

Ideology as a factor for the eschatological outlook hidden in a text: A study between Ezekiel 37 and 4Q386 fragment 1i

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The book Ezekiel continues to present various challenges to students studying the text as a result of redaction and revision that the book went through. One will find many different points of view when analysing the book as a whole. Ezekiel's presence in exile supplies us with significant ideological information regarding the historical context of the author of the Masoretic text, whilst the Qumran community provides the same support for the authors of the Pseudo-Ezekiel manuscripts. The vision of the dry bones is portrayed in three different texts: the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14, Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q385 and Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386. When comparing the vision of the dry bones found in these separate texts, one must consider each author's ideology in order to establish a better understanding of the eschatological message of each text. This study reveals the importance of an ideological analysis when interpreting an eschatological text.

Introduction

Eschatology presents hope, although the meaning of its outlook changes from one eschatological genre to the next. According to the biblical texts hope remains the constant aspect in every difficult situation Israel and the Jews faced. Reading the Bible from an ideological point of view, one will find that it describes various ideological changes that Israel went through and each text may be connected to specific historical contexts. In this study, the historical context will not refer to the physical dating of the manuscripts but rather the ideological context to which the text refers as well as the intended recipients of the text.

Throughout the Old Testament¹ one will find various promises that are concerned with a better future, but although the Old Testament is concerned with a new and better future, Gowan (1998:1–2) states that one will find little with regard to all the aspects of hope.²

In the broader sense, Old Testament eschatology refers to the promise regarding the end of sin and the restoration of YHWH's relationship with Israel. In this case eschatology refers to 'promises of the end of sin, of war, of human infirmity, of hunger, of killing or harming of any living thing' (Gowan 1998:2). One finds a strong sense of hope in this eschatological genre for a better or different future that is yet to come, hope for the correction of what is wrong, and for making it right. This will happen on the day of the Lord and the Old Testament reveals that this day is only known to YHWH (*ibid*).

The exile may be described as the biggest crisis of Israel's history. Therefore, one cannot overemphasise the importance of Ezekiel (McKeating 1993:11), as Ezekiel is placed in exile. The exile raised the question, 'Can the nation survive?' (*ibid*) The nation of Israel was forced to change its ideology if it was to survive the exile.

The experience of the people that were taken away by the Babylonians was not merely the physical separation from the land that was promised by YHWH. It also meant the separation between them and the presence of YHWH, as the temple was considered to be the heart of Israel and their

1. In this study, when I refer to the Old Testament the Masoretic text is meant.

2. Gowan (1998:2) acknowledges that eschatology literally means 'doctrine of the end' and states that the Old Testament does not refer to the end of the world, the end of time or of the end of history. However, this statement of Gowan does not seem plausible when one considers the book of Daniel. Collins (1998:85) states that 'the book of Daniel contains the only full-blown example of apocalyptic literature in the Hebrew Bible', which implies that the Old Testament does refer to the end of time.

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connection to YHWH (Baker 2014:3). Scholars place the Babylonian exile in the sixth century, 597/587–539 BCE (Scott, Chilton & Feldman 1997:7). It was during this time that the exiles formed a different ideology from those who stayed behind in Jerusalem, due to the crises they experienced and the need that they had to survive this time.

Sometime after the exile sectarians settled at Qumran and it has been suggested that this may have been in 152 BCE (García Martínez 2007:8). It was at this time that the sectarians broke from the Essenes, which García Martínez (*ibid*) classifies as the pre-Qumran phase in which the sectarians established the ideological basis for this break. Textual data indicate that the manuscripts that have been found at Qumran may be dated between 250 BCE and 50 BCE (Dimant 2014:9).

It is clear that the Masoretic text of Ezekiel may be associated with the exile, whereas the Pseudo-Ezekiel manuscripts discovered at Qumran may be associated with the Qumran community at a time after the exile. The vision of the dry bones is portrayed in the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 and in Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 fragments 2&3, 4Q386 fragment 1i and 4Q388 fragment 7).

The aim of this article is to consider the impact that ideology has on the eschatological message of a text, by comparing the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 to Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 fragment 1i.

Ideology within social context

Van Dijk (1998) defines ideology as follows:

Ideologies are not merely sets of beliefs, but socially shared beliefs of groups. These beliefs are acquired, used and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups in complex social structures. (p. 135)

Mayer (1982:14) refers to Zentner (1973:75–84) for a definition of ideology: ‘beliefs which are publicly expressed, with the manifest purpose of influencing the orientation and actions of others’.

Hence, ideology may be explained as a belief system that is set in place over time in which members function and live each day. Within this belief structure, certain rules are developed and one must adhere to these rules in order to function in the group setting. A certain value system appears within the group that forms part of the ideology and regulates the actions of the members in a specific group.

When considering the term ideology, Van Dijk (1998:137) makes it clear that it is neither the group nor the organisation nor any other abstract within the social structure that directly conditions, influences or constrains ideological practices. The main focus of a group’s ideology lies in the ways the social members subjectively represent, understand, or interpret it. Therefore, the social structure process exists for practical purposes and it is also an object of sociological analysis.

The purpose of ideology is to protect the interests and resources of the group, whether these are unjust privileges, or minimal conditions of existence. It serves groups in their social practices and in their daily social life as a whole (*ibid*).³

When an individual forms part of a group setting, the goals and interests of that group are placed above that of the individual; each member of the group has the same goals and interests, although the individual may have personal goals and interests which he or she would not give up. This forms part of the individual’s personal life, but does not exclude him or her from the group. For the individual group members their personal identity is now associated with a social identity of the group, namely the self-representation of being a member of a social group and no longer being only an individual that is on the outside of the group (Van Dijk 1998:141). Ideology refers to a particular community’s system of ideas and ideals and forms the basis of the community’s economic and political theory and policy, which includes the religious belief system and theological interpretation of the members of that community.

Mayer (1982:23) suggests that ideology may be an important motivating force when a new group is established or when the group dynamic needs to change. Different reasons may be given for the group to change its ideology, but when one considers the exile and Israel’s circumstances during that time, it is necessary to consider that this group needed to defend its way of life against a larger group that overpowered it. Jonker (2010:594) states that ‘the status of Israel changed dramatically as a result of the Babylonian exile’. During the pre-exilic period Israel’s identity was closely linked to the Davidic monarchy, which they lost with the exile. This brought about a change in their socio-political and socio-cultural environment, which resulted in a process of identity change in Israel (*ibid*).

According to Liverani (2013:31), ancient manuscripts are not the most reliable sources to reconstruct a factual history of an ancient society, but these manuscripts do provide useful information about the society’s ideology. Ancient writers wrote each text at a specific time for a specific reason, in which they revealed something of the society’s ideology. When one understands the ideology of a society, one may form a better understanding of the reason behind the text; this may lead to a better interpretation of the message that the author wanted to reveal to the first readers or the intended readers of the text, within their own specific context. Understanding the place that ideology has within a historical framework, allows one to recognise the cultural character of an ancient community, their values, ethics and concerns that were based on their religious belief system (Liverani 2013:31–33).

Jokiranta (2012:78) suggests that the fundamental argument is that ‘human behaviour cannot be explained solely psychologically (individualistically) or sociologically, but a truly social psychological explanation is needed’. No group can

³Ideologies are shared within a group. Van Dijk (1998:137), therefore, explains that there are no ‘private’ ideologies, only private opinions in a group setting.

be established without individuals being part of that group. People live within a social system. This system refers to the greater ideology of a group and it has psychological implications for the individual's behaviour, perceptions and emotions. Therefore, one may say that groups can change individuals and that people derive much of their self-definition from their social group that they are part of (*ibid*).

It stands to reason, therefore, that when one considers the eschatological message of the vision of the dry bones in the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 and in Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q386 fragment 1i), one should also consider the ideology from which these authors wrote their text.

The ideology of Israel as represented in the Masoretic text of Ezekiel

Petersen (2002:137–138) states that 'Ezekiel lived astride the momentous historical events associated with the demise of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem (587 BCE)'. Ezekiel was among the leaders ordered to be deported to Babylon in 597 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar. During the next ten years one might refer to Judah as two groups, the first group that stayed behind and the second that consisted of the exiles in Babylon. Each group also had its own king: Zedekiah in Jerusalem and Jehoiachin in exile.

Eichrodt (1970:1) states that one may regard statements in the book of Ezekiel (1:1–3 and 29:17) as reliable, which 'places the prophet's period of activity between 594 and 571 BC'. Ezekiel received his call to become a prophet when he was a young man, probably at the age of thirty (*ibid*). Therefore, his youth fell in the period of king Josiah's reign (639–609 BCE), which influenced the prophet greatly, by reason of the political and cultic reformation undertaken by that king in 621.⁴

Israel experienced a time of crisis during the Babylonian exile, which, according to Rom-Shiloni (2014:9) led to great literary creativity. The writings that Rom-Shiloni (*ibid*) regards as 'exilic literature' specify, according to her, the exile as the place where these texts were written, compiled and edited. The term 'exilic literature' is also used to designate a category of authorship of literature that was written by exiles themselves and she categorises the prophetic books of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah as part of it.

The Masoretic text of Ezekiel found in the Bible, as we know it today, reveals certain elements that may help in identifying the time period that the text depicts. The knowledge and historical details from the period 594 BCE and 572 BCE that are portrayed in this book argue for a 6th century dating. Whilst Albertz and Green (2003:351–352) state that although historical details lead them to argue for a sixth century dating of the book, one may also argue for a later dating due to redactional editing of the text. It is not my intention to argue

4. In the time of Josiah's reign he aimed to strengthen 'his people and state, worn out as the result of vassalship to Assyria, with the forces of a purified faith in Yahweh, so as to be able to lead them to a better future' and it is with the death of Josiah that Israel ended in a turmoil of politics (Eichrodt 1970:1).

for or against authorship and dating of the book, because the focus of this study lies with the ideology of Israel during the time of the Babylonian exile, which was the intended audience of the book, and the latter may be linked to the sixth century.

To reconstruct the ideology of the people in the Babylonian exile that Ezekiel is relaying, one may only look at the details provided in the text and not focus as much on determining authorship and the date in which the text was written. The context of the book Ezekiel reflects the ideology and problems Israel faced during the exile and may not necessarily reflect the events in the historical period when it was written.

Therefore, the unique quality of the book of Ezekiel is that the prophet was part of the first group that was taken to Babylonia. A statement by Josephus places Ezekiel in the Babylonian exile when he prophesied the future fate of his people (Albertz & Green 2009:351–352). When one considers Ezekiel 1:2, Ezekiel's ministry as a prophet may be estimated from 593 BCE onwards. Fishbane (2002:307) also places the time period of Ezekiel's ministry in the Babylonian exile. Ezekiel was among the first exiles of Judah in 597 BCE according to 2 Kings 24:8–16 and Ezekiel 1:1–2 to be taken away to Babylon. Joyce (2009:4) argues for a sixth century dating of the book Ezekiel saying: 'The historical circumstances portrayed broadly reflect what is known of the sixth century from extra-biblical sources such as the Babylonian Chronicle'.

Joyce (2009:3) sees the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry from 593 BCE onwards and also indicates that this is in accordance with Ezekiel 1:2, which places Ezekiel's ministry in the sixth century. Within the first two decades of the sixth century Judah faced catastrophic times. Joyce (2009:3) states that this was due to the crushing defeats Judah suffered at the hand of the Babylonians in 597 BCE and 587 BCE respectively. In this time a significant portion of the population was taken away in exile to Mesopotamia.

To realise the impact that the Babylonian exile had on the deportees of Israel, one should also consider the worldview they held. Parry (2014:2) considers the biblical cosmos as a vital place bursting with life. He also describes the universe as imagined in the biblical world to be strange in comparison to how we consider the universe in modern day thinking (Parry 2014:4). It is therefore essential to consider ancient Israel's worldview to establish a basis for the interpretation of its ideology at the time of the Babylonian exile.⁵

5. Ancient Israel's worldview consists of main divisions. The first main division is that of the heavenly realm with its subdivisions. God, the divine counsel and the angels live in the highest heaven. The separation between highest heaven and the 'atmosphere' is depicted as chaos waters where the weather and birds may be found. The second main division is the earthly realm with the subdivisions of land and sea. All humans and animals inhabit the land while fish and monsters inhabit the sea. The waters under the earth separate the land/sea from *Sheol* (the underworld) where the dead reside. This worldview is also divided into a grading scale of holiness that works with a vertical axis within the cosmos: heaven where God dwells being supremely holy against *Sheol* where the dead are, the furthest away from heaven, being unholy (Parry 2014:12). Cultures of the ancient world also perceived the world as being fixed down and immovable and thus flat (Ezk 37:9 makes reference to the four corners of the earth, whereas 1 Sm 2:8 references the pillars of the earth and the foundation that provides stability to the earth [Parry 2014:18]).

Israel's worldview was also shaped by the association the people had with YHWH and Zion as the place He chose as his dwelling place (Gowan 1998:8). Monson (1999:1) writes that the temple of Solomon may be seen as the focal point of Israel's religious, political and cultural life. The temple in Jerusalem is the setting of worship to YHWH and the parameter of Israel's spiritual health, which forms part of the Zion tradition. In the Zion theology it was YHWH who chose Mount Zion as his dwelling place when the ark was brought to Jerusalem. Zion became a permanent location of Israel's religious activity. Among the imagery that Zion presented are the following: that of divine dwelling high on the mountain, a life-giving water source, and the conquest of chaos (Monson 1999:6).

Zion was also associated with Israel's sense of security. Ollenburger (1987:66) explains that this is so because Zion was seen as the dwelling place of YHWH, creator of the cosmic order and defender of Israel. Therefore, the symbolic idea of Zion is rooted in the presence of YHWH, which is indicated by texts such as Psalm 46:6:

אלהים בקרבה בלִּתְמוּת
Elohim is in her midst, she will not be moved.'

Ollenburger (1987:66) states that *מוֹט* refers to the quavering of the mountains and the earth in the presence of the threat of chaos and is most commonly used in the language of the Jerusalem cult.

Joyce (2009:3) states that the exile may not seem as extreme when one considers the text of Ezekiel 3:15, which conveys a picture of unity in the sense that the people in the Babylonian exile were not scattered, but placed in 'ghetto-like settlements in Babylonia, such as Tel-abib'. The people also enjoyed freedom of association, as described in Ezekiel 8:1; 14:1 and 20:1, where it is written that the elders would gather in the house of Ezekiel. Therefore, the exiles had the opportunity to share their basic religious beliefs with each other when assembled.

Grabbe (1998:98) asks the question whether one can write a history of the exile and states that he can. In this history he states that, 'we know that the exiled communities need not lose their identity' (*ibid*). This may pertain to the physical identity they kept through worship to YHWH and rituals that they performed, so that they might still be identified as a people in their own right. Keeping this in mind one should also consider Israel's worldview of that time and the fact that they were separated from the temple, which was seen as the heart of their connection to YHWH (Baker 2014:3).

One also finds 'letters to the exiles' in Jeremiah 29 that indicate that the exiled community had to build houses and live in them, plant gardens and live from what the gardens produced, take wives and have sons and daughters (Joyce 2009:3). Such details lead to the assumption that the people in exile continued their daily lives, as they would have done if they were still living in Jerusalem, while keeping their

religious practices within the setting that they found themselves in. In the light of Grabbe's (1998:98) statement above and the privileges the exiles had, it does seem that it was unnecessary for the people to form a new ideology while in exile.

However, one finds that although the conditions under which the exiles were expected to live were tolerable, there was a severe feeling of anguish and bitterness among them. This is revealed in the text of Psalm 137, a lamentation describing the exiles that found themselves in Babylon at this stage with a longing for their land. Verse 1 reveals that the lamentation refers to the Babylonian exile with the first part of the verse reading בבל על נהרות 'By the rivers of Babylon', whilst the lamentation ends with verse 9 that reveals the hatred of those in exile – hatred towards the Babylonians:

אשרי שיאחז ונפץ את־עלליך אלה־סלע

'Blessed is he who grasps and dashes to pieces her children against the cliff' (Joyce 2009:3).

When interpreting this lamentation one realises that the ideology of the exiles changed because of the crisis they were in, which formed part of the separation that they felt being away from their homeland.

The physical destruction of those living in exile cannot be disputed, yet this is not the main focus of their despair. The people did not only lose their homes, they also felt the separation between them and YHWH. This calls to mind the worldview of the time, where the people in exile did not consider themselves to still reside in the presence of YHWH. To be away from the temple meant to be away from YHWH. In exile they experienced the loss of a physical place, which meant a crisis in their religious existence. The ideology of the exiles, which is depicted in the book of Ezekiel, is that of a broken people, and although they may have received certain benefits, they lost a part of their being (Joyce 2009:16–17).

Joyce (2009:33) explains that Ezekiel addresses various aspects in the text that reveal the ideological context that the Babylonian exile created for the people. The prophet's message and theological agenda can be defined by a range of traditions that appear to have broken down, leaving the exiles in a time of crisis. The temple in Jerusalem defined Israel as YHWH's people and their connection to YHWH, which was lost to them because of the destruction of the temple and the city being burned to the ground. This implies that the people in exile were not just far from the temple but they had no temple to speak of anymore. The crisis that they were experiencing also involved the loss of the monarch that governed over them, which made their situation even more hopeless (*ibid*).

Gowan (1998:8) says that one might think that the destruction of the temple and exile of 587 BCE would have left the Zion theology destroyed and that it would cease to exist. This, however, was not the case. The exile led the people of

Israel to form a new ideology from which an eschatological theme began, in the form of a prophetic perspective. This was prominent from prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel who promoted a New Jerusalem that would be established by YHWH after the time of judgment had passed. The hope of the people in exile was focused on the physical restoration of the temple and that was shown through a metaphorical resurrection in the vision of the dry bones.

In light of the above interpretations of the people's situation in exile one may once again consider Van Dijk's (1998:135) definition of ideology: 'Ideologies are not merely sets of beliefs, but socially shared beliefs of groups. These beliefs are acquired, used and changed in social situations and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups in complex social structures.' This definition is true for the people that found themselves in the exile at that time. They had a specific belief system, but their social situation changed because of the exile, which forced them to interact with the Babylonians within a complex social structure, not only between them and the Babylonians, but also among the people in the newly formed group. In their new group setting they were confronted with different issues and they needed to preserve their way of life and their relationship with YHWH in the new social order.

Mein (2001:74) states that in the book of Ezekiel as a whole one sees the progression of a group that had to change from being privileged to being oppressed, which leads to the people trying to explain what had happened to them. This leads them to maintain their identity as people of YHWH so that they may form a new hope for the future.⁶

McKeating (1993:73–74) refers to the theology of Ezekiel and states that a theology is never produced within a vacuum. Theology is the response to a situation within which the literature is shaped. Thus, the text of Ezekiel is the response to what happened in the time the book represents. The book of Ezekiel as a whole was written by people that considered it their responsibility to 'assert eternal providence, and justify the ways of God to men' (McKeating 1993:74). The text of Ezekiel is therefore an attempt to make sense of the exile and the enormous loss the people faced because of the exile. The literature that Israel related to, defined them according to their relationship to a place, this place being the city of Jerusalem and the temple as dwelling place of YHWH. In the Ezekiel tradition the exiles lost this part of their identity as a result of the separation between them and the place that defined them (McKeating 1993:75).

Ideology in the Qumran community

Between 1947 and 1956 various manuscripts of more than 200 scrolls that resemble the text found in the Bible as we know it

⁶With the ideological changes that occurred in the exile Mein (2001:74–75) advises that it is necessary to consider Ezekiel's ethics within the new moral world of the exile. Within the new moral world their old moral outlook changed. With deportation the exiles no longer had access to their political and religious life that was connected with Jerusalem. If one considers that the exiled group was formed out of the higher class of Jerusalem, one realises that their social position changed from being privileged to being minor servants of Babylonia.

today were discovered in the eleven caves in and around Qumran. According to Tov (2001:103), these manuscripts included 'all the biblical books except for the texts of Esther and Nehemiah (however, Ezra-Nehemiah formed one book represented in Qumran by a fragment of Ezra)'. Fragments were also found that seemed to be copies of the same texts in duplicate form, which has led to the conclusion that these were especially popular among the people of the Qumran community.

García Martínez (2007:8) gives credit to Murphy-O'Connor for his work on dating the establishment of the Qumran community. In his work, Murphy-O'Connor (1985:223–246) suggests that the group known as the Essenes returned from Palestine after 165 BCE and settled in Qumran in 152 BCE. García Martínez (*ibid*) indicates that one must consider a pre-Qumranic phase or formation period, which he suggests to be a 'fruitful period' that established the ideological basis that preceded these writings when the break with the Essene movement was established. This group of sectarians became involved in conflicts that led to their trek to the desert.

Various scholars identify the sectarians of Qumran as Essenes, although there is no mention of the term Essene in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Magnez 2003:39). With regard to the possible association with the Essenes, García Martínez (2007:3) refers to the 'Groningen Hypothesis' which 'is an attempt coherently to relate to each other the apparently contradictory data furnished by the Dead Sea manuscripts as to the primitive history of the Qumran Community'. A clear distinction is made between the Essenes and the sectarians that settled at Qumran. It is also suggested that the sectarians were a split group within the Essene movement and that it is only after this split that the sectarians settled at Qumran.

Dimant (2014:9) states that textual data gathered from the manuscripts found at Qumran have a basic chronological framework that may be dated between 250 BCE and 50 BCE. This provides a starting-point for dating the texts. According to Dimant (*ibid*) it has been established on palaeographic grounds that the Qumran manuscripts span between these two dates. Along with the framework for dating of the manuscripts, Dimant (*ibid*) also refers to the archaeological phase of the Qumran site and argues for the date of settlement to be 100 BCE, rather than 150 BCE as suggested by Murphy-O'Connor (in García Martínez 2007:8).

Cross (1976:378) suggests that in the community of Qumran the members reconstructed their identity to be associated with that of a pre-exilic Israel that was embodied and reconstituted according to the times before the exile, although in actual fact the emergence of the Qumran community occurred in a historical setting that formed the point of view of nascent rabbinic Judaism and, therefore, it must be defined as post-biblical.

García Martínez (2007:3–11) points to the problematic issues with regard to the origin of the sectarians that settled at Qumran but does acknowledge that the community was

rooted in an apocalyptic tradition that formed part of its ideology. According to García Martínez (2007:24), it is unfortunate that there are no historical sources from outside Qumran that may aid in reconstructing the historical context of the community. Therefore, one can only speculate as to its history as our information is limited to the manuscripts that were found at Qumran.

Constructing a historical framework in which the community of Qumran functioned is not without its own problematic issues. García Martínez's (2007:24–25) main concern with determining a historical framework is the problem that the preserved texts, apart from the *pesharim*, are not profuse in detail and that the peculiar character of the *pesharim*, which consist of the greatest number of references to the early history of the community, makes it difficult to reconstruct a reasonable historical frame. The *pesharim*, however, do remain the only Qumran texts that provide the best source for constructing a history of the community. The hermeneutical principle that underlies the *pesharim*, as a history of the community, indicates the belief that they are living in the last days (*ibid*).

A dominant characteristic of Jewish life in Palestine in the Second Temple period was the influence of the groups that split from the broader Jewish community. Among these groups were the Essenes and those who lived at Qumran (Baumgarten 1997:1). Each group used terminology in Hebrew to identify themselves, and the Qumran community was no different in this regard. This community called itself the $\eta\eta$, this term is frequently mentioned in the *Manual of Discipline* which emphasises its communal nature in the sense that members 'ate together, prayed together and decided together (1QS vi, 3)'. The Qumran community also established a social structure. The term $\eta\eta$ reflects the sense that this group as institution united around the same agenda in a practical and ideological way (Baumgarten 1997:3–4).

The change in ideology of the sectarians of Qumran can be traced back to their separation from partaking in the Jerusalem temple worship. Schiffman (2010:81–82) discusses this separation starting with the Maccabean revolt. The temple was defiled by pagan worship at that time. This led to disagreements in the original group of Israel before the community at Qumran was established. With a victory in 164 BCE the Maccabees purified the temple, although this seemed to be a short-lived victory since moderate Hellenists among the Jewish people regained control of the temple worship. What followed was a process that led to the separation within the group: one part stayed with its way of temple worship whereas the other distanced itself from this form of worship. The view of the group that distanced itself from this form of temple worship, which later on formed the community at Qumran, is found in the text of the so-called *Halakhic Letter*, 4QMMT. This letter shows disagreements between the Zadokite priests and the new order of affairs in the Jerusalem temple. The disagreement about the details and the interpretation of Jewish law formed a rift between these two

groups that could not be repaired and out of this the community at Qumran was eventually established (Schiffman 2010:81–82).

With this notable disagreement the sectarians moved away to settle at Qumran and what followed was a process in which the community established their own unique ideology. In the scroll corpus one can observe a development of new ideas that the sectarians at Qumran formed. It began with a series of disagreements between the sectarians and the temple authorities regarding particular ritual issues. The disagreements generated a decision from the sectarians to separate themselves from the temple and to move away from those whom they were in disagreement with, as noted above. The next level in the development of the sectarians was their search to substitute temple worship in the life of the sect. It was out of this that their own rituals started to develop. At the same time one observes rabbinic parallels that are instructive in the sectarians' religious belief system. The sectarians were unwilling to participate in the temple worship. That led to an eschatological vision of the sectarians taking control of the temple, modifying its architecture and bringing its holy offerings in accordance with their own legal views. At this point an 'end of days' expectation of the sectarians developed from their expectation for a new, divinely-built temple to substitute the one in the present era. With each level of development in the community at Qumran, a phase of the sectarians' ideology became represented, which is documented in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Schiffman 2010:83).

When one considers the differences between the Judean group and the sectarians that broke away to establish their own community, one finds that the Law of Moses plays a big part in the sectarians' daily functions, or at least they aimed at turning back to the original meaning and practices of the Law. Jokiranta (2012:96) states that the revelatory character of the Law had consequences: it was necessary for the members of this group to be taught the right way to understand the Law and they had to take it upon themselves to seek for what pleased YHWH. Each individual had to subject to the authority of the community. One may therefore suggest that the basic function of the group was their desire to live in such a manner that they would fulfil the Law (Jokiranta 2012:100).

The community at Qumran can be foremost recognised as a community of rules. After considering Douglas' characteristics for being called a community, Arnold (2006:40) makes the assumption that these 'communities, characterized as having a strong grid, exhibit a highly developed system of rules and an ideological system that reinforces the importance of that system'. It seems that the community at Qumran distinguished themselves from the leaders in Jerusalem based on their idea that they had a better understanding of the interpretation of YHWH's Law. They proceeded to believe that they were the only ones who actually lived according to YHWH's commandments. Apart from their interpretation of YHWH's laws from the Torah, the community also produced numerous

texts detailing their own rules to govern the individual's life in the community (*ibid*).

Harmerton-Kelly (1970:1–15) demonstrates that the idea of an eschatological temple developed in the apocalyptic tradition. In Harmerton-Kelly's (*ibid*) description of the eschatological temple he reveals his idea that this formed part of the temple ideology of Ezekiel and that it was this ideology that accounted for the community's rejection of the temple and of the cult practised there.

A substitute for temple worship by the Qumran community did not mean that they disregarded the idea of temple worship completely. Himmelfarb (1993:33–36) states that in the original group of the Jewish sect the earthly sacrifice in the temple worship was the central part of their ritual. It therefore stands to reason that the Qumran community would not completely break with this tradition; however, they did not agree with the manner in which the original group participated in temple worship. Their reaction to this was not to avoid temple worship completely but rather to find a new way of worshipping. The community replaced the earthly temple with the idea of a heavenly temple.

Davies (1985:39) also concludes that the community at Qumran was generally an isolated, tightly-knit and ideologically-integrated group of people. Davies (*ibid*) refers to the work of Stone (1982) who said:

The Dead Sea Covenanters lived under a strong feeling of the imminence of the end. This eschatological tension was so high that they felt that their own community lived in a sort of anticipation or prolepsis, a bridging as it were of the gap between this age and the age to come. (p. 67)

Elledge (2005:88) states that prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars possessed no complete biblical manuscripts from this era. Our understanding of the Hebrew Bible's history and development was based upon comparisons that were made between three ancient textual traditions. These include the Masoretic or rabbinic tradition, which later emerged as the authoritative text in Judaism. The Samaritan tradition was a version of the Torah that was later adopted by the Samaritan community as their canonical Scriptures. The Septuagintal tradition (a version of the Hebrew Scripture that served as the basis for the Septuagint), the Greek translation of the Masoretic Scriptures, was only available from late antiquity and medieval times (*ibid*).

Among the manuscripts that were discovered at Qumran were those of Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385–388 & 391). Elledge (2005:92–93) considers Pseudo-Ezekiel among some of the most important writings that exhibit features of rewritten biblical manuscripts. 'This writing portrays a creative retelling of Ezekiel's chariot visions and the valley of dry bones that reflects the influence of apocalyptic motifs, including resurrection' (Elledge 2005:93).

Throughout the manuscripts of Pseudo-Ezekiel one finds the underlying theme of hastening time. This theme connects

with the same cluster of ideas related to resurrection (Dimant 2001:9). This correlates with the statement of García Martínez (2007:24–25) regarding the community's apocalyptic idea. The concept of resurrection was not part of the ideology of the people of Israel at the time of the Babylonian exile. Hogeterp (2009:248) states that 'the Dead Sea Scrolls provides first-hand evidence about pre-70 CE Palestinian Judaism', which is important for the development of theories with regard to a resurrection tradition.

Eschatology

Eschatology describes the belief in what is still to come in the final times, what will not be able to change, what is sure to come to pass, the redemption of the world at the end of times. There will be no return to the old days as there will be a new beginning (Baumgarten 1997:153). Grabbe (2010:87) simply refers to the term eschatology as the concept that refers to the 'last things': 'the end of life, the end of the world, final judgement, life after death'. Schwarz (2000:26) describes eschatology in its broadest sense to include all concepts of life beyond death as well as everything that is connected with death, such as 'heaven and hell, paradise and immortality, resurrection and transmigration of the soul, rebirth and reincarnation, and the last judgment and doomsday'. An eschatological time does not only imply a time of crisis; it is also a time of salvation (Schwarz 2000:27).

According to Evans and Flint (1997:1), '[a] prominent feature of the Old Testament is the expectation of future events'. Throughout the Old Testament one finds this expectation for what is still to come. This expectation for future events rests within a specific historical framework. This can be seen in various narratives taken up in the Old Testament, such as the promise of land that YHWH made to Abraham, the hope the people had when in exile in Babylon to return to this land that was promised to Abraham. There seems to be a hope for a better future that would not end in the tradition of Israel throughout the Old Testament. The expectation of a future hope for a better world brings about a shift in the idea of the end time, in an age of peace, righteousness and prosperity. It is this expectation which one refers to when using the term eschatology, which in turn refers to the 'last' period of history or existence (Evans & Flint 1997:2).

While Grabbe's (2010:87) definition of eschatology is a straightforward definition of the basic meaning of the word eschatology, Finitis (2011:6) states that it is somewhat more difficult to define the term eschatology, due to several factors that one must consider when attempting to define this term. The term itself is derived from modern theology (cf. also Collins 1997:56), although it may be applied to a wide range of material from the ancient Near East and ideas that changed over time. 'The noun eschatology is derived from the Greek adjective *eschatos*, which means "last" or "final"' (Finitis 2011:7). This is why the term eschatology is 'understood to refer to expectations and events that are believed to take place at the end-time' (*ibid*).

The *eschaton* presents a new order within an old creation as it is improved. This is seen not only in the narrative of the exodus from Egypt, but also in the flood narrative of Noah and his family. Isaiah 11:11 reinterprets this by stating that YHWH's intervention will save Israel. Therefore, one may view eschatology not only as the end but also as a renewal of creation (Baker 2014:30).

Kelly (2006:22) discusses hope that relates to eschatology and how it brings dialogue between people about the future state of affairs as well as the aspect of hope it has for the future. When one considers biblical eschatological texts, one might consider that it is not so much about the end as it is about a new life within a different historical frame (Baker 2014:29). Eschatology has been closely linked to an end time of hope, a hope for something different and better to come, with the end of the old and the beginning of the new. For Schwarz (2000:25–26) it is clear that the concept of *eschata* does not merely imply those things that will happen in the end, but rather that these things will happen in a decisive way and will influence people in the present and their well-being. Therefore, eschatology 'is a comprehensive concept extending to this life and beyond' (*ibid.*).

According to Finitis (2011:14), the problem with defining the eschatology that is found in post-exilic prophecy is due to the grey area between prophecy and apocalypticism. When one thinks of eschatology in the Old Testament one may interpret it as prophetic eschatology, as suggested by Finitis (2011:8–10).

A prophetic eschatological idea is therefore in line with the worldview of the time and does not refer to the end of a person's life, the final judgement or the afterlife. It is rather the idea that YHWH will judge the people of Israel for their own injustice and the sins they have done in their life. In the light of this and Baker's (2014:21) suggestion to read eschatology in relation to creation, we might understand narratives like the exodus from Egypt as the end time hope the Israelites had for their time in slavery. The flood that YHWH sent to wipe out all life on earth and then sparing Noah, his family and two of each of the creatures that roamed the earth, is another example of eschatology. One may also draw the same lines in all the different narratives of the exile in the Old Testament.

Apocalyptic eschatology associates a hope for the end of times by means of a heavenly vision. It is this interest in heavenly mystery that made the apocalyptic view different from the prophetic view (Baumgarten 1997:155). According to Dimant (2014:249), the idea of a bodily resurrection that was associated with the end of days, which forms the basis of the apocalyptic eschatological teachings, was somewhat controversial in ancient Judaism, although it gained ground among the Jewish schools in the Second Temple period and laid the foundation for the Christian faith.

The apocalyptic writers had the same belief as the prophets, namely that God will intervene in history at a certain time to

judge the world. But they also went beyond the prophetic thinking in many aspects as Collins (1997:6–7) states: the 'apocalypse give glimpses of the world in the present, and those that describe heavenly ascents give more extended glimpses of it'. After a person dies, if he or she were righteous in life, then he or she may hope to participate forever in the heavenly world.

Murphy (2012:23) states, 'Apocalypses draw their authority from direct revelation', therefore 'apocalyptic revelation has a spatial and temporal aspect'. The spatial aspect has to do with the person that receives knowledge about a world that cannot be seen by others; this is considered to be a spiritual world, the world of God, angels, Satan and demons, whilst the temporal aspect deals with the knowledge of what will happen in the future. Consideration must also be given to aspects of the apocalypse that go beyond its basic definition. Murphy (2012:24) notes that one will commonly find that apocalyptic thinkers will take into account aspects like: a dualistic perception of evil; periodisation of history; the concept of an afterlife; resurrection; messianism; as well as angelology and demonology (Murphy 2012:23).

Differences and similarities between Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 fragment 1i

The most obvious difference between Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 Fragment 1i is the length of each text; it appears at first glance that the Masoretic text provides the reader with more information. Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 Fragment 1i is the shortest of the three texts with regard to the amount of lines of text. When comparing the length of these texts it is important to realise that Pseudo-Ezekiel did undergo reconstruction due to the disintegration of the manuscripts that were discovered at Qumran; therefore, one may only speculate about the difference in length of texts, so my own observation is dependent on the reconstruction of Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 Fragment 1i as done by Dimant (2001).

While the Masoretic text begins with a type of introduction of the prophet being taken to a valley that is filled with bones, this introduction does not appear in the Pseudo-Ezekiel texts. In Pseudo-Ezekiel the author refers to the bones as if the subject was already a familiar one. Dimant (2001:33) suggests that this indicates that the authors of Pseudo-Ezekiel were familiar with the exegetical tradition of the vision of the dry bones and thus show an interpretive character in the compositions of Pseudo-Ezekiel.

Another omission from the Pseudo-Ezekiel texts is the lack of detail with regard to the revival of the dry bones. The stages that indicate the prophetic process in the Masoretic text is merely replaced by ויהי כן 'and it was so'. This is the same formula that one finds with the repetition in the creation narrative of Genesis 1. Dimant (2001:33) argues that 'the author of Pseudo-Ezekiel enhances its creative character in analogy to the cosmic creation of Genesis 1, an analogy already embedded in the prophetic vision of Ezek 37:1–14'.

Dimant (2001:33) also points out that Pseudo-Ezekiel's prophecy consists of a three-stage process. The first time the prophet prophesied over the bones to be connected joint to joint; the second time the prophet prophesied that the bones be covered with sinew and skin; then the third time over the winds so that the bodies might be filled with breath. In the Masoretic text there is only a two-stage process, with the author combining the first and second stage as opposed to Pseudo-Ezekiel that separates these two stages.

One also finds an eschatological shift between the Masoretic text and the Pseudo-Ezekiel texts. Whilst the Masoretic text indicates in verse 10 that the future hope of this vision is represented by the whole house of Israel – thus Israel as an entity – the Pseudo-Ezekiel text brings an individual hope for the future by referring to the righteous of Israel (Dimant 2001:33).

Each text also reveals a different ending to the vision that is shown to the prophet by YHWH. Verses 12–14 indicate the end of the Ezekiel 37:1–14 pericope with YHWH giving the prophet instruction about what he must say to Israel and not to the meaning of the prophecy whereas 4Q386 Fragment 1i ends with a blessing to YHWH for the resurrection and new life.

The similarities between these texts only appear in the vision itself that appears in Ezekiel 37:4–10, 4Q385, and 4Q386 Fragment 1i in lines 4–9. Although one can see that these texts deal with the same vision, the verses and lines between these texts are not verbatim copies of each other. Three texts deal with the *בן אדם* 'son of man' that has to act as prophet over the many bones: the bones coming together and receiving flesh, the breath of YHWH that enters these newly formed bodies and the bodies, now living organisms, praising YHWH.

Eschatology in the texts of Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Pseudo-Ezekiel 4Q386 fragment 1i

Collins (2014:388) describes the vision of the dry bones as one of the most memorable of Ezekiel's visions and suggests that the imagery of the dead that lie before Ezekiel in the vision may be in correlation to the Zoroastrian custom of laying out the dead to be picked clean by vultures. If this is indeed the case, the vision may be dated later than the time of Ezekiel, although it is still faithful to his style. Because there was no tradition of resurrection at this time, Collins (*ibid*) suggests that the resurrection that is implied in this vision is merely metaphorical. It is not the dead that will literally be resurrected; 'the whole house of Israel' will be restored and will come back to 'life' and be liberated from the exile. This may be seen as a miracle in itself as one would consider the physical resurrection of the dead.

Joyce (2009:208) interprets verse 2 where it is indicated that there were many bones and that they were very dry as an

image that sums up the situation in which the exiles found themselves. They too were 'lifeless' with no hope to return to Jerusalem. Considering how Brueggemann (2002:74) explains the Old Testament idea between life and death and the fact that there is no physical resurrection tradition at the time, it stands to reason that verse 5 may be interpreted as referring to YHWH's complete control over the situation and the exiles' complete dependence on YHWH and his judgment of them.

When YHWH states that He will breathe life into them, it coincides with Baker's (2014:21) reflection on creation and eschatology. The historical background of the exile and the hopelessness that the exiles felt, lead to an end time hope and YHWH revealing a new creation that will occur after his judgment is fulfilled. 'The whole house of Israel' will be brought out of exile by the new breath that YHWH will breathe into them.

Some modern scholars have debated these texts as to whether the original meaning does refer to literal resurrection when read in a post-biblical version as Dimant (2014:249–250) states. However in the light of the ideological context of this vision it does stand to reason that Collins' (2014:388) point on the matter that the vision implies a metaphorical resurrection, is more plausible. Many scholars are in agreement with Collins who understands this text as a symbolic restoration of Israel as a nation.

The same vision of the dry bones as found in Ezekiel 37:1–14 undergoes reinterpretation in the texts of Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 Fragment 2 & 3 and 4Q386 Fragment 1i) which implies a literal interpretation of the dry bones as opposed to the metaphorical interpretation that one finds in the biblical text (Collins 2014:388). These texts, according to Dimant (2014:251), are unique because they reveal the earliest witnesses for understanding Ezekiel 37:1–14 as they relate to an individual's eschatological resurrection. The largest fragments that have survived among the Pseudo-Ezekiel manuscripts are those of 4Q385 and 4Q386, which deal with two eschatological themes: 'resurrection and the ingathering of the Israelites from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel' (Dimant 2014:251).

When comparing the biblical text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 to that of Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 fragments 2 and 3 & 4Q386 fragment 1i), one can see a difference in language between a non-resurrection idea in the biblical text and an idea of resurrection in the text of Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 fragments 2 and 3 & 4Q386 fragment 1i). The same vision forms the basis in both texts, although the eschatological message changes between the texts. The hope factor that the message reveals is different. While the biblical text reveals hope for the living, Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 fragments 2 and 3 & 4Q386 fragment 1i) texts reveal hope for those after their death. The biblical text reveals a prophetic outlook whereas the text in Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 fragments 2 and 3 & 4Q386 fragment 1i) reflects an apocalyptic version of the same vision.

Results and concluding remarks

Although eschatology refers to the end of times, it is also closely associated with hope. This hope implies that after the end of time something new will be established that will bring about a new future. One cannot think about any genre of eschatology without realising the hope connection. For the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 this hope is characterised as earthly hope (Ladd 1974:58). In the context of the Torah, hope is used to indicate that one will not give up or grow tired in ‘the conviction that Yahweh is gracious’ (Reynolds (2010:37). The book of Ezekiel indicates that the text should be read within the historical frame of the Babylonian exile. Therefore, one must consider the ideology of Israel at this time to completely understand the intended eschatological message of the text.

Collins (2014:388) also notes that the author of the Masoretic text associates the dry bones with the ‘whole house of Israel’ and does not refer to the individuals that form part of Israel as a group. The miracle of the dry bones being resurrected by YHWH lies in the metaphorical language of the author with the hope that the exile will end and Israel as a nation will be restored when later generations will be able to return to Jerusalem.

Considering the ideology and worldview of Israel in the 6th century, it is clear that the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 revealed a prophetic eschatological message of hope that did not indicate anything other than a metaphorical resurrection. The author revealed the hope for a new future for Israel as a nation and did not separate the individual from the group. It is therefore my opinion that the ideology of Israel at this time did not leave room for an apocalyptic eschatological interpretation of this text.

On the other hand, the Qumran community’s ideology was rooted in an apocalyptic tradition (García Martínez 2007:3–11). Collins (2014:388) indicates that the texts from Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 Fragment 2 & 3 and 4Q386 Fragment 1i) are a reinterpretation of the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14. Therefore, it stands to reason that the reinterpretation of Masoretic Ezekiel 37:1–14 was done in the ideological context and tradition of the authors at the time of their reinterpretation of the vision. Their historical context and ideology urged the authors of Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 Fragment 2 & 3 and 4Q386 Fragment 1i) to reinterpret the vision of the dry bones within their apocalyptic perspective.

Whereas the Masoretic text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 and Pseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 Fragment 2 & 3 and 4Q386 Fragment 1i) used the same vision to emphasise the authors’ messages, one must understand the ideology in which each text developed. The ideological context of each author was shaped in a unique historical context. Therefore, each text’s eschatological perspective and hope differ to accommodate the author’s ideology.

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