¹ while Amos and Hosea addressed the northern kingdom. Micah and Isaiah prophesied in Judah before or until after the fall of Samaria.⁴² The geographic spread should give us a good indication of the pervasiveness of creation thought during this century.

41. This is an oversimplification, since the book of Jonah is also overtly arguing against an exclusivist Israelite nationalism that was prominent during the reign of Jeroboam II (cf. 2 Kings 14:25).

42. The case here is made for the unity of Isaiah, a point that can be argued widely, especially on literary grounds related to common vocabulary, themes, and theology. See, for example, J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1993), and also Gregory J. Polan, "Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah," *SBL Seminar Papers, 1997*, SBLSP, 36 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999), 224–33.

Jonah

Jonah's message is replete with ecological content⁴³ and, as such, alludes to creation. When introducing himself to the sailors, Jonah defines himself as a follower of the Creator-God in a language that is reminiscent of creation and the Decalogue: "YHWH, God of heaven, I worship/fear who made the sea and the dry land" (Jon. 1:9).⁴⁴ One cannot but notice the somewhat problematic but very emphatic sentence structure where the predicate (*'ānî yārē*) is inserted between the object (*wē'et-YHWH*) and its qualifying relative clause (*'āšer-āśā*). Jonah sees himself surrounded by YHWH, the God of creation, although ironically, he is not quite sure if he should worship or fear Him.⁴⁵

The progressive descent to the depths of the ocean in Jonah's psalm (Jon. 2:2–9 [MT 2:3–10]), indicated by the verbal root *yārad*, "to descend" (Jon. 2:6 [MT 2:7]; cf. also Jon. 1:3, 5), can be related to Genesis 1 through 3. According to the ancient Near Eastern and also, to some extent, Old Testament cosmologies, there is a spatial dimension of above and below (i.e., the earth rested on pillars in waters under which the realm of Sheol was to be found).⁴⁶ All these elements appear in Jonah's poem: he finds himself cast into the "heart of the sea" (Jon. 2:4 [MT 2:5]; Gen. 1:10) and cast out of God's presence (Jon. 2:5 [MT 2:6]) as Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden (Gen. 3:24); he passes through the chaotic waters (Jon. 2:5

43. "With a focus on human beings and their environment, ecology constitutes a prominent theological theme throughout Jonah." Phyllis Tribble, "The Book of Jonah," in *NIB*, vol. 7, 482.

44. My translation.

45. Consider the double meaning of *yārā*?, "to fear, revere." *Ibid.*, 498.

46. While it is important to differentiate between ancient Near East and Old Testament cosmologies, one needs to remember that the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures lived within and interacted with the broader ancient Near East cosmology, at times even polemically criticizing and demythologizing it. See Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *EvQ* 46, no. 2 (1974): 81–102. However, these texts were not written with the purpose of outlining Israelite cosmology in a scientific way. Intents of describing the Israelite cosmology based on the Old Testament as well as ancient Near Eastern literature and iconography can be found in the following: Bernd Janowski, "Das biblische Weltbild: eine methodologische Skizze," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte*, ed. Beate Ego and Bernd Janowski, FAT, 32 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 3–26; Annette Krüger, "Himmel-Erde-Unterwelt: kosmologische Entwürfe in der poetischen Literatur Israels," in *Das biblische Weltbild*, 65–83. See also Izak Cornelius, "The Visual Representation of the World in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible," *JNSL* 20 (1994): 193–218. For a short summary of the difference between ancient Near East and Old Testament cosmology from an evangelical perspective, see Ernest C. Lucas, "Cosmology," in *DOTP*, 130–39.

[MT 2:6]; Gen. 1:2) and finally descends to Sheol (Jon. 2:2 [MT 2:3]) or the pit (Jon. 2:6 [MT 2:7]).⁴⁷ Jonah is sinking toward darkness and death, away from light and creation, a process that is equivalent to de-creation.⁴⁸

In the whole book, obedient creation is in juxtaposition to disobedient humanity, and the Creator is portrayed as continually being involved in His creation by throwing a storm at Jonah (Jon. 1:4), appointing a fish to his twofold rescue by letting it swallow the disoedient prophet (Jon. 1:17 [MT 2:1]), and letting the fish vomit him onto solid ground (Jon. 2:10 [MT 2:11]). He furthermore prepares a plant (Jon. 4:6), a worm (Jon. 4:7), and an east wind (Jon. 4:8) to bring His despondent servant to his senses. Creation is not just an event of the past but reoccurs through YHWH's permanent involvement in His creation and with His creatures. But foremost, all creation is geared toward YHWH's salvation acts toward humanity, and the question that concludes the book of Jonah finds its answer in the book's presence in the canon, reiterating Jonah's belief in the supreme Creator-God, as initially and ironically stated in his confession to the heathen sailors (Jon. 1:9).

Amos

Creation in Amos is based on an analogy of history. YHWH is presented as the Creator Who is continuously interacting with His creation. This occurs in a context of threatening judgment but also promising salvation. Creation terminology appears predominantly in the three hymns (Amos 4:13; 5:8, 9; 9:5, 6) that play a structuring role in the overall layout of the book.⁴⁹

47. The understanding of the proper name Sheol as a poetic designation of the grave without reference to any form of continuous existence has been demonstrated by Eriks Galeniaks, "The Nature, Function, and Purpose of the Term שְׁאוֹל in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2005).

48. It is interesting to note the appearance of God's temple in this context. The cosmic symbolism connected to the temple is evident throughout the Old Testament, while the temple on earth serves as a reflection of its heavenly counterpart. Thus, the temple serves as a creation motif, as demonstrated by Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 88–94. See also Bernd Janowski, "Der Himmel auf Erden: zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels," in *Das biblische Weltbild*, 229–60.

49. See Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 324–26. Paas further mentions Amos 6:14; 7:1, 4; and 9:11 as texts alluding to creation.

Amos 4:13	Amos 5:8, 9	Amos 9:5, 6
<p>He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals his thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD God Almighty is his name.</p>	<p>He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name. With a blinding flash he destroys the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin.</p>	<p>The Lord, the LORD Almighty—he touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn; the whole land rises like the Nile, then sinks like the river of Egypt; he builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth; he calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name.</p>

Creation language is predominant in these five verses and a number of lexical creation markers appear in the three passages: *bārāʾ*, “to create”; *yāṣar*, “to form”; and *ʿāśā*, “to make.” Interestingly, all these markers are participles, a syntactic peculiarity, which can be found throughout the book of Amos.⁵⁰ God’s creative activity in each instance is brought into relationship with the human sphere, indicating how creation touches human life. One can perceive a certain progression among the three hymns in terms of how God’s intervention impacts humanity. In Amos 4:13, God reveals to humankind His intent to judge, whereas Amos 5:8, 9 describes the destructive aspect of God’s judgment. Amos 9:5, 6 finally describes the human reaction to the divine judgment. The startling aspect of Amos’s presentation of creation is that it is intrinsically linked to judgment, in such a way that creation almost seems to form the explanation for destruction. What starts as a hymn of praise for YHWH the Creator becomes a threatening description of YHWH the

50. Overall, seventy-four participles can be found in Amos. This presents a further argument against the suggestion made by various scholars that the hymns have been added subsequently by a different author. Pfeifer explains the syntactic usage of these forms in Amos as follows: “Nach Aussagen über das Verhalten einer Personengruppe folgt eine mit dem Participium pluralis + Artikel beginnende Aussage darüber, wer die Betreffenden sind.” Pfeifer, “Jahwe als Schöpfer der Welt,” 476. Similarly, Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 324, comes to the conclusion that the hymns “are sufficiently interwoven with their direct context that we may safely assume that from their origin they belonged with the passages to which they are now connected.”

Judge. This apparent contradiction has startled a number of scholars and most likely, and more deliberately, Amos's audience. The position of inherent security based on belief in the Creator-God is challenged by Amos, and what has provided a basis for a false religious auto-sufficiency now becomes the rationale for judgment,⁵¹ reversing the original function of the hymns.

By means of the hymns, Amos makes it clear that YHWH is not a God who could simply be controlled. He challenged certain positions of presupposed rights—by means of which the people presumed the right of existence—from the broader perspective of God's creation.⁵²

Thus, creation can be contextually oriented toward both comfort and judgment, whereas in Amos it is mostly directed toward judgment. To accept YHWH as the Creator also implies the acceptance of His power to de-create. At first sight, creation used in this way is dissociated from salvation, but when judgment is understood as preliminary and partial to salvation, then de-creation becomes a necessary precursor for re-creation. Amos drives this point home by the formulaic usage of the expression *YHWH šēmô*, "the LORD is his name" (Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6), indicating that this still is God; He "is not only the God who creates, but He also destroys."⁵³

The book of Amos concludes with a glorious perspective on restoration after judgment (Amos 9:11–15), introduced by the eschatologically charged phrase *bayyôm hahû'*, "in that day." The passages allude to the creation theme by employing building terminology (for example, *bānâ*, "to build," Amos 9:11, 14) and the metaphor of YHWH as King. Thus, within the theological thinking of Amos the correct understanding of creation becomes a prerequisite to the comprehension of re-creation.⁵⁴

Hosea

Creation in Hosea is closely linked to the theme of the creation of Israel as a nation, again, as with Amos, in a context of pending judgment. Creation is not only analogous to history but is history itself.

51. One can test this against the structure of the oracles against the nations in Amos 1 and 2, all of which are located geographically around Israel, driving home the final judgment message against Israel, with an extraordinary rhetoric force.

52. Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 324.

53. *Ibid.*, 429.

54. *Ibid.*, 195.

Hosea begins to develop his creation theology with a description of de-creation in Hosea 4:1–3, where an interesting reversal of the order of creation presented in Genesis 1 takes place. God is entering into a *rîb*, “controversy, legal case,” with or against Israel (Hosea 4:1). In the relationship-focused narrative context of Hosea, this could be better understood as a quarrel between husband and wife, which constitutes the underlying metaphor of the book.⁵⁵ Based on Israel’s sins (Hosea 4:2), verse 3 invokes judgment by introducing the creation, namely the anti-creation theme: “Therefore the land will mourn, and all who live in it will waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea will be extinguished.”⁵⁶ The three groups of animals represent the three spheres where life is found on earth, and the reversal of their known creation order⁵⁷ invokes the idea of judgment as de-creation, where creation just shrivels up when confronted with and abused by sin.

The affinity between Hosea 6:2 and Deuteronomy 32:39 can hardly be overlooked in this context and constitutes another creation motif in Hosea.⁵⁸ The reference to YHWH as the One Who puts to death but also resurrects is pointing to the God of creation, which is a theme strongly developed in the Song of Moses. Hosea 8:14 picks up the same motif, again establishing a relationship with the Pentateuch in using the divine creation epithet *’ōśeh*, “Maker,” which also occurs repeatedly in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:6, 15, 18). However, “the notion of creation leads toward indictment and sentence, not toward praise.”⁵⁹

Possibly the strongest creation text in Hosea is found in Hosea 11:1, and it synthesizes the passages mentioned above into the

55. DeRoche adduces sufficient evidence to understand *rîb* as a controversy or quarrel that could be settled in or out of court. He argues for the latter option, since in the context of Hosea, we have a situation of only two parties involved (i.e., God and Israel), whereas a lawsuit would necessitate a judge. See DeRoche, “The Reversal of Creation,” 408, 9.

56. My own translation. The verbal root *’āsap* in the *Nip’al* can be translated as “taken away, gathered” and in parallelism with the preceding cola as “extinguished.” According to DeRoche, “the actions described by *’sp* are the complete and absolute opposite of those described by *br*.” Ibid., 405.

57. Genesis 1:20: fish; 1:20: birds; 1:24: beasts; see also 1:28, where the same order is used in the description of human dominion over creation.

58. “After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence” (Hosea 6:2). “See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand” (Deut. 32:39). Paas points to the linguistic affinity between the two texts. See Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 343, 44.

59. Petersen, “World of Creation,” 207.

metaphor of YHWH as the Creator and Procreator of Israel: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." This verse connects to Hosea 1:10 (MT 2:1; "they will be called 'children of the living God'") and to the exodus, which is described in creation terminology. Thus, the creation of Israel as a nation during the historic events connected with the exodus from Egypt becomes part of God's creation. Who God elects, He also creates, and with that, an intimate and eternal bond is created like that between a father and his son. Beyond reiterating and enhancing creation theology, the metaphor is pedagogic in its rhetoric: "By means of this theme of Israel's creation it is not so much the intention of Hosea to nuance the view that the people had of YHWH but, rather, to confront them with their own behaviour. They are faithless sons."⁶⁰

Micah

Affinities and intertextual issues between the messages of Micah and Isaiah are numerous and have been noted repeatedly by many scholars.⁶¹ The most-often quoted passage in this context is the almost identical parallel found in Micah 4:1–3, 5 and Isaiah 2:2–5. While the passage can be taken as an argument for a common prophetic message of the two prophets, for the purpose of this study, the focus rests on the creation imagery, which is transmitted in an eschatological setting via the metaphor of Mount Zion. According to Old Testament cosmology, Zion lies at the center of the created world, and Micah points to its establishment in terms of creation terminology (*kân*, "to establish" [Mic. 4:1]). Creation in Micah is focused on destruction and consequent re-creation in the context of the "day of the Lord" with its eschatological implications.⁶² The prophet builds a theological bridge between creation in the beginning and in the end around the presence of God, as symbolized by the Mount Zion metaphor.⁶³

60. Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 431.

61. See, for example, Marvin A. Sweeney, "Micah's Debate with Isaiah," *JSOT* 93 (2001): 111–24; Dominic Rudman, "Zechariah 8:20–22 and Isaiah 2:2–4//Micah 4:2–3: A Study in Intertextuality," *BN* 107–8 (2001): 50–54; Bernard Gosse, "Michée 4,1–5, Isaïe 2,1–5 et les rédacteurs finaux du livre d'Isaïe," *ZAW* 105.1 (1993): 98–102.

62. In order for that to take place, there needs to be the preceding destruction, as expressed in Micah 1:3, 4.

63. For a discussion of God's mountain as creation motif, see Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 94–97.

Isaiah

As mentioned previously, Deutero-Isaiah was the point of departure for Gerhard von Rad and others in establishing an Old Testament theology of creation, based on the assumption that Isaiah 40 through 55 could be dated to the postexilic period. Nevertheless, recent studies, which focus on the literary unity of Isaiah—though few scholars would take the argument to its logical conclusion, i.e., unity of authorship—show that creation theology is present throughout the whole book. In view of the wealth of creation material in Isaiah, I will focus only on a selection of creation texts and motifs that demonstrate the main lines of the prophet's theological thinking on creation. The examples are taken deliberately from across the three divisions proposed by critical scholarship.

Taking Isaiah's temple vision as a chronological departure point, Isaiah 6:1 describes YHWH along the lines of the heavenly King metaphor, which has been identified as allusive to creation. The song of the vineyard in the preceding chapter presents an important aspect of creation in demonstrating the interconnection of God's creation and His intervention in history, placing it in the context of Israel's election.⁶⁴ Isaiah 5:12 provides a further insight into Isaiah's creation theology: sin is, in reality, not acknowledging God's deeds in creation.

In Isaiah 17:7, the prophet takes up the theme developed by Hosea of YHWH as the "Maker" of humankind. The image of YHWH as the Potter of Isaiah 29:16 has already been identified as creation terminology and occurs in all three divisions of the book (41:25; 45:9; 64:8). Creation in Isaiah focuses primarily on God's sovereignty over His creation and humankind's failure to recognize His proper position within this world order.

Isaiah 40 through 55 has been called the center of Isaiah's theology, whereas Isaiah 36 through 39 fulfills a bridging role, carefully linking the previous chapters to the remainder of the book.⁶⁵ It has been argued that the so-called Deutero-Isaiah introduces creation as a new theological topic to the book, but the preceding

64. The key verb *nāṭaʿ*, "to plant" (Isa. 5:2, 7) points to YHWH as the planter of a garden reminiscent of His activity in creation, where He "planted a garden in the east, in Eden" (Gen. 2:8).

65. See Clifford, "Unity of the Book of Isaiah," 2.

observations show that the theme is “deeply continuous with the Isaian tradition.”⁶⁶ While creation terminology abounds in the whole book,⁶⁷ creation occurs in Isaiah 40 through 55 in connection with the exodus and conquest (Isa. 41:17–20; 42:13–17; 43:16–21; 49:8–12), placing creation in history. Furthermore, creation is positioned alongside redemption (Isa. 44:24), pointing to the theological significance of the motif in introducing Cyrus as the agent of God’s redemption. In this way, the exodus serves as a typological guarantee for the future redemption from the Babylonian exile through Cyrus (Isa. 44:28). The theocentric manifestation that God forms light and creates darkness as much as peace and evil (Isa. 45:7) serves as an introduction to the *God as the Potter* metaphor (Isa. 45:9–13), which illustrates the absolute sovereignty of God within the realms of human history.⁶⁸

The final division of the book of Isaiah (Isa. 56–66) focuses on the creation of Zion with chapters 60 to 62 at the center of the section describing the glorious city. The book’s grand finale in Isaiah 65 and 66 adds an eschatological dimension to creation theology in Isaiah, describing renewal and restoration in terms of creation. But creation in these last chapters not only refers to Zion as a place but foremost to its inhabitants who need re-creation and transformation: “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy” (Isa. 65:18).

In summarizing Isaian creation theology, the following becomes apparent. Creation in Isaiah 1 through 39 is focused on God’s sovereignty over His creation and the establishment of a personal relationship with humanity, exemplified by the usage of the potter metaphor, which points back to Genesis 2. In Isaiah 40 through 55,

66. *Ibid.*, 16.

67. Compare, for example, the usage of *bārā*, “to create,” in Isaiah 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7, 8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17, 18.

68. The view of God also being responsible for the creation of evil fits well within the theocentric Hebrew worldview and forestalls any notions of dualism. See George F. Knight, *Servant Theology: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, 40–55*, ITC (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984), 90. See also Michael DeRoche, who concludes: “Isa. xlv 7, on the other hand, is part of a prophetic oracle the purpose of which is to reassure the reader (listener?) that Yahweh is in control of the events shaping world history, in this particular case the events surrounding the rise of Cyrus and the fall of the Babylonian empire. The oracle achieves its goal by reminding the reader that there is no god but Yahweh (vss 5–6), and that he is the creator (vs. 7).” DeRoche, “Isaiah xlv 7 and the Creation of Chaos?” *VT* 42.1 (1992): 20.

the theme focuses on the creation of Israel as a nation in history by connecting creation with the exodus and theologically with salvation. In Isaiah 56 through 66, creation is centered on the future recreation of Zion and its people in response to the failure of a pre-exilic Israel. Thus, we have a sequential development of creation theology in the book of Isaiah, which follows a natural progression of thought.

SEVENTH-CENTURY BC PROPHETS

A new century in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament was overshadowed by the sobering perspective of the fall of Samaria (722 BC) and an increasing urgency for the prophetic message to be heard as the Babylonian exile was approaching. As during the eighth-century BC, the prophetic word was often introduced with an international message, as was the case with the words issued by Nahum against the Assyrians. Habakkuk entered with God into a dialogue about His people, while Zephaniah and Joel enlarged upon the eschatological meaning of the “day of the LORD” motif. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, and his message ultimately failed in averting the Babylonian exile.

Nahum

Creation in Nahum is connected to the “day of the LORD,” and the description of its characteristics is reminiscent of creation terminology: “He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it” (Nah. 1:4, 5). Again, there is a context of de-creation, which is driven by cosmological imagery. In the judgment theophany, the created order is impacted by its own Creator in a way that is reminiscent of the ancient Near Eastern *Chaoskampf* motif, whereas there is a polemic reworking of the motif with YHWH being depicted as the Sovereign over all the common ancient Near Eastern power symbols, such as the sea, the mountains, and the earth.⁶⁹

69. See Martin G. Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven. God as a Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography*, OBO, 169 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 84–99, who discusses, within the context of Psalm 29, the polemic nature of the *Chaoskampf* motif in the Psalms.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk offers a perspective on creation similar to Nahum's in using creation imagery in the context of de-creation during the theophany in the "day of the LORD": "He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed but he marches on forever" (Hab. 3:6). In the following verses, Habakkuk describes the impact of YHWH's appearance on creation (vv. 7–12). However, through the destructive power of de-creation, salvation is accomplished: "You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one" (3:13). Along the same lines, creation imagery also serves as a point of reference for recognition of the Creator: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (2:14).

Zephaniah

As observed earlier, Zephaniah 1:3 introduces a de-creation theme by listing the animals in an order that is the exact reverse of the order in which they were originally mentioned in Genesis 1.⁷⁰ He furthermore uses the familiar word play between *'ādām*, "man," and *'ādāmâ*, "ground," from Genesis 2:7. However, the reversal of creation transmits a strong theological message: "In Gen. ii, however, the pun is used to indicate man's dependence on that from whence he came, whereas Zephaniah uses it to show man's separation from his Creator, YHWH. A situation that involves a return to the age before creation can result only in man's destruction."⁷¹ Zephaniah is depicting the progressive loss of dominion over creation by humanity and its resulting de-creation.⁷²

Aside from the obvious creation allusions, Zephaniah also refers to another event of the *Urgeschichte* (i.e., the Flood, by using the phrase "from the face of the earth" as an *inclusio* for the passage in Zeph. 1:1–3 [cf. Gen. 6:7; 7:4; 8:8]). Within the prophet's message of judgment, the Flood serves as an example of present impending doom.⁷³

70. See earlier under "Lexical Creation Markers."

71. DeRoche, "Zephaniah I 2–3," 106.

72. DeRoche adds an interesting afterthought: "If Zephaniah knew and used both creation accounts of Genesis (i 1–ii 4a and ii 4b–iii 24), does this not imply that the so-called P account of creation (i 1–ii 4a) is earlier than usually thought, and that Gen. i–iii (and probably all Gen. i–xi) came together as a unit before the seventh century B.C.?" *Ibid.*, 108.

73. See Petersen, "World of Creation," 209.

Joel

Within the “day of the LORD” imagery, Joel employs creation imagery in order to describe the impact of YHWH’s theophany on creation as part of that judgment day: “The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel” (Joel 3:15, 16 [MT 4:15, 16]). The merism “heavens and earth” serves as a creation indicator, but again, within a negative context of judgment. The theophanic event is always connected to the experience of God in nature and the impact of His appearance on creation.⁷⁴ However, the final verses of Joel return to the topic of re-creation, describing the future of Zion in paradisiacal terms: “In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD’s house and will water the valley of acacias” (Joel 3:18 [MT 4:18]). The Garden of Eden mentioned earlier on (Joel 2:3) that has been destroyed by the locust plague is thus being re-created. Again, a linear motion from creation to de-creation and finally to re-creation can be observed with creation being the overall paradigm that underlies history.

Jeremiah

Creation is so omnipresent in Jeremiah that we will have to limit ourselves to a number of key passages.⁷⁵ The book begins with reference to the creation of the prophet in his mother’s womb (Jer. 1:5), using the lexical creation marker *yāšar*, “to form, fashion,” which can also be found in Genesis 2:7. The creation of humankind as part of the creation week is repeated in every new creation of new human life.⁷⁶

74. “The employment of theophanic material in prophetic texts is intended to show, in a drastic manner, the motivation for the prophet’s message of judgement.” Paas, *Creation and Judgement*, 218.

75. Perdue provides a useful summary of creation theology in Jeremiah, suggesting the following three categories: (1) dialectic of creation and history, (2) creation and destiny of humanity, and (3) wisdom and creation. He suggests that a reshaping of Old Testament theology has to take place if creation receives its adequate attention in biblical theology. Leo G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, OBT (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1994), 141–50.

76. “Göttliche Handlungen, die im jahwistischen Schöpfungsbericht den Beginn der Menschheitsgeschichte markieren, wiederholen sich nach beiden Zeugnissen aus dem Jeremia-

A survey of creation in Jeremiah has to include Jeremiah 4:23–26, which connects with strong linguistic markers to the creation account as found in Genesis 1. The oracle of doom presents possibly the most faithful account of de-creation, or the reversal of creation, when compared to Genesis 1:2–2:4a. The following table adapted from Michael Fishbane’s work shows the progression:⁷⁷

Detail	Jeremiah	Genesis
Pre-Creation	“formless and empty” (<i>tohû wābōhû</i> ; Jer. 4:23)	“formless and empty” (<i>tohû wābōhû</i> ; Gen. 1:2)
First day	there was no light (<i>’ôr</i> ; Jer. 4:23)	“there was light” (<i>’ôr</i> ; Gen. 1:3)
Second day	heavens (<i>šāmayim</i> ; Jer. 4:23)	heavens/sky (<i>šāmayim</i> ; Gen. 1:8)
Third day	earth: mountains quaking and hills swaying (<i>’ereṣ</i> ; Jer. 4:23, 24)	earth: dry ground (<i>’ereṣ</i> ; Gen. 1:9, 10)
Fourth day		lights (<i>mē’ôrôt</i> ; Gen. 1:14)
Fifth day	birds had fled (<i>’ôf</i> ; Jer. 4:25)	“let birds fly” (<i>’ôf</i> ; Gen. 1:20)
Sixth day	“there were no people” (<i>’ādām</i> ; Jer. 4:25)	“Let us make mankind” (<i>’ādām</i> ; Gen. 1:26)
Seventh day	towns destroyed before His “fierce anger” (<i>hārôm ’appô</i> ; Jer. 4:26)	Sabbath (<i>šabbāt</i> ; Gen. 2:2, 3)

While the Genesis account ends with day of rest, the Sabbath, Jeremiah’s de-creation account ends with a day of fury. The deconstruction of creation is taking place, and one can be sure that the listeners (and subsequent readers) of the prophet’s message recognized the creation pattern. Creation becomes the paradigm for destruction and serves as the primeval point of departure for contemporary theology. “What acts and words could be more invested with power than those of creation?”⁷⁸

buch beim Entstehen eines jeden neuen menschlichen Lebens; denn Jahwe ist der ‘Gott allen Fleisches’ ... wie Jer 32,37a formuliert.” See Helga Weippert, *Schöpfer des Himmels und der Erde: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Jeremiabuches*, SBS, 102 (Stuttgart, Germany: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981), 13.

77. Fishbane, “Jeremiah iv 23–26,” 152.

78. *Ibid.*, 153. Brueggemann provides an answer to Fishbane’s rhetorical question: “Creation theology here functions to voice a complete, unreserved, elemental negation of all

The antithesis to the doom oracle is provided in Jeremiah 31:35–37, where two short sayings conclude the so-called book of comfort (Jer. 30–31), and in creation language, point to the impossibility of YHWH destroying Israel. Yet, it is expressed along the lines of remnant theology with reference to the “seed of Israel” and its future hope. Both apparent opposite expressions, Jeremiah 4:23–26 and Jeremiah 31:35–37, show the range of possible applications of creation theology within Jeremiah, but beyond that, they show that Israel needs to acknowledge YHWH with regard to their present future: “Thus both extremes of expression bear witness to the theological claim that finally Israel must come to terms with Yahweh upon whom its future well-being solely depends.”⁷⁹

Jeremiah 10:12–16 is a hymn that celebrates YHWH’s creative power, and it is replete with creation imagery:

But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. The images he makes a fraud; they have no breath in them. They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish. He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the people of his inheritance—the LORD Almighty is his name.

Although most commentators point to the contrast between the true God and the idols, the emphasis is rather on a contrast between YHWH as the Creator of life (Jer. 10:13) and humankind as false creators of life (Jer. 10:14). The focus is not on the idol but on its maker, humankind, who is “shamed” by his inanimate image, since he is not able to provide the creature with the necessary breath of life, which is the distinguishing characteristic of YHWH’s creation.

Idolatry is therefore a double sin. The worship of idols denies the reality of God’s complete control over the cosmos because it involves

that makes life livable, a negation that could hardly be uttered without such large language.” See Brueggemann, “Jeremiah,” 156.

79. *Ibid.*, 159.

the acknowledgement of other divine powers. . . . Worse still is the pretense of creating life. In doing so, humankind lays claim to divine knowledge.⁸⁰

SIXTH- AND FIFTH-CENTURY BC PROPHETS

The Babylonian exile and postexilic period caused a change in the prophetic messages, shifting their themes toward restoration and re-creation. While Ezekiel and Obadiah witness the downfall of Jerusalem, and as such the ultimate fulfillment of the long-prophesied de-creation, Daniel brings an apocalyptic dimension to the topic. Re-creation becomes the prominent topic for postexilic Haggai and Zechariah, and Malachi finalizes the canonical prophetic chorus of the Old Testament with the restorative message centered on the second Elijah.

Ezekiel

David L. Petersen comes to the conclusion that “creation traditions are not important for Ezekiel’s theological argument.”⁸¹ However, his assertion appears to be based on the assumption of an exclusive positive reading of the creation account, which, as has been seen, forms only one part of the theological panorama for which creation motifs were invoked. If understood in this way, Ezekiel “is not concerned with how the world itself came into existence . . . , but rather with re-forming a world gone awry.”⁸² In order to illustrate this, I will focus on three passages that outline Ezekiel’s theological use of creation.

Ezekiel 28:11–19 is a prophetic oracle that centers on a description of the king of Tyre as a type for the anarchic Cherub, which has been interpreted since patristic times as pointing to the fall of Lucifer.⁸³ A number of indicative creation linguistic markers are present,⁸⁴ yet the context of the passage is focused on the description of the hubris of a fallen angel who is staining a perfect world.

80. Rudman, “Creation and Fall,” 68.

81. Petersen, “Creation in Ezekiel,” 499.

82. Galambush, “Castles in the Air,” 147.

83. See, for example, Jean-Marc Vercauysse, “Les pères de l’église et la chute de l’ange (Lucifer d’après Is 14 et Ez 28),” *RevScRel* 75, no. 2 (2001): 147–74.

84. For example, *bārā’*, “to create” (Gen. 1:1 and Ezek. 28:13, 15); *ēden*, “Eden” (Gen. 2:8, 10, 15 and Ezek. 28:13); various gemstones (Gen. 2:11–12 and Ezek. 28:13); and *kērûb*, “Cherub” (Gen. 3:24 and Ezek. 28:14, 16).

As with Jeremiah, creation language is employed as a powerful paradigm to describe the origin of sin.

Ezekiel 31:1–18 transfers the same scenario into the realm of human history. The cosmic tree representing human kingship, a motif well known from ancient Near East iconography,⁸⁵ is used as a metaphor for the downfall of the king of Assyria, which in turn, serves as a warning for Egypt's future judgment. The chapter describes the glory of the tree within creation terminology and cosmology (e.g., *těhôm* in Ezek. 31:4 and Gen. 7:11) and connects it with paradise (Ezek. 31:8, 9, 16, 18). Creation terminology is employed to describe the downfall of two prominent nations, Assyria and Egypt. Thus, not only paradise but also human history has been spoilt.

Re-creation in Ezekiel and the reversal of de-creation, as exemplified by the two previous passages, can be found in Ezekiel 47:1–12 within the context of the vision of the future glory of the temple, which in itself serves as a creation motif.⁸⁶ This time, the trees are growing again, not in rebellion against but under YHWH's power and provision of fertility (Ezek. 47:12).⁸⁷ The sustaining agents of God's power are the rivers of paradise, which connect Ezekiel to the creation account in Genesis 2:10–14.⁸⁸ Ezekiel deliberately merges temple and Zion with paradise imagery, because the destruction of the earthly temple in Jerusalem and his own exile in Babylon has caused the place of God's presence to transcend to a heavenly realm, indicating that YHWH's presence is continuous and does not depend on human realities.

As the connections between Ezek 47:1–12 and Gen 2:10–14 reveal, Ezekiel understood the symbol of Zion in a new way. Cut free from explicit reference to the temporal, political realities of kingship, priesthood, and the earthly temple, the temple-mountain and river of Ezekiel's last great vision stand as timeless symbols of divine presence. For Ezekiel, the earthly Zion, with its city and temple, was a bitter disappointment.⁸⁹

85. Othmar Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh: Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup, 261 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

86. See footnote 48.

87. "Ezekiel's emphasis on trees as signifiers indicating acceptance of or rebellion against divine authority stands in striking contrast with the symbolism of trees elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible." See Galambush, "Castles in the Air," 155.

88. There are significant linguistic creation markers in the text; for example, *nepes̄ hayyâ*, "living creature" (Ezek. 47:9 and Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 30); and *šaras*, "to swarm" (Ezek. 47:9 and Gen. 1:20, 21).

89. Tuell, "Rivers of Paradise," 189.

Creation in Ezekiel is used to express God's (and the prophet's) disappointment over angelic rebellion and consequent human history, which replays that rebellion again and again. However, the prophet moves beyond that in stating that God is able to re-create something new and eternal from the shreds of human history. At the same time, one should be cautious not to attribute an exclusive otherworldliness to Ezekiel's prophecies.⁹⁰

Obadiah

No explicit creation terminology is employed in the book of Obadiah except for the usage of the Mount Zion motif (Obad. 1:17, 21), which stands in juxtaposition to the mountains of Edom (vv. 3, 4, 8, 9). The one who has made his "nest among the stars" (v. 4) will be brought low because of human wisdom and understanding (v. 8). Instead, the mountains of Esau will be governed from Mount Zion (v. 21).⁹¹

Daniel

Few studies engage the book of Daniel with creation theology, and those who take up the task usually focus on the mythological *Chaoskampf* motif and its ancient Near East counterparts, as found in the description of the waters in Daniel 7:2, 3.⁹² According to Robert R. Wilson, in contrast to Genesis 1, the waters described in Daniel 7 are presented as returning to chaos, and the animals that surface from the waters are composite creatures that do not correspond to the order of creation in Genesis 1. "The world has reverted to its pre-creation state and is clearly in need of re-creation."⁹³ This re-creation is achieved in the vision of the Ancient One Who constitutes the second part of the vision (Dan. 7:9–14) with the word *šoltān*, "dominion," as the keyword that appears eight times in this chapter.⁹⁴ The failure of human dominion over the earth in history,

90. One should not forget the prophet's vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37, which employs creation terminology in the re-creation of the house of Israel.

91. See earlier, under the section titled "Micah," regarding the usage of the Mount Zion metaphor.

92. See, for example, André Lacocque, "Allusions to Creation in Daniel 7," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, vol. 1 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 114–31.

93. Wilson, "Creation and New Creation," 201, 2.

94. Namely in Daniel 7:6, 12, 14 (three times), 26, 27 (two times).

as envisioned in creation, is replaced by God's dominion over the universe through an everlasting kingdom.

But apart from Daniel 7, there are more references to creation in the prophetic book, as demonstrated by Jacques B. Doukhan. Approaching the issue from a linguistic perspective, he arrives at the conclusion that "les allusions à la création foisonnent tout au long du livre et sont attestées d'une manière ou d'une autre dans chacun de ses chapitres."⁹⁵ In the following, I have included the most significant allusions highlighted by Doukhan.

In Daniel 1:12, the four young men opt for a menu, which echoes the pre-Fall diet found in Genesis 1:29, while the description of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:38 invokes creation terminology when it employs the same attribute of dominion over the earth and all its creatures to the Babylonian king as Adam received in Genesis 1:28. Clay, which is part of the statue's feet, is used throughout the Bible in contexts alluding to creation, indicating the religious aspect of the spiritual Rome (cf. Isa. 29:16; Jer. 18:2; Lam. 4:2). The word pair *hōšek* and *'ôr*, "darkness and light," in Daniel's benediction (Dan. 2:22) echoes the creation account of Genesis 1:4, 5. Another creation word pair, *šamayim* and *'eres*, "heaven and earth," is found in Nebuchadnezzar's prayer after he returns to his senses in Daniel 4:35. Furthermore, the usage of the cosmic tree motif in Daniel 4 points to the creation account (cf. Gen. 2:9). The combination of the two segolates *'ereb bōqer*, "evening-morning," in Daniel 8:14 is found in this sequence—following each other in close proximity—and with the same associated meaning only in the creation story (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). In the concluding chapter of the book, Daniel evokes creation terminology by describing re-creation, which is taking place after the de-creation scenario of the previous chapter (Dan. 11). For the righteous ones, there is a passage from sleeping in the dust (12:2) to shining like the stars (12:3), and for Daniel in particular there is a passage from resting to standing up in the final day to receive his inheritance (12:13).⁹⁶

The apocalyptic themes of the transformation of history and the final return to an Edenic state that are so recurrent in the book of

95. Jacques B. Doukhan, "Allusions à la création dans le livre de Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. Adam S. van der Woude, BETL, 106 (Leuven, Belgium: University Press and Peeters, 1993), 289.

96. *Ibid.*, 286–89.

Daniel are theologically grouped along a continuum from creation to de-creation and finally re-creation—a topic that we have encountered repeatedly in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, whereas the timelines in Daniel are broader and informed by his apocalyptic perspective. Eschatology, which moves toward an end, imperatively necessitates a beginning, and the theme of creation provides the theological rationale against which eschatology can take place.⁹⁷

Haggai

In Haggai 1:10, the prophet invokes the heaven and earth merism, demonstrating how the postexilic community's lack of faithfulness is causing nature's or creation's blessings to be interrupted. Further on, Haggai employs the same word pair in order to describe how the created order is affected by the "day of the LORD," but this time, from a Messianic perspective, Haggai states: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty" (Hag. 2:6, 7; cf. 2:21, 22).

Zechariah

Zechariah describes God as the continuous Sustainer of creation: "Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone" (Zech. 10:1). The *ʿēseb baššādeh*, "vegetation in the field," connects with the *ʿēseb haššādeh*, "vegetation of the field," of Genesis 2:5. Springtime and fertility are caused by the ongoing process of "creating" (*ʿāšā*) the rain clouds. Zechariah's second oracle is introduced by using a distinct creation terminology, however, with a significant rearranging of the various elements: "The word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD who stretches out the heavens, who lays the

97. "L'idée de commencement est conséquente avec celle de 'fin'. L'idée de transformation est contenue dans celle de résurrection. L'idée de déterminisme rejoint celle de contrôle de l'histoire par Dieu. L'idée d'universalisme est impliquée dans la conception cosmique du salut. En fin et surtout, l'idée de souveraineté et de royaume de Dieu qui est centrale dans tout le livre de Daniel, relève de la même pensée que celle du Dieu créateur (Ps 24,1-2, 7-10; cf. Ps 95,3-6)." *Ibid.*, 290, 91.

foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares” (Zech. 12:1). While the “stretching out of the heavens” is not a direct linguistic creation marker, it nevertheless recaptures the action of Genesis 1:6, 7 and is found throughout the Old Testament (cf. Ps. 104:2; Job 9:8; Isa. 44:24) in connection to creation. It is also interesting to note that the object of *yāšar*, “form,” in Zechariah 12:1 is not man himself as in Genesis 2:7 but *rûaḥ-ʾādām*, “the spirit of man.”

One has the sense that there is a traditional set of creation vocabulary, but that it could be arranged in various acceptable patterns. Heavens, earth, humanity, and spirit provide the crucial building blocks. Zechariah 12:1 combines them into an innovative and adroit manner.⁹⁸

Interestingly, Zechariah 12:1 serves within the given literary genre as a validation for the following oracle, which is a description of Israel’s new and victorious role among the nations, a new creation of the nation on the day of the Lord.

Malachi

Malachi concludes the cycle of Old Testament prophets with a rhetorical question, which links the God-as-Creator metaphor to the God-as-Father metaphor: “Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?” (Mal. 2:10). Creation is here being elevated to the intimate level of a father-son relationship and a husband-wife relationship (cf. 2:14, 15), which echoes the intimate creation account of Genesis 2. Creation in the last book of the Old Testament and, in its final analysis, is not centered on cosmogony but on a personal relationship between God and humanity as already hinted at in the order of creation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following synopsis highlights the most prominent dimensions of creation motifs and links in the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

98. Petersen, “World of Creation,” 210.

Eighth-Century BC Prophets

Jonah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological content • Jonah's progressive descent reflects a movement away from creation, from life toward death • Obedient creation against disobedient humanity • Reoccurring creation is geared toward salvation
Amos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation is analogous to history • Creation becomes a paradigm for judgment (de-creation) and salvation (re-creation) • Correct understanding of creation is prerequisite for re-creation
Hosea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation is history • Reversal of creation order in order to portray anti-creation • Creation of Israel as a nation during the Exodus forms part of original creation • Election amounts to creation
Micah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation focuses on de-creation and subsequent eschatological re-creation • Mount Zion metaphor as a theological bridge between creation and re-creation
Isaiah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation is present throughout the whole book • Creation metaphors, like maker and potter, establish a personal relationship • Creation in history serves as a guarantee for redemption • Future re-creation flows out from redemption

In trying to establish the broader lines of creation in the prophetic literature of the eighth century BC, it becomes apparent that creation is progressively anchored in history, theologically made relevant in salvation, and paradigmatically centered in the introduction of the triad of creation, de-creation, and re-creation.

Seventh-Century BC Prophets

Nahum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation terminology is used to describe the "day of the LORD" • God's sovereignty as Creator over ANE power symbols
Habakkuk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation as de-creation during the "day of the LORD" • De-creation is intended to accomplish salvation and recognition of the Creator

Zephaniah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversal of creation indicates separation of Creator from creature • Progressive de-creation results in loss of humankind's dominion over creation • Flood as a type for de-creation
Joel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eschatological de-creation but redemption for His people • Re-creation in paradisiacal terms • Triad: creation, de-creation, and re-creation
Jeremiah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongest account of reversal of creation in prophetic literature • Creation becomes the paradigm for destruction • Remnant theology connects to creation • Contrast between true Creator (YHWH) and false creator (idolater)

Creation in the prophetic literature of the seventh century BC is historically contextualized by the impending Babylonian exile, whereas the triad of creation, de-creation, and re-creation becomes more prominent with the prophets beginning to look beyond the inevitable judgment and toward restoration.

Sixth- and Fifth-Century BC Prophets

Ezekiel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on reforming a de-created world • De-creation is foreshadowed in the fall of Lucifer • Paradise and human history are stained by the primeval event • Ezekiel's future temple in itself serves as a creation motif • The idealistic character of the future temple transcends the shortcomings of human (Israelite) history
Obadiah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No explicit creation theology, except for the Mount Zion motif
Daniel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation terminology present throughout the book • Apocalyptic transformation of history in terms of creation • Eschatology (re-creation) is dependent on protology (creation)
Haggai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Day of the LORD" motif with Messianic perspective together with creation terminology
Zechariah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing creation by sustaining life through fertility and rain • Creative rearranging of creation-terminology building blocks in order to describe the re-creation of the nation
Malachi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation elevated to an intimate personal relationship level • Creation not based on cosmogony but relationship

The usage of creation during the final two centuries of Old Testament prophetic literature is clearly future oriented, whereas a theological abstraction has taken place that can be related to the disappearance of the physical temple and monarchy. While creation is still the overarching paradigm that spans human history, the focus has moved toward the end of that arch, which, as in the case of the book of Daniel, takes on apocalyptic and also Messianic notions.

Creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament is employed as a constant literary and theological reference, which connects to a historical past, motivates the interpretation of the present, and moves toward a perspective for the future by means of a continuous contextualization of the topic via the triad: creation, de-creation, and re-creation. This reference point is anchored in the creation account as found in Genesis 1 through 3.

The final authors of the Hebrew Bible understood creation not as *one* topic among others or even one of lower significance. For them creation was the starting point, because everything human beings can think and say about God and his relation to the world and to humankind depends on the fact that he created all this.⁹⁹

The intertextual markers that refer to creation in the prophets indicate that they saw creation as a literal and historical given, whereas reference is made indiscriminately to the creation account as presented in both Genesis 1 and 2. The intertextual movement indicates clearly that as much as creation forms the starting point of much of the prophetic theological discourse, all markers of creation as discussed in this study point back to the creation model presented in Genesis 1 through 3. While it has not been the purpose of the present study to reconstruct the cosmology of the Old Testament prophets, it has become apparent that creation was the point of departure for their worldview. They clearly explained and interpreted the world from this perspective. Any discussion of whether the prophets considered creation anything other than a historical event or even that they only used it for literary or theological purposes cannot be sustained from the textual data and would be projecting a nineteenth-century AD rationalist debate into a first-millennium BC context.

99. Rendtorff, "Some Reflections on Creation," 207, emphasis added.