

**ANICONISM IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE
DECALOGUE IN EXODUS 20:4-6 AND ITS INNER-BIBLICAL
INTERPRETATIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**An Exegetical and Theological Study
of Exodus 20:4-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20**

by

JEONG-WOOK SHIN

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The Faculty of Theology

University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. P. M. Venter

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Table of contents

Summary	vii
Key words	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Abbreviations	xvi
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Statement of the problem and hypothesis	1
1.2 Research Methodology	9
1.2.1 Exegesis of each passage	10
1.2.1.1 Exegesis of Exodus 20:2-6	10
1.2.1.2 Exegesis of Exodus 32:1-6	10
1.2.1.3 Exegesis of Isaiah 40:18-20	10
1.2.2 The inner-biblical interpretations of Exodus 20:2-6	
in the Old Testament: Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	11
1.2.3 Thematic - theological consideration	15
<Excursus 1> The formation the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament	32
1.2.4 Coming to a conclusion regarding aniconism in these passages	37
1.3 Rationale	39
1.3.1 The final text of the canon	39
1.3.1.1 Text as divine narrative	39
1.3.1.2 The establishment of canonical text of the Old Testament	47

1.3.2 Inner-biblical interpretation between texts	48
1.3.2.1 Theoretical consideration	49
1.3.2.2 Practical consideration	60
1.4 Aim of the study	63
CHAPTER 2. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS 20:4-6	
2.0 Introduction	66
2.1 Exegetical consideration of Exodus 20:2-6	68
2.1.1 The unity of the Sinai Pericope in the present text as the final form	68
2.1.2 Exodus 20:2 (The introduction to the Decalogue)	72
2.1.2.1 Exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:2	72
2.1.2.2 The connection between the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the rest of the commandments of the Decalogue	74
2.1.3 Exodus 20:3 (The first commandment of the Decalogue)	76
2.1.3.1 Exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:3	76
2.1.3.2 The connection between the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 and other commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20	81
2.1.4 Exodus 20:4-6 (The second commandment of the Decalogue)	82
2.1.4.1 Exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:4-6	82
2.1.4.2 The connection between the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 and the second commandment in Exodus 20:4-6	87
2.1.5 Summary	89

2.2 In-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6	90
2.3 A provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue	
in Exodus 20:4-6	92
2.3.1 The relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 in the context of the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab Covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69)	95
2.3.2 The arrangement of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11)	103
2.3.3 The formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God	107
2.4 Summary	118
CHAPTER 3. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS 32:1-6	
3.0 Introduction	122
3.1 The exegetical consideration of golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6	124
3.1.1 Exodus 32:1	125
3.1.2 Exodus 32:2-4	129
3.1.3 Exodus 32:5	131
3.1.4 Exodus 32:6	132
3.1.5 Summary	132
3.2 In-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6	133
3.3 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in context	137
3.3.1 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in the literary context of Exodus 32-34	138

3.3.2 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6, and Exodus 25-31 and 35-40	141
3.3.3 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11	144
3.4 Inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Exodus 32:1-6	146
3.5 Summary	153
CHAPTER 4. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE IN ISAIAH 40:18-20	
4.0 Introduction	157
4.1 The exegetical consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20	160
4.1.1 Exegesis of Isaiah 40:18-20	161
4.1.1.1 Isaiah 40:18	162
4.1.1.2 Isaiah 40:19	165
4.1.1.3 Isaiah 40:20	171
4.1.1.4 The relationship between Isaiah 40:18 and Isaiah 40:19-20	177
4.1.2 Isaiah 40:18-20 in the context of its macro unit	181
4.1.2.1 The structural features of Isaiah 40:12-31	182
4.1.2.2 The structural features of the passages dealing with rhetorical question followed by idol-fabrication within Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 40:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7	191
4.1.2.3 The structural features of Isaiah as a whole	201
<Excursus 2> A brief history on the authorship and composition of Isaiah	203
4.2 The theological-thematic consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20	210

4.3 The comparison of aniconism in Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	218
4.3.1 The inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Isaiah 40:18-20	218
4.3.1.1 inner-biblical interpretation between Exodus 20:2-3 and Isaiah 40:18	219
4.3.1.2 Inner-biblical interpretation between Exodus 20:4-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	222
4.3.1.3 Determining one text's dependence on another: Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	224
4.3.2 Theological-thematic comparison of Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	228
4.3.2.1 God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2-3 and Isaiah 40:18	228
4.3.2.2 The prohibition of making image of God in Exodus 20:4-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20	229
4.4 Summary	231
CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	237
WORKS CONSULTED	257

Summary

Title: Aniconism in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 and its inner-biblical interpretations in the Old Testament: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Exodus 20:4-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

Researcher : Jeong-Wook Shin

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. P. M. Venter

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (2011)

Department: The Old Testament Science

Faculty: The Faculty of Theology

University: The University of Pretoria

The aim of this study is to highlight the significance of the prohibition of making any image of God as found in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 with its inner-biblical interpretations in Exodus 32:1-6 and in Isaiah 40:18-20. This study has discussed the close connection between the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue, the idea of Yahweh's incomparability in the introduction and the command to worship God only in the first commandment. God's incomparability prevents Israel from worshipping any other god by making images of them or making any image of God. The 'construct of the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue' serves as a linchpin concept in our understanding of the prohibition of making any image of God. The aniconism matriculated in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 in relation with the introduction and the first commandment in Exodus 20:2-3 forms the basis for the prohibition of making any image of God from the Sinai event onwards.

This construct in Exodus 20:2-6 is shared with Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. There an inner-biblical interpretation of the aniconism of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 in relation with the introduction and the first commandment in Exodus 20:2-3 explicates and applies the meaning of the command in a new situation.

Chapter 1 deals with the statement of the problem and the hypothesis of this study, its methodology, theological rationale, and the aim of this study.

Chapter 2 discusses that the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is important, not only as a phenomenon in the Pentateuch, but also as the provenance of aniconism in the rest of Old Testament. Exodus 20:4-6 can be considered as the explicit traceable provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Pentateuch and the rest of Old Testament. The ‘introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue construct’ provides a framework within which the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment can be understood in the context of the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus and the first commandment of the Decalogue. The second commandment of the Decalogue is sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both of them.

The origin of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God whether it comes from the early or later stages of Israel’s history is discussed with the discussion on the arrangement of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the relation between the two Decalogues in

Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The sharp differences of opinions on the provenance of the prohibition in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is dealt with. This study supposes that the dating of the prohibition on making any image of God of the Decalogue should be attributed to Moses' time as stated in the text of the Pentateuch.

Chapter 3 deals with one key Pentateuchal text for the prohibition of making any image of God, Exodus 32:1-6, as an example that the second commandment represents the prohibition on making any image of God in relation with the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue proclaiming God's incomparability, which is called 'the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct' in this study. Exodus 32:1-6 is regarded to be an interpretation of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

Chapter 4 deals with Isaiah 40:18-20, which forbids idol-fabrication and the worship of an image of God in its relation with the proclamation of God's incomparability, as well as with the worship of other gods and their images. This chapter deals with the similarity of the negative attitude toward worship of God through images found in the legal and prophetic parts of the Hebrew Bible. Theologically speaking, Isaiah's message is in line with the Pentateuch, and flows from the office of the prophet as a plenipotentiary of God to condemn the transgression of the covenantal law. This similarity of the idea between them is seen in respect of its linguistic aspects. Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts, there can be seen a correlation between the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue in

Exodus 20:2-6 and the passage dealing with the incomparability of God and the idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40:18-20.

The final chapter summarizes the flow of the argument in this thesis dealing with three phenomena of aniconism in the Old Testament and suggests the conclusion of this thesis based on the result of the exegetical and thematic study on the three passages.

Key words

- Aniconism
- Decalogue
- Golden Calf episode
- I am Yahweh your God
- Idol-fabrication
- Inner-biblical interpretation
- Introduction and first two commandments construct
- Isaiah
- God's incomparability
- Prohibition of making any image of God
- Prophetic covenantal lawsuit
- Rhetorical question
- Second commandment
- Sinai pericope
- Worship

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Abbreviations

Commonly Used Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Studies
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ARTU	An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit,
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australia Biblical Review</i>
AV	Authorized Version, King James Version
BA	Biblical Archeologist
BAR	Biblical Archeology Review
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BD	The Egyptian Book of the Dead
BEvT	Beiträge zur Evangelische Theologie
BET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Iovaniensium
<i>BI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BK	Bibel und Kirche

BKAT	Biblische Kommentar: Altes Testament
BN	Biblische Notizen, Bamberg
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSC	Bible Student's Commentary
<i>BSO(A)S</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin.
CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBC	The Cambridge Biblical Commentary
CC	Continental Commentaries
ComC.	Communicator's Commentary
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
COT	Commentaar op het Oude Testament
<i>CQR</i>	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Current in Research</i>
CsBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplement
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
<i>ErIs</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel, Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>

FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literature des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FTL	Forum Theologicae Linguisticae
<i>GOTR</i>	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	The Interpreter's Bible.
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
ITC	International Theological Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JHNES	Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JPSOT	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series

JSSM	Journal of Semitic Studies Monographs
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological studies</i>
JTSA	Journal of Theology of South Africa
KTU	Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit
LRS	Leipzig Rechtswissenschaftliche Studien
LXX	Septuagint; Greek translation of the Old Testament
MT	Masoretic Text
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary of the Old Testament
NICOT	New International commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTESup	Old Testament Essays Supplement
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
POT	De Prediking van het Oude Testament
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Révue biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RLA</i>	<i>Reallexikon der Assyrologie</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Review of Theology and Philosophy</i>

SBLDS	Society for Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society for Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bible-Studien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTS	Studies in Biblical Theology Series
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	Studi epigrafici e linguistic sul Vincino Oriente antico, Verona
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series
StBL	Studies of Biblical Literature
StOr	Studia Orientalia
SVT	Supplement to Vetus Testamentum
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBü	Theologische Bücherei
THAT	Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament
ThSt	Theologische Studiëns
ThT	Theologische Tijdschrift
Thw	Theologische Wissenschaft. Studium und Beruf
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TRE	Theologische Reallencyklopädie, Berlin
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen, Kevelaer</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplement of <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
Vg	Vulgate

WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, Berlin</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für theologie und Kirche</i>

Bible Books with Apocrypha

Gn	Genesis
Ex	Exodus
Lv	Leviticus
Nm	Numbers
Dt	Deuteronomy
Jos	Joshua
Jdg	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sm	1 Samuel
2 Sm	2 Samuel
1 Ki	1 Kings
2 Ki	2 Kings
1 Chr	1 Chronicles
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Ezr	Ezra
Nh	Nehemiah



Es	Esther
Job	Job
Ps	Psalms
Pr	Proverbs
Ec	Ecclesiastes
Can	Canticles, Song of Songs
Is	Isaiah
Jr	Jeremiah
Lm	Lamentation
Ezk	Ezekiel
Dn	Daniel
Hs	Hosea
Jl	Joel
Am	Amos
Ob	Obadiah
Jnh	Jonah
Mi	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zph	Zephaniah
Hg	Haggai
Zch	Zechariah
Ml	Malachi
Mt	Mathew



Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Ac	Acts
Rm	Romans
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Gl	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phlp	Philippians
Col	Colossians
1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Th	2 Thessalonians
1 Tm	1 Timothy
2 Tm	2 Timothy
Tt	Titus
Phlm	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews
Ja	James
1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Pt	2 Peter
1 Jn	1 John
2 Jn	2 John
3 Jn	3 John
Jd	Jude

Rv	Revelation
1 Esd	First book of Esdra
2 Esd	Second book of Esdra
Tob	Tobit
Jdt	Judith
AddtEsth	Rest of the chapters of the Book of Esther
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
Sir	Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach
1 Bar	First book of Baruch
LetJer	Letter of Jeremiah
Song3	Song of the Three
Sus	Daniel and Susanna
Bel	Daniel, Bel and the Snake
PrMan	Prayer of Manasseh
1 Macc	First book of Maccabees
2 Macc	Second book of Maccabees

General Abbreviations

B.C.	Before Christ
cf.	confer (compare)
ch(s)	chapter(s)
B.C.E.	Before Common Era
ed(s).	editor(s), edited by

e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for example)
esp.	especially
ET	English translation
et al.	et alii (and others)
f(f).	folio(folios), that is, f. following page / ff. following pages
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (that is)
tr	translation, translated (by)
v(v).	verse(s)

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem and hypothesis

The concept of ‘aniconism’ holds an important position not only in the legal codes of the Pentateuch (Cf. Ex 20:4; 20:23; 34:17; Lv 19:4; 26:1; Dt 5:8; 27:15), but also in the rest of Old Testament (Cf. Schmidt 1983:78).¹ According to the biblical evidence, the aniconic tradition can be considered as one of many distinctive features of Israel’s religion. This feature distinguishes Israelite religion from the religions of her neighbours (Cf. Oswalt 1998:63). The legal, historical and prophetic writings of Israel in the present text, all display a markedly negative attitude towards making any image of God and worshipping God through these images.²

Scholars have no unanimity on the possible provenance of the aniconic attitude in the Old Testament, although they have suggested some postulates (Carroll 1977:64).³ It is

¹ The concept of aniconism as term itself and its definition are directly borrowed from Mettinger (1997:174). The term ‘aniconism’ will be used to refer to cults having no iconic representation of their deity, neither anthropomorphic nor theriomorphic. Mettinger used it as reference to the relation between the symbol (the theophoric object) and its referent (the worshipper’s notion of God). He distinguished between two forms of aniconism: the mere absence of images, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the programmatic demand for a cult without any images, that is, the repudiation of iconic objects. He called the first type “*de facto* aniconism”, and the other one, “programmatic aniconism”. Mettinger’s (1977) conception of “programmatic aniconism” will be used in the inquiry of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in this study. In this study, the term ‘aniconism’ itself is used to designate the prohibition of the representation of God in any form of any image.

² God’s image is something different from an image of God. The first says that there exists an image of God, that is, God has an image which can be represented. But God is spirit and can’t be pictured. The second idea therefore says that an effort is made to create an image of God. The intention in the Bible is rather that no effort should be made at all to try and represent God in the form somebody chooses. Man is made in a God’s image and was created by God himself (Cf. Gn 1:3). Man, however, has tried to create an image of God instead of being God’s image himself.

³ Nonetheless, certain theories are widely held. According to Hendel (1988:368), these can be generally grouped according to four possible motives for the aniconic tradition: (1) Yahweh is a god of history (Zimmerli 1963:246); (2) Yahweh cannot be magically manipulated (Zimmerli 1963:248); (3) Yahweh is transcendent (Von Rad 1962:218);

difficult to date the provenance of aniconism as found in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, it is not totally impossible to find some trace of the provenance of aniconism in the witness of the Bible itself.⁴ According to the biblical narrative in Exodus, the second commandment of the Decalogue not only refers to the phenomenon of aniconism, but also explicitly indicates the provenance of aniconism.⁵ This study starts from the hypothesis that the second commandment of the Decalogue is not only referring to some kind of “programmatically aniconism” but also the explicit provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the rest of the Old Testament. The aniconic tradition, which was transmitted as one of the distinctive features of Israel’s religion and distinguished the Israelite religion from the religions of her neighbours

(4) Yahweh is Israel’s God in contrast to the gods of Canaan (Keel 1972:37-45). However, criticism was given to each view. These views are formed in contrast with ancient Near Eastern religions. However, it was raised that the argument is not satisfactory, because the characteristics of Israelite religion are also shared with other ancient Near Eastern religions (Cf. Hendel 1988:368-372).

⁴ It is necessary to indicate specifically what is meant by the expression ‘the witness of the Bible’. An argument about what the status of the biblical text is, can be outlined in terms of questions such as: is it the precipitation of centuries of tradition?, or is it a factual report of different phenomena?, or is it a historical document?, or can it be seen as an interpretation of ideologies?, or as a religious witness? etc. (Cf. Frei 1974; Sailhamer 1995:37). Basically, the position that the character of the narrative of witness of the Bible can be said as a factual report, rather a theological presentation of history is taken in this study. However, this factual report is also presented as a form of narrative with the sequence by author. This is, as Sailhamer (1992:128) suggests, the view on the witness of the text that the order of the biblical text is the true representation of the order of historical events. This study regards the witness of the Bible as “a ‘literary coherence’ of a ‘written configuration’ about *real events*” (Lee 2004:202). Vasholz (1990:2) shows how it can be supported from the concept or theory of canonicity of the ancient Near Eastern convention that “a deity communicated a message in some form with man and that he in turn accurately recorded it” that the writer of the Bible “preserved for future generations for they are the words God had spoken and man wrote it down” (Cf. Graham 1987:49-50). See 1.3.1.1 Text as divine narrative below for the detail.

⁵ Some attempts were made to represent the prohibition of making any image of God of the Decalogue as a marked phenomenon of aniconism in the Old Testament (Cf. Zimmerli 1974:247-260; Mettinger 1979:18-29; Dohmen 1995:236-277; Dick 1999:7ff.). Mettinger (Cf. 1995: 18-27, 174-175) states that at the very least, the prohibition of making any image of God in the Decalogue presents “programmatically aniconism” in its uncompromising form. Dick (1999:2), who follows the hypothesis of Dohmen (1985:38), points out the second commandment of the Decalogue as a phenomenon of aniconism in the Old Testament, saying “the legal commandments prohibiting cult images include the Decalogue in its various versions.” Moreover, they have a different view that the prohibition of making any image of God was originated in the early period of Israelite history or religion. Rather, they suggest that the prohibition was originated in the later period, that is, in late exilic or in early post-exilic period of Israelite history. See 2.3 A provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 for detail.

(Oswalt 1998:63) can be traced to the first and second commandments of the Decalogue.

As Sarna (1986:144-145) says:

This strict and comprehensive formulation, as we can see in the first and second commandments of the Decalogue, demands the exclusive recognition of and allegiance to one God, the One who showed Himself to be active in history and who is known to Israel by the name of that is consonantly written in Hebrew YHVH.

This study will evince this hypothesis, arguing that the proclamation of God's incomparability requires the prohibition of making any image of God, shared with some passages in the Pentateuch and Isaiah of the Prophets.

The prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue as well as the prohibition of making and paying homage to other gods including their images in the first commandment of the Decalogue. The prohibition in the second commandment is sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue. Both verses reflect God's uniqueness, but it is stated totally different in them. Therefore, this thesis postulates the hypothesis that the proclamation of God's incomparability demanded the prohibition of worshipping God through images. God's incomparability doesn't allow making any image of God. This construct can be depicted into the following table:

The introduction of the Decalogue	God's incomparability (v. 2)
The first commandment of the Decalogue	The prohibition of other gods including their images (v. 3)
The second commandment of the Decalogue	The prohibition of making any image of God (vv. 4-6)

In-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6 confirms that God's incomparability requires the prohibition of making any image of God. In the present text God's self-predication that is used in verse 2 representing God's incomparability, is represented as the ground for the prohibition of making any image of God in verse 5.

Exodus 32:1-6 is another example that interprets the second commandment as interwoven with the idea of God's incomparability, first in the introduction proclaiming God delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt and secondly in the first commandment commanding the exclusion of worship of other gods and their images. This link can be seen behind the condemnation of "the golden calf" in Exodus 32:1-6 (Cf. Patrick 1985:45; 1995:117). The creation and worship of the golden calf under the leadership of Aaron reported in Exodus 32:1-6 is the first instance of idolatry by the Israelites narrated in the Bible in sequence to the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mount Sinai.⁶

⁶ According to the Bible's view of history - although a certain construction of history, which is not necessarily the order of history as we would have constructed it, is provided by the Bible-, the first violation of the second commandment occurred when Israel manufactured and worshipped a "golden calf" directly after the Decalogue was promulgated (Ex 32). It is not self evident that Exodus 32 is dependent upon Exodus 20 just because it follows upon the Decalogue passage. In the reading process Exodus 32 does follow upon Exodus 20, but it still has to be examined whether the events also historically followed upon each other in the same order as the text because the Bible is not a diary which represents exactly the sequence of events. This study is of view that the Bible's witness of the golden calf episode as an event after promulgation of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai is chronologically correct, while in many other cases, it is not.

This study suggests that Moses wrote the law connected with narrative surrounding it from Exodus 20 onward to Deuteronomy (Cf. Dt 31:24) "during the wilderness years after the exodus from Egypt for the

According to the biblical narrative, the first instance of idolatry by the Israelites after the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mount Sinai, the story of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 explicates that the promulgation of the second commandment at Mount Sinai prohibiting the making of image implies the prohibition of making image of God. This event illustrates that by making a golden calf, Israel has transgressed not only the first commandment but also the second commandment. It was a sin that violated the second commandment in creating an image of God in the form of something from his creation, namely, fashioning a calf as an image of Yahweh and declaring that this created thing is the god who brought them out of Egypt (Cf. Enns 2000:415). The calf is thus not only the equation of an idol with God, but also a pagan representation of the true God (Cf. Enns 2000:415). This passage can be used to explicate and confirm the meaning of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 being the prohibition of making any image of God.

Inner-textuality between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 shows that the latter is alluding to the former. What is more, the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 is an evidence showing that the second commandment of the Decalogue is as old as it is regarded as the provenance of the ban in the Old Testament because the golden calf episode tradition in Exodus 32:1-6 is regarded as earlier in Israelite history.⁷

What is stated in the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue construct (Ex 20:2-6) and explicated in the golden calf episode (Ex 32) is also used in

benefit of all Israelites who needed to know the full story of their national history-especially the new generation born in the wilderness as well as those from other ethnic groups (Ex 12:38)” (Stuart 2006:33-34).

⁷ See 3.3.1 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in the literary context of the Exodus 32-34 for the discussion on the formation of this tradition in Exodus 32:1-6.

the prophecy of Isaiah 40:18-20. Many studies tried to explain the meaning of the idolatry or of the denouncing of idolatry in Isaiah 40:18-20. These studies concentrated on the prophet's critique on serving other gods and making their images, but not, to my knowledge, on the prohibition of serving God through images, as it is forbidden by the second commandment. This study tries to read it in the point of view that it can also be the prohibition of making any image of God in relation with God's incomparability.

The expression of God's self-predication in the form of "I am Yahweh, your God" as expression of God's incomparability, is not directly found in Isaiah 40:18-20. The assertion of God's incomparability can, however, be inferred from the allusion of these expressions in the rhetorical question: "To whom will you compare God and to what image will you compare him?" (Is 40:18). This rhetorical question asks the audience to answer if God can be compared with any other being whoever or whatsoever he/she/it is. Its unexpressed but explicitly expected answer is to "none!" Therefore, this rhetorical question prohibits not only serving other gods and their images but also even try to make any image of God. Verses 19-20 in Isaiah 40 duplicates and confirm an unexpressed but explicitly expected theological reply to the rhetorical question stated in verse 18. In reply to the rhetorical question in verses 19-20, which is a rather "neutral" description of idol-fabrication, no direct theological polemic against idolatry as such is found (Holter 1995:77-78). But in its function this description fortifies the statement that not only serving other gods and their image but also creating an image of God cannot compared with God himself (v. 18). It is structured according to the scheme of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making other gods' images, even making an image of God as follows:

	Isaiah 40:18-20
<i>God's incomparability</i>	-Rhetorical <i>וְיִשְׁאַל</i> -question (v. 18): "To Whom will you compare God...?"
<i>The prohibition of not only other gods and their image and even making any image of God (1)</i>	-Self-evident answer: [unexpressed but explicitly expected, "None!"]
<i>The prohibition of not only other gods and their image and even making any image of God (2)</i>	-Indirect reply followed by a idol-fabrication passage (vv. 19-20): "A craftsman casts the image..."

The aniconism as expressed in the second commandment forbidding the making of any image of God functions within the context of God's incomparability and his demand for the exclusive worship for him. God's incomparability requires not only the prohibition of worshipping other gods and their images, but also the prohibition of making any image of God himself. The prohibition of making any image of God as stated in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6, is important not only as a phenomenon of the prohibition of making image of God itself, but also as the provenance enabling us to trace the history of aniconism in the rest of the Old Testament. The construct of the introduction and the first two commandments in the Decalogue provides a framework within which the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God can be understood in the rest of the Old Testament.

The present research deals with the phenomenon of aniconism in Exodus and in Isaiah, presupposing that the Prophets used the prohibition on making an image of God as it was found in the Decalogue. They used the Decalogue in the form it was known during their lifetime.⁸ The prophetic use of the prohibition on an image of God continues the

⁸ This, of course, supposes that the Pentateuch was already finished in its present form by the time of the major prophets. As this is against the present theory that the Decalogue in its present form underwent a

same fundamental objection to images, which Israel has learned from the beginning (Cf. Childs 1974:409).

A preliminary conclusion can, therefore, be drawn from this idol-fabrication passage in Isaiah 40:18-20 as an indirect answer to the question. The prohibition on making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 is to be read in the context of God's incomparability implied in Isaiah 40:18. Isaiah 40:18-20 read in the context of its macro-unit confirms the thesis of this study. Considering compositional strategy in Isaiah 40-55 as part of Isaiah's prophetic covenant disputation, especially in Isaiah 41:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7, it can be seen more explicitly that Isaiah 40:18-20 reuses the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct in Exodus 20:2-6.

This study argues that God's incomparability implies the prohibition of making any image of God. The argument of this study goes as follows: Firstly, the construct of the prohibition on making any image of God, stated in the second commandment, is interwoven with the idea of Yahweh's incomparability in the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the prohibition of serving any other god as stated in the first commandment in Exodus 20:3. Secondly, this study argues that the explicitly traceable provenance of aniconism shown in the legal and prophetic writings of the Old

growing process from an original and shortest version whether it could have been written or oral and the Pentateuch was only finished much later after the exile. Durham (1987:278) suggests that at least five aspects of the form the Decalogue has to be considered: "(1) the ANE covenantal / legal form to which the commandments are obviously related; (2) the "original" form of the commandments in relation to the "expanded" form that some of them now have; (3) the connection between the commandments and other OT covenantal/legal collections, in particular the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 20:22-23:33; (4) the arrangement of commandments into a sequence coincident with the sequence of the larger narrative of which they are a part; and (5) the "age" of the commandments and the hand by which they have been brought into Exodus." On these aspects this study takes a different position believing that the form in which we have received the Ten Commandments comes directly from the hand of Moses. See 2.3.2 The arrangement of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) for detail.

Testament can be traced back to the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. The provenance or reason for aniconism, that is, the prohibition of making an image of God in the Law and the Prophets reflects God's incomparability as found in God's self-prediction in the introduction of the Decalogue (Ex 20:2) and the exclusive worship of God in the first commandment (Ex 20:3). This study will seek to evince the thesis that the second commandment is the provenance of aniconism (the prohibition on making any image of God) as found *inter alia* in Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. For this purpose a comparison will be made between the prohibition of making any image of God in Exodus 20:2-6 and 32:1-6, and Isaiah 40:18-20.

1.2 Research Methodology

This section presents an outline of the methodology used in this study to analyze the texts in Exodus 20:2-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. All of them deal with the prohibition of making any image of God in his worship in related with God's incomparability and the exclusive loyalty of God.

The aniconism expressed in the second commandment in Exodus 20:4-6 explicates the prohibition of making any image of God from the Sinai event onwards. It is necessary to study the relevant passages exegetically and theologically to confirm this hypothesis.

Therefore, this study will firstly do exegesis of the separate passages in Exodus and Isaiah and after that compare Exodus 20:2-6 with Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20.⁹

This process of exegetical and theological consideration can be summarized as follows:

⁹ We do stand by the Sola Scriptura principle of the Reformers. Although 4 centuries passed in which development took place, the principle of the Reformers that Scripture interprets Scripture is can be applied here. This study done from Reformed point of view follows the tradition of the Reformers,

- (i) Exegesis of each passage
- (ii) Inner-biblical interpretation of the texts.
- (iii) Thematic-theological consideration of each passage
- (iv) Coming to a conclusion regarding aniconism in these passages

1.2.1 Exegesis of each passage

1.2.1.1 Exegesis of Exodus 20:2-6

The key question related with the thesis of this study is whether the second commandment (Ex 20:4-6) is a separate commandment or only an elaboration of Exodus 20:3. The position taken up here is that Exodus 20:4-6 is a separate commandment. As a result of this exegesis, this study will represent that the second commandment is the prohibition on making any image of God.

1.2.1.2 Exegesis of Exodus 32:1-6

The exegetical issue raised in Exodus 32:1-6 is that an indication of what the golden calf represents is polytheism or idolatry? This study will argue that the identity of the golden calf is regarded as an image of God, not a foreign god or foreign gods.

1.2.1.3 Exegesis of Isaiah 40:18-20

because it witnesses to the authority of Scripture (Old 2002:170). As this study accepts the Reformers as important constituents of Reformed tradition, this study is interested in them because they point out to us what Scripture is about (Old 2002:171).

The exegetical issue raised in Isaiah 40:18 is that the word, דְּמוּת in verse 18 being used with תַּעֲרֹכוּ can be rendered as an abstract, “likeness” or can mean the image of God. Whatsoever דְּמוּת means, concrete image or abstract sense of likeness, it can include the image of God in that God is compared with something in this context. Thus, this study will argue that verse 18 clearly says that God is not comparable with other gods who can be replaced by images and making of any image of God is prohibited because God himself cannot be compared with an image, even the image of God.

The exegesis of Isaiah 40:19-20 explaining the process of how an image was made is to be answered by the result of exegesis of verses 19-20. There is a consensus that this passage deals with the description of the technical process of idol-fabrication. Nevertheless, there are problems in translating and substantiating the thesis: firstly, whether it describes the manufacture of one or two idols; secondly, it evokes in us the question whether this idol in verse 19 consists of a wooden core, or a metal core; thirdly, the obscure phrase הַמִּסְכָּן הַתְּרוּמָה poses a problem for interpretation. This study will represent how verses 19-20 function as a prohibition of making any image of God in the context of God’s incomparability expressed in the rhetorical question of verse 18.

1.2.2 The inner-biblical interpretations of Exodus 20:2-6 in the Old Testament: Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

Which approach will serve as useful model for the study of the relations between passages such as Exodus 20:3-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with the

prohibition of making any image of God in the Old Testament? This study mainly seeks for the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Old Testament. The relation between the two passages of Exodus 20:3-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 will be studied, and then the relation between Exodus 20:3-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. The method of inner-biblical interpretation can be employed as a means of exploring the correlation between the passage dealing with the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 and the passages dealing with God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God in Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20.¹⁰

A compositional strategy of a biblical text consists of some sub-units. Saillhamer (1995:207) says that "the compositional strategy of a biblical text can be traced at various levels." Saillhamer (Cf. 1995:207-215) divides this category into four levels: "In-textuality, Inner-textuality, Inter-textuality and Con-textuality." Saillhamer (1995:207) defines it as follows: "The cohesive nature of the strategy of the smallest literary unit is called in-textuality...is the inner coherence of the smallest units of text"; Inner-textuality can be defined as "inner-linkage binding narratives into a larger whole" (Saillhamer 1995:209). By means of such links the biblical authors can thematize their basic message" (Saillhamer 1995:210); According to Saillhamer (1995:212), "while inner-textuality is the study of links within a text, inter-textuality is the study of links between and among texts"; Con-textuality "is the notion of the effect on meaning of the relative position of a biblical book within a prescribed order of reading" (Saillhamer

¹⁰ Biblical scholarship, however, shows little unanimity when using a term designating intertextuality (Cf. Holter 2003:14). Not only the details of the terms, but even the term "intertextuality" itself, is used differently by different scholars. Many scholars share more or less the same definition of this concept. See Fishbane 1972:349-352; Sommer 1996:479-489; Nielsen 2000:17-18; Chandler 1982:464; Alter [1989] 1996: 112-113; Garner 1990:228 n.24; Ben-Porat 1985:170; Guillory 1983:74; Bloom [1973] 1974; Culler 1981:107-111; Hays 1989:14-15; cf. Kronfeld 1996:121-123, 125, 129-130; Van Peer 1987:20; Van Wolde 1997:430; Rashkow 1992:57-73; Hollander 1989:14-21; Becker 1993:64-69.

1995:213) and “does not necessitate an intentional linkage of books within the structure of the OT canon... [It] merely recognizes the obvious fact that context influences meaning” (Sailhamer 1995:214). Thus study will borrow and use Sailhamer’s (1995:207) concept of in-textuality for the analysis of a smallest literary unity, for example, Exodus 20:2-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20.

Though Sailhamer’s (1995:207-215) division of the compositional level into four sub-division is very useful for posing how a biblical text consists of some sub-units, it is limited in dealing with the relation between two texts. Rather, it is helpful to use Sommer’s (1998:6; cf. Clayton & Eric 1991:3-4, 21) approach to define the relationship between texts: “influence” and “allusion”, and “intertextuality”. According to Sommer (1998:7f.), the term used in this field can be formulated as follows: Intertextuality “encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and other texts, or between a text being studied and commonplace phrases or figures from the linguistic or cultural systems that do not arise exclusively from an intentional and signaled use of a earlier text, such as citation (which might be studied under the rubrics of influence or allusion).” In distinction to intertextuality, “influence” and “allusion” distinguish between the earlier text (the source or the influence) and the later one (the alluding text or the influenced) and focus attention on the author as well as on the text itself (Sommer 1998:7, 8). The distinction between the two approaches can be evinced: while the former encompasses manifold connections between a text being studied and other texts, or common place phrases and figures from the linguistic or cultural systems whether they come from an earlier or later stage than the text being studied, but doesn’t concern whether the links is known to the author of the text being studied and focuses not on the author of a text but either on the text itself or on the reader: the latter as diachronic

approach distinguishes between the earlier text (the source or the influence) and the later one (the alluding text or the influenced) and focuses attention on the author as well as on the text itself. According to Sommer (1998:10-18), however, “allusion” and “influence” are not a subdivision of intertextuality, but a different category of relation between two texts at the same level, and are not identical. Both concepts, along with some related notions, need to be described on their own. They can, however, be grouped under inner biblical allusion and exegesis.”

This study will focus on the distinction between allusion and influence, and intertextuality on relations between texts. More specifically, this study will use the inner-biblical allusion and exegesis to decide the one text’s dependence to another. This study prefers to use ‘allusion’ or ‘influence’ rather than ‘intertextuality’. This distinction is very useful to study the relations of literary texts including biblical texts because while the former concerns the one text’s dependence to another between two texts, the latter doesn’t (Sommer 1998:7f.). According to Sommer (1998:10-18), echo and exegesis can be added to its rubric. It is not easy to discern the boundary between them. Thus, this study will utilize the model of inner biblical allusion and exegesis in wider meaning including the other rubric: allusion, influence, echo, and exegesis. Sommer (Cf. 1998:20-31) classifies the nature of the relationship along two axes. “One is concerned with form or rhetoric:....explicit citation, implicit reference and inclusion. The other with meaning, interpretation or strategy:....exegesis, influence, revision, polemic, allusion and echo.”

The necessity and advantage of using “allusion” and “influence” rather than “intertextuality” for the study of the relation between biblical texts dealing with the

provenance of an idea and its reflection can be evinced. Comparing Exodus 20:3-6 with Exodus 32:1-6 and Exodus 20:3-6 with Isaiah 40:18-20 respectively, calls for enquiring into the methods used by the authors of Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 respectively. Whereas this study will borrow and use Sailhamer's (1995:207) concept of in-textuality for the analysis of a smallest literary unity, for example, Exodus 20:2-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 and call the term *in-textuality* to designate a textual composition of the smallest unity, this study will borrow and use Sommer's (1998) concept for comparing between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 and between Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20: exegesis, influence, revision, polemic, allusion and echo and call the term *inner-biblical interpretation* to designate a discipline dealing with the relation between two texts. This enquiry calls for attention to the allusivity found in Exodus 20:3-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. Both seem to use earlier texts. Considered the aim of this study, it would be preferable to use the term "allusion" and "influence" rather than "intertextuality" as will be shown later on.¹¹

1.2.3 Thematic - theological consideration

Exodus 20:1-17 can be analyzed according to ancient Near Eastern Treaties having a similar pattern: 1. Preamble (Ex 20:1), 2. Historical prologue (Ex 20:2) and 3. Stipulation (Ex 20:3-17). The Decalogue of Exodus 20:3-17 functions as a Stipulation of the Sinai Covenant (Cf. Kitchen 2003:284). It plays the role of constituting the laws that follow (Ex 20:22-26; 21-23; 25-31; Lv 11-20; 27).¹² Comparing Exodus 20:2 to

¹¹ See 3.4 Inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Exodus 32:1-6 and 4.3.1.1 Inner-biblical interpretation between Exodus 20:2-3 in Isaiah 40:18-20 for a thorough discussion.

¹² The first two commandments of the Decalogue out of the larger context cannot be studied. See 2.1.1 The unity of the Sinai pericope in the present text as the final form for detail on the larger context of them.

the Hittite suzerainty treaties, we can see that it functions as a historical prologue. The name of Yahweh as a suzerain is found here, although in a reduced form. It also refers to the exodus event, which Israel experienced as Yahweh's redemptive grace in the past. The structure of this clause, which has the name of God in the form of Yahweh and his redemption in verse 2, elucidates the Decalogue as it was given by Yahweh with Israel's redemption from Egypt. The historical prologue of Exodus 20:2 stands in relation to the stipulations that follow it, which Israel as the covenantal partner had to obey (Cf. Kitchen 2003:284).

Furthermore, Kitchen (2003:288) pointed out the similarity of form between Exodus-Leviticus and Deuteronomy as well as Joshua 24 concerning the Sinai Covenant and its renewals, and ancient Near Eastern treaties, including the Hittite suzerainty treaties, indicating both of them have the same elements of a treaty.¹³ The Hittite suzerainty

¹³ In contrast to this traditional view that the Ten Commandments had been handed down to us from Moses himself stands the view that it can never be traced to the times of Moses (Cf. Nielsen 1982:88; Alt 1934; von Rad 1938; Noth 1948). On the one hand, it is maintained that the tradition of Moses as the promulgator of the law stands in relation to the Hittite vassal contracts from the middle and latter half of the second millennium B.C.E. (Cf. Nielsen 1982:90). In these vassal contracts or covenants the Great King would remind his vassals or partners of the benefits he and his predecessors has bestowed upon them, and he would issue the basic demand for loyalty. Thereafter would follow a number of separate regulations such as the invocation of the deities of the parties, curses against a possible violator of the contract, and regulations on how to preserve the document (Cf. Nielsen 1982:90). Mendenhall (1955) contends that the tradition of the Ten Commandments fitted into this pattern and that these Hittite analogies supported the tradition of Moses as law-giver. Mendenhall (Cf. 1954:50-76; 1955:5-41) and Baltzer (1971:9-93) says that the covenantal law of the Old Testament copied the form of the Hittite suzerain treaties. Mendenhall (1954; 1955) compared the form of the treaties between ancient Near Eastern nations. He insists on the close similarity between the form of the apodictic law of Israel and of Hittite suzerainty treaties, and indicates the commonality between the ancient Near Eastern treaties and the treaty in the Bible. Mendenhall (1954:58ff.; cf. Kitchen 2003:290) points out the clear congruence between the format of the Hittite corpus of treaties and part of Exodus plus Joshua 24, suggesting that the Sinai covenant might well have had thirteenth-century roots. Other biblical scholars, on the other hand, "have challenged the idea that the Exodus-Liviticus and/or Deuteronomic covenants reflects the structure of the second-millennium treaty covenants of the ANE, a connection that had been convincingly presented by G. E. Mendenhall (1954:26-46, 49-76; 1955) (Stuart 2006:440)" and also insist that the Bible treaty documents, including the Decalogue corresponds with ancient Near Eastern treaties of the seventh to sixth centuries B.C.E. (MaCarthy 1963; 1973; 1978) because they contain the elements of ancient Near Eastern treaties of 7th and 6th centuries B.C.E.. Kitchen (2003:290; cf. 289-294), however, says "there were clear distinctions between the late-second-millennium treaties and the first millennium group. The "formulation of the Hittite treaties" is unique to the period between 1400 and 1200 (more exactly, ca. 1380-1180

treaties are composed of the following elements: 1. Title, 2. Historical prologue, 3. Stipulation, 4. Depositing and Reading of text, 5. Witnesses (the list of gods), 6b. Blessings and 6c. curses. The Assyrian treaty is composed of the following elements: 1. Title, 5. Witness, 3. Stipulation, 6c. Curses (Mendenhall 1954:58ff; cf. Kitchen 2003:288). The corpus of Exodus-Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua24 are composed of the following elements: 1. Title, 2. Historical prologue, 3. Stipulation, 4. Depositing and Reading of text, 5. Witnesses, 6b. Blessings and 6c. Curses. The biblical covenant seems to be more similar to the Hittite suzerainty treaties than the Assyrian treaty in the comprising elements (Mendenhall1954; 1955; cf. Kitchen 2003:288). According to Kitchen (2003:284), Exodus-Leviticus, which deals with the Sinai covenant, can be analyzed according to the form of the ancient Near Eastern treaties as follows:

1. Title and preamble: Now God spoke all these words, saying...(Ex 20:1)
2. Historical Prologue: I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of Egypt...(Ex 20:2)
3. Stipulation: a. Basic / 10 words (Ex 20:3-17)
 - b1. Details (Ex 20:22-26; 21-23; 25-31)
 - b2. Details (Lv 11-20; 27)
- 4a. Depositing Text (Ex 25:6 / Book by Ark)
- 4b. Reading Out (Ex 24:7)
5. Witness (Ex 24:4 / 12 stelae)
6. Blessing (Lv 26:3-13 / If you follow My word, I send...peace)
7. Curses (Lv 26:14-43)

B.C.E.)” Stuart (2006:440; cf. Miller 2001:146-166) maintains that “the elements thought to be neo-Assyrian (i.e., not exactly typical of second-millennium treaties) are simply the specific Israelite adaptations made by Yahweh through Moses, rather than having late extrabiblical origins at all.”

The account of the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai is found in chapters 19-24 of Exodus. The rest of the Old Testament contains the story of how Israel responded to the demands of the covenant relationship. Israel has the responsibility to live according to the law under the terms of the Sinai covenant. God expects his people to fulfill their obligations under the covenant.

The abundant accusations, judgments, and sermons or instructions of the people, however, do not refer unambiguously to the Mosaic Law as if they lived their lives under the impact of the Mosaic Law whatsoever (Cf. Nielsen 1982:88). Although Clements (1975:23) argues that “we can see that the traditions which the prophets inherited and used had a place in the emergence of a distinctive covenant ideology in Israel”, he attributes the concept of the prophet as a covenant mediator to the product of later theology.”¹⁴ Mayes (1979:60-71) agrees with Clement, saying “Deuteronomic covenant theology is not in itself to be understood as an innovation, but as the end of a

¹⁴ Regarding the office of prophets Clements (1965:127; cf. 23f, 123) states that “the distinctiveness of the canonical prophets...lays in their particular relationship to, and concern with, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.” Prophets were the ones who “actualized covenant tradition in a situation of crisis, in which the older had fallen into decay” (Clements 1965:123). Clements (1965:23f.) presents this thesis in connection with the more general acknowledgement that “the controlling factor” in the development of the several literary traditions in the Old Testament was Israel’s knowledge of their covenant relationship with Yahweh. Clements (1965:54) says that the actual term ‘covenant’ was only found twice in the eighth-century B.C.E. prophets, i.e. in Hosea 6:7 and 8:1. He argues that to elect someone leads to some kind of special relationship between the one who elects and the one who is being elected. Within this framework the obligations of the latter are set out. The use of the term ‘covenant’ to describe such a relationship was ‘only of secondary importance’. Clements (1965:126) holds that the prophets’ unique contribution was to reactivate the idea of the covenant, which had fallen into neglect. He goes as far as to assert that, without the prior fact of the covenant, the prophets would be unintelligible to us. In general, scholars see the prophets as drawing on the various ways in which disaster could occur in the ancient Near East employing the legal metaphor of a court action (Cf. Phillips 2002:164-165). These scholars attempt to explain many concepts within the prophetic corpus as deriving from the political suzerain treaties. According to them, there was a strange lack of theological creativeness on Israel’s part when confronted with radically changed circumstances. One could have expected them to develop new theological insights (Cf. Phillips 2002:165). Clements (1965:126) abandoned the attempt to see the prophet as fulfilling the office of covenant-mediator based on Deuteronomy 18:15-22. He considered the Deuteronomist as interpreter of the prophets who were both preachers of *tōrâ* and a spokesman of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.

In this, Clements relied on Mendenhall’s (1954a: 26-46; 1954b:50-76) thesis that related the covenant to the Hittite suzerainty treaties, which were reflected in the prophetic curse and lawsuit oracles.

process, which is finally assimilated into a system, as set out in the Deuteronomic history work. The law and the prophets are thus very early seen in conjunction, which explains the almost total absence of the canonical prophets from the Deuteronomistic History.” Barr (1977:23-28), however, says “whether the covenant of Yahweh with Israel became significant so late” is suspicious. Barr (1977:23-28; cf. Martin-Achard 1978:299-306) suggests “that syntactical and linguistic, rather than ideological and theological restrictions might explain its use in one kind of linguistic context and not in another.” Muilenburg (1965:97) maintains that the prophets were “like Moses, Yahweh’s messengers, his covenantal mediators...[were] sent from the divine King, the suzerain of the treaties.” Muilenburg (1966:466) points out that there is a close connection in respect of the continuing influence of the Sinai covenant on the commission that Israel received: “covenant (בְּרִית) and teaching (תּוֹרָה) belong together; the covenant people have been entrusted with teaching or law (Cf. Ex 19-24).” Kitchen (2003:377) indicates the prophets’ main theme as follows:

[T]heir main themes involve warnings of punishment for wrong-doing, whether “religious” (cultic) or moral/ethical, against both foreign nations and Israel/Judah, and (often) promises of restoration and blessing if the admonitions be heeded and Israel/Judah return to a “clean” and exclusive worship of YHWH.

The Sinai covenant, with repeated blessing/curses for obedience/disobedience, was a basis for all that followed it, especially for the prophets as plenipotentiaries of the covenant (Cf. Kitchen 2003:397). They were all basing their polemic on the old Sinai covenant: the worship of YHWH versus other deities and images plus their rites (Cf.

Kitchen 2003:401). The prophets sought to call both rulers and people back to the Sinai covenant, and invoke its curses, while looking also for the future blessing after the punishment was over (Kitchen 2003:401). They in effect tried to call Israel and Judah back to their ancestral covenant made at Sinai, which made them subjects of the sole sovereign, their god YHWH (Kitchen 2003:420). Like other kings, he required their exclusive allegiance, not shared with other deities, hence a basic monotheism (Kitchen 2003:420).¹⁵

Broadly, the prophet's main themes involve warnings of punishment for wrong-doing and promises of restoration and blessing if the admonitions be heeded and Israel/Judah return to a "clean" and exclusive worship of Yahweh (Kitchen 2003:377). The conjunction of curse/blessing proceeded from the terms of the long-standing covenant first established at Sinai following the exodus from Egypt, and renewed by Jordan, as can still be seen in Leviticus 26 as well as Deuteronomy 28 (Kitchen 2003:377). That covenant underlays the prophetic call to the people and kings urging them to follow the traditional covenant and its exclusivity in the worship of YHWH, providing practical application in right living, treating one's fellows justly and kindly (Kitchen 2003:377). The main theme of the Prophets is Israel's disloyalty to her ancient covenant with YHWH as their sole and sovereign god, by adding other cults to his, or even going over to other cults in his stead, and indulging in forbidden practices (Kitchen 2003:395).¹⁶

¹⁵ 'Monotheism' differs from 'henotheism' and 'monolatry' (Kitchen 2003:330-333). Monotheism can be found as early as the fourteen/thirteenth centuries B. C. E.. None of the commonplace objections to a "Mosaic monotheism" made by Biblicists have any actual validity (Cf. Stager 1998:148-149; Propp 1999/2000:537-575)

¹⁶ Kitchen (2003:395; cf. 330-333) points out that the monotheism of Israel is as prominent as other nations, stressing some three point: "First, YHWH's role as *sovereign* in a treatylike covenant meant that he stood over Israel as their ultimate-and *sole*-king, even though that terminology (Hebr. *Melek*) was scrupulously avoided...Second, monotheism was *not* invented among uprooted Jews during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E....Third...a belief in, and loyalty to, just one deity *does* naturally tend to lead to the exclusion of all other deities, regardless of whether they are thought to exist

The demands for righteousness (and against non-YHWH cults) throughout some prophets presuppose the socio-religious requirements of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which are much more pervasive (Kitchen 2003:377). With this go the prophetic condemnations of social injustice in the Israel/Judean conduct of daily life, which also constituted of the breach of the social justice dimension of the basic covenant, held since Sinai (Kitchen 2003:395). Thus, the Sinai covenant, with repeated blessings/curses for obedience/disobedience, was a basis for all that followed it, especially in the prophets (Kitchen 2003:397). The prophets were all basing their polemic on the Sinai covenant, along two lines: (1) the worship of YHWH versus other deities and images plus their rites, and (2) social justices that equally broke with the letter and/or spirit of the social injunctions of the Sinai covenant in Exodus and Leviticus and allied items in Numbers and in Deuteronomy (Kitchen 2003:401). The prophets sought to recall both rulers and people to the ancient covenant, and invoked its curses, while looking also for future blessing when the discipline of punishment was over (Kitchen 2003:401). Classic Israelite prophets of the early first millennium did not start from nowhere. They in effect recalled Israel and Judah to their ancestral covenant from Sinai, which made them the subjects of a sole sovereign, their god, YHWH (Kitchen 2003:420). Like other kings, he required their exclusive allegiance, not shared with other deities, hence a basic monotheism-something already “in the air” in the fourteenth centuries B.C., with older roots (Kitchen 2003:420). During the settlement period the Hebrews compromised in practice, then in concept, by admitting other deities also, in breach of covenant (Kitchen 2003:420). Thus the prophets recalled Israel to an *existing*, former covenant; they were not imposing something *new*, or nobody would have listened (Kitchen 2003:420).

also well (henotheism, monolatry) or are deemed to be nonexistent (strict monotheism).”

Labuschagne (1969:133-134; cf. Sellin 1933:12) points to the relation between “this experience of Israel at the beginning of its history, that Yahweh by virtue of His act of salvation is the incomparable One” and its maintenance by prophetic voices (Cf. Dt 26:5ff.; Jos 24:5ff.; Jdg 6:13; Am 2:10; Hs 11:1; 13:4; Mi 6:4; Jer. 2:6).”¹⁷ Prophetic appeal to the covenant is explicit in the Prophets.¹⁸ The correspondence between Pentateuchal law and prophetic covenant lawsuit in this case, however, has to be substantiated. How did the prophets as plenipotentiaries of Yahweh in the administration of his covenant with Israel recall Israel to the old covenant and apply the law?

The Pentateuchal laws are depicted as part of the covenant between God and Israel. The laws are made special to Israel, the covenant partner of God. Bergen (1974:211-212) indicates how this was recognized by the prophets. He says:

¹⁷ An investigation into the question of the place of the concept of Yahweh’s incomparability in the cult world” (Labuschagne 1969:134) requires to be mentioned separately. But “the concept was not linked with one particular cultic act or festival, but that it had its place in the whole of the cycle of annual festivals and in individual religious life, even as it has its place to this day in the Jewish divine service.” (Labuschagne 1969:134)

¹⁸ This is found in the three of the “great” prophets, and in four of the Twelve (Kitchen 2003:377). Bergen (1974:221) says that “a look at the contents of the accusation portion (which stipulates what the “accused” has done wrong) of the prophetic judgment-speeches of Amos, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah reveals a correspondence in content to certain Pentateuchal laws” Bergen concentrates on the offences actually cited by the prophets in their indictment. His argument rests not only on Mendenhall’s thesis about the covenant origins of Israel, but also on Alt’s distinction between apodictic law and casuistic law. Bergen contends that, whenever the prophets used law as basis of their condemnation of Israel, their accusation was grounded solely on the breach of apodictic law, because nowhere is there any appeal to casuistic law. Bergens’s view is that the prophets understood that God had made a covenant with Israel, conceived of as a treaty, by which it was committed to a certain standard of behaviour as set out in the apodictic law, and which God himself would enforce. For Bergen, it is in the prophetic judgment speech that the law and prophets come together. He relies on Westermann’s (1967) analysis of the forms of prophetic speech. Thus Bergen maintains that a comparison of Alt’s apodictic law and the content of the accusation sections of the prophetic judgment speeches indicates that the latter was entirely dependent on the former (Blenkinsopp 1977).

For the criticism of Bergen’s thesis see Schottroff 1977:3-29; cf. Mendenhall 1954:29-30; Gevirtz 1961:137-158; Kilian 1963:185-202.

The Prophets establish that a law must be part of the covenant in three ways: 1) by the language they use... the language of a number of the disasters, which are announced as consequences of this behavior, is paralleled in the treaty-curses....2) by the use of form. Isaiah institutes a covenant lawsuit indicting the people for behavior contrary to apodictic law...3) by establishing what it is about the accused that makes him indictable. The accused is... 'Israel,' the covenant community. If the covenant people or its representatives behave contrary to apodictic law, it is ground for a covenant lawsuit, amounts to "rebellion" against, and not recognizing the authority of this covenant sovereign. It results in the activation of the covenant-curses (Bergen 1974:221-222).

There are a considerable number of instances where a prophet makes explicit reference to earlier laws (Fishbane 1985:293; cf. Kitchen 2003:401). In addition to explicit prophetic references to Pentateuch laws, there are many other cases where the relationship is implicit and much less precise (Fishbane 1985:295). The references to Pentateuchal laws are oblique and indirect and has almost no firm lexical basis. But even this lack of explicit references is not sufficient to gainsay the strong impression made by the sources that a prophet was aware of ancient Israelite legal traditions, and that he made use of them in the course of his covenantal lawsuit (Fishbane 1985:295).

According to Fishbane (1985:296), we can conclude from the antiquity of apodictic formulations of law in ancient Israel that the Prophets made considerable use of ancient Israelite legal traditions. It can be inferred that the older Israelite legal stratum, whether it may be official or local, ethnic or civic, oral or written, was recognized and utilized by the prophets in their covenant disputations (Fishbane 1985:296).

The ideological background of a prophetic passage may be deducted from the basis of known Pentateuchal sources and ideas (Fishbane 1985:299). That the prophets utilized the old legal notions aggadically - although just how, and in what state these were known to them, is uncertain (Fishbane 1985:299). In this manner, the prophets exegetically reinterpreted the old law. The textual transformation is aggadic: while the aggadic rhetoric does not exist for the sake of the old tradition, that is, for the sake of its *legal* exegesis. Rather, the aggadic exegesis existed solely for its own rhetorical sake, and the law functions as the particular occasion for the rhetorical-exegetical enterprise which results, not more (Fishbane 1985:300).

Wright (1962) proposed that the form of the covenant lawsuit was as follows:

1. Call to the witnesses to give ear to the proceedings.
2. Introductory statement of the case at issue by the Divine Judge and Prosecutor or by his earthly official.
3. Recital of the benevolent acts of the Suzerain.
4. The indictment.
5. The sentence.

Harvey (1967) suggested a more elaborated scheme, distinguishing between five 'stable elements' in the form as follows:

1. Preparation for the trial, including the summoning of heaven and earth as witnesses, declaration of the judge's right to act, and the accusation.

2. Cross-examination by the judge, who is also the plaintiff; no response is ever expected or given.
3. The persecutor's accusatory address, usually recalling the plaintiff's past benefits and the accused's infidelity.
4. Official declaration of the accused's guilt.
5. Type A: Condemnation expressed in threats, but not in judgments.
Type B: Positive instruction as to how the accused should respond.

Nielsen (1978) also suggested an outline of the lawsuit in the simplest possible form as follows:

1. Depiction of the scene of the trial
2. Accusation
3. Defense
4. Judgment.

Under the continuing influence of the Sinai covenant, Isaiah follows the contents of certain Pentateuchal laws. The laws found in the Pentateuch are part of the covenant between God and Israel. The prophetic use of the second commandment represents basically the same fundamental objection to images which Israel has learned before.

The prophet Isaiah's prohibition of God's image on account of the incomparability of God, is in line with the prohibition of God's image in the Sinai covenant in Exodus. The Sinai covenant, with its repeated blessing/curses for obedience/disobedience, formed the basis for all that followed it, especially for the prophets as plenipotentiaries of the

covenant. As Kitchen (2003:420) says, they based their polemic on the old Sinai covenant: “The prophets sought to call both rulers and people back to the Sinai covenant, and invoke its curses, while looking also for the future blessing after the punishment was past. They in effect tried to call Israel and Judah back to their ancestral covenant made at Sinai, which made them subjects of the sole sovereign, their god YHWH. Like other kings, he required their exclusive allegiance, not shared with other deities, hence a basic monotheism.”

Isaiah poses the covenant disputation of deviation on the prohibition of making any image of God to the covenant people, introducing God’s incomparability with a formula of God’s self-predication, which is seen in structure of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. Thus, this study presents that Isaiah’s covenant disputation of Isaiah 40:18-20 is based on the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6.

The prophet Isaiah acts as plenipotentiary of the covenant who accuses the people of the covenant according to this covenantal law. He uses of the first two commandments to show to Israel, the covenant community of Yahweh, that the incomparability of God requires the prohibition to represent Yahweh in any way, whether cultic or not.

According to Williamson (2003:393), “many scholars have suggested that either the whole or part of the opening chapter of the Book of Isaiah is in itself a part of a ‘covenant lawsuit’.” The term ‘covenant lawsuit’ can be replaced by ‘prophetic lawsuit’ or ‘prophetic/covenant *rîb*.’¹⁹ This genre was considered as a genre for representing God

¹⁹ For a general discussion of the covenantal lawsuit see Daniel 1987:339-60; Huffmon 1959:285-95; Roche 1983:563-574; Wright 1962:26-67.

as formally accusing his people and finding them guilty, although its specific background should be in the particular indictment of covenant infringement associated with secular ancient Near Eastern treaties. (Cf. Nielsen 1978:5-26; Houtmann 1993:117-22)

The rhetoric of the book of Isaiah, of which the formal structure comprises of several major sections, and presents a complex frameworking of patterns and repetitions among its subunits, is closest to that of the prophetic covenant disputation (O'Connell 1994:19-20). It may be inferred that the book of Isaiah best manifests its structural unity, thematic coherence and rhetorical emphasis when read as an exemplar of the prophetic covenant disputation genre (O'Connell 1994:20). Arrangement of materials in the book was understood to cohere under the rhetoric of prophetic covenant disputation (O'Connell 1994:21). It seems reasonable to infer that overall rhetoric of the book is that of a prophetic covenant disputation, that it is the covenant disputation that forms the basis of the book's rhetorical strategy (O'Connell 1994:21). Isaiah's exordium (1:1-2:5) appears to be a truncated version of the biblical covenant disputation form and an aggregate of rhetorical elements typical of ancient Near Eastern and biblical covenant disputation forms, aligning with the rhetorical strategy of the book of Isaiah as a whole (O'Connell 1994:21).²⁰

²⁰ These explicit examples of a strategy such as disputation against the people (3:13-14a; cf. 27:8; 45:9; 57:16), vindication of his servant before the people in 49:25 and 50:8, and vindication of his people before the nations (51:22; cf. 2:4; 41:11) in Isaiah to portray YHWH in covenant disputation may lend further support that it is the genre of covenant disputation that best defines the controlling rhetoric strategy of the book, even though the book contains a variety of speech forms, which would not normally be associated with a covenant disputation form (O'Connell 1994:21).

Similarity is found in both legal and prophetic parts in forbidding images in worship showing a negative attitude towards idolatry, i.e. worship of God through images.²¹ It results from the office of the prophet as a plenipotentiary of the covenant having the authority to accuse the people according to the covenantal law. This can be seen in the prophetic curses and lawsuit oracles, which was inherited from a distinctive covenant ideology in Israel. One of the main themes found in the “written prophets” is Israel’s disloyalty to the ancient covenant with YHWH being their sole God and sovereign. The prophet Isaiah as a plenipotentiary of the covenant stresses the idea of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.

Isaiah’s references to the covenant responsibility in connection with the one of divine self-predication have to be attended to:

[A] basic formula such as “I am Yahweh” has specific connotations [in this case, the incomparability of God as the motif for the prohibition of images of God] and retains these through changing historical circumstances ([in this case, not the fall of Jerusalem, the loss of the liturgical context of the temple worship, and the exile to Babylon in general, as scholars assume, but a warning about disobedience, the proclamation about the fall of Jerusalem, and of Yahweh’s judgment on their sin of worshipping other gods and of God through images]) (Harner 1988:159).

²¹ Many passages on idol-critique can also be conceptualized according to the form below. Schematically, they can be represented according to Bergen’s (1974:183) thesis, which is presented in a tabular form as follows:

1) A summary of the contents of the prophets’ accusations, the contents of which corresponds to that of certain Pentateuchal laws;		
2) The prophetic passages where each accusation is found;		
3) The corresponding Pentateuchal legislation.		
<i>Accusation</i>	<i>Prophetic Passage</i>	<i>Pentateuchal Legislation</i>
Images	Mi 1:7; 5:12; Is 10:10; Jr 8:19	Ex 20:4; Lv 26:1; Dt 27:15
Idolatry	Is 2:8, 18, 20; Jr 1:16	Lv 19:4; 26:1

Harner's (1988) insight on divine self-predication in the Old Testament supplies a vehicle for a thematic approach in this thesis.

Isaiah thought of Israel as the covenant community that had the obligation to follow the religious and ethical tenets of the Sinai covenant and in very careful, and tactful ways-such as the use of the formula "I am Yahweh"-reminded his audience that they were called to live responsibly as the community of the covenant. When Isaiah connects the self-predication "I am Yahweh" with a reminder to Israel of their covenant responsibility, he is employing this self-predication in a way that he had evidently become familiar with from existing Old Testament traditions.

Kitchen (2003:396) points out that one of the main strands which can be seen in the Sinai covenant is its monotheistic and exclusive basis. It can be seen in the "Ten Words" (Ex 20:1-17): no deity alongside/instead of YHWH, and no material images for worship (Ex 20:3-4). Under the continuing influence of the Sinai covenant (Ex 19:5), the Prophets share with the Pentateuch the accentuation of God's word against images. According to Childs (1974:409), the prophetic use of the second commandment continues basically the same fundamental objection to images which Israel has learned from the beginning (Cf. Phillips 2002:178).²² The prophetic use of the second commandment by the prophet being a plenipotentiary of the covenant accusing the people of the covenant according to this covenantal law, shows that at least to Israel, the

²² See Phillips (2007:178) for the explanation of the prophetic silence about the Decalogue and its provisions. Phillips's comment is helpful to understand the prophetic silence about the law of the Pentateuch. Phillips (2002:178) mentions that the prophetic silence can be due to other reasons than the ignorance of its existence.

covenant community of Yahweh, the incomparability of God requires the prohibition to represent Yahweh in any way, whether cultic or not.

Isaiah met with pagan cultures because pagan religion was already present and pervasive. In chapters 40-55, the idols were taken into account, for they were real to some Israelites (Cf. Labuschagne 1966:144). As in the rest of the Bible, Isaiah insists that the Supreme Power ruling the universe is totally different from his creation. God cannot be represented by any form in the universe, and cannot be manipulated by any of those forms. The inevitable result of such a belief is monotheism, as represented in the Scriptures (Oswalt 1998:175). As Sarna (1991:144-145) observes, “the essence of monotheism is that God is absolutely sovereign precisely because He is wholly independent of the world He created...to present an invisible God in any material and tangible form whatsoever is by definition to distort the divine reality.” (Cf. Enns 2000:569).

Isaiah considered Israel to be a covenant community with the obligation to follow the religious and ethical tenets of the Sinai covenant. By using the rhetorical question followed by an idol-fabrication passage Isaiah reminded his audience that they were called to live responsibly as the community of the covenant (Harner 1988:152). Isaiah uses it in connection with a theme that was expressed in the Sinai covenant, even though he uses it with new emphasis on the meaning of it in Isaiah 40-55 (Harner 1988:159).

In sum, the close correlation between the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6, and the passages in Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with the

incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God will be examined thematically. The passages of Exodus 20:3-6, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 share the same theological context, namely the prohibition on making any image of God on account of God's incomparability. The prophet Isaiah reuses the second commandment of the Decalogue, in which God prohibits the making of any image of God in the context of his incomparability. The request here is not to place God in line with other gods in the pantheistic shrine. This would degrade him to a mere god among other gods in the pantheon. This forms the basis of what follows. As a result of the exegesis of these two passages, it is clear that both express the same theme, which seems to be too consistent to be coincidental or simply attributable to a common tradition. The thematic continuity between the two passages can be inferred from their linguistic affinities. Thematically, this continuity comes from the office of the prophets as covenantal plenipotentiaries. The prophets condemn the human partner of the covenant in a covenantal lawsuit, using the law, which originated in the Sinai covenant. Thus, the Ten Commandments, as the law of the Sinai covenant were used by the prophets in their role as covenantal plenipotentiaries. The prohibition on any image of God, expressed explicitly in the structure and theme of the first two commandments in Exodus, explicates the provenance of the prohibition of images of God in the Old Testament. Therefore, the prohibition on any image of God in Isaiah shows the same theological thought as found in the Decalogue of Exodus. It is especially clear in the passages in Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with a rhetorical question followed by an idol-fabrication.

<Excursus 1> The formation the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament

The basic presupposition of this study on the canon formation is that the present form of the canon is, in reality, identical to the Pentateuch in the time of Moses. The argument of this study implies that the present form of the Pentateuch is not something, which grows and reaches a final form after a long history of tradition.

Childs (1979:56, 60-61) insists that the present form of the Hebrew canon as a product of a historical development has to be recognized, distinguishing between the history of the literature and the history of the canon. Childs (1979:62) maintains that, although “writing the word of God by Moses (Cf. Dt 31:24ff.) cannot be unequivocally fixed, nor can the scope of the law attributed to Moses be determined with certainty, many scholars agree that the age is pre-exilic and the scope is not to be identified with the whole Pentateuch.” In view of the identification of the literary and canonical history, Childs (1979:61) criticizes both Kline’s view and Freedman’s on the relation between the literary and canonical history as follows: “In the recent search for a new reconstruction of the history of Israel there have been several attempts to identify the two processes, whether by means of a new literary –critical hypothesis (Freedman) or by a return to an older conservative position (Kline). In my judgment, whether stemming from the left or right of the theological spectrum, is a step backward and cannot be sustained.” Childs (1979:61) indicates Kline’s basically dogmatic formulation of the history of the canon in terms of a divine inspiration which assured an inerrant transmission of the Word of God. In my judgment, as Kline (1981:40) points out, “the theories on canon formation are only hypotheses concerning the time of composition or redaction of the various books or parts of it, having dictated the shape of the canon formation.”²³ Kline’s (1981:25-61) theory does more justice to the biblical account with his view on the canon formation in the light of Ancient Near Eastern custom, namely that divine revelation is immediately recorded, and in the light of the internal example of the Bible of this custom. The identification of the literary and canonical history is considered as legitimate by

²³ Harrison (1969:284) correctly says that the fundamental issue is whether they consider divine inspiration as the principle of canon formation or not. Beckwith (2003:52) also states “what qualifies a book for a place in the canon of the Old Testament...is not just that it is ancient, informative and helpful, and has long been read and valued by God’s people, but that it has God’s authority for what it says....It is not just a record of revelation, but the permanent written form of revelation. This is what we mean when we say the Bible is inspired and it makes the books of the Bible in this respect different from all other books,” although “the issue of inspiration in biblical exegesis is [still] controversial...as far as it[s] meaning and applications are concerned” (Lee 2004:220; cf. Geisler 1980:227-264).

some scholars, on account of the many evidences both internal and external to the Bible. During the Mosaic age specific collections of laws were put into writing, as indicated by the formulation of the Book of the Covenant (Ex 24:4ff.) and the composition of the essentials of Deuteronomy (Harrison 1969:263). As scholars (Childs 1979:62; Harrison 1969:263; Vasholz 1990:2ff.) commonly observes, the book of Deuteronomy (Cf. Dt 31:24ff) records an act which clearly reflects an early stage in the growth of the canon. Moses wrote the words of the divine law in a book that was deposited at the side of the ark of the covenant for periodical reading before the entire assembly of Israel. Vasholz (1990:43) points to the internal evidence that the divine revelations were recognized as such by his people from the time when they first appeared and written and kept in God's shrine. The belief that God could reveal his will by means of a holy book was thus an early and indelible feature of Israelite religious life (Harrison 1969:264). The nature of the Old Testament itself argues strongly for its accurate preservation (Vasholz 1990:82).

This study would like to presume that on the canonization process of the Pentateuch. Van Zyl (1983:44-47) wants to determine the earliest period of canon formation, and views Moses as the departure point for such a canon history. Van Zyl (1983:50) assumes that Moses complied with his prerequisite; he recorded the authoritative words of Yahweh, and thus, the history of canon can start here and illustrate how things developed from this point.

As Beckwith (2003:53) says, the Pentateuch presents itself to us as basically the work of Moses, one of the earliest and certainly the greatest of the Old Testament Prophets (Nm 12:6-8; Dt 34:10-12). As Beckwith (2003:53) points out, God often spoke through Moses orally, as he did through later prophets, but Moses' activity as a writer is also frequently mentioned (Ex 17:14; 24:7; 34:27; Nm. 33:2; Dt 25:58, 61; 29:20-27; 30:10; 31:9-13,19, 22, 24-26). Van Zyl (1983:50-56, 59) says that "during the time of Moses a nucleus of the canon existed which comprised of the Decalogue and the book of the covenant and some other regulations, and historical references were also included. This nucleus was not only written down but also accepted as normative for the believing community." Thus, although it is difficult to say accurately how the Pentateuch was compiled in the formation of the canon, it can be possible to say as follows (Cf. Childs 1979:62): Moses' writing of Exodus 20-24 as the covenant law of the Sinai covenant (Ex 24:18) (Marshall 1993; cf. Song 1992:145-147)²⁴; Moses' writing of Exodus 25-Numbers 10 as the Levitic law (Nm 33:1-2) (Kaufmann 1974:24-57); Moses' writing of Deuteronomy 12-26 as

²⁴ Marshall (1993) maintains that so-called 'the Book of Covenant' (Cf. Ex 24:8), which is allotted to Exodus 21-23, includes Exodus 20, namely, the Decalogue, so that it can be identified as Exodus 20-24. He argues that the times of writing of the Book of Covenant can be traced to the times before the kingship of Israel emerges.

the Deuteronomic law (Dt 31:9-22) (Korosć 1931; Mendenhall 1955); Moses' writing of the narrative of the Pentateuch conjuncted with other laws (Ex 17:14; Nm 33:2) (Unger 1951:217). Although there is some exceptions (Gn 12:6; 13:7; 14:17; 36:9-43), which is not possible to be attributed to Moses, we believe that Moses is the fundamental and real author of the Pentateuch (Young 1964:45). Wilson (1929:11) says that "the Pentateuch as it stands is historical from the time of Moses, and Moses was its real author, though it may have been revised and edited by latter redactors, the additions being just as much as inspired and as true as the rest." This study would like to presume that on the canonization process of the Pentateuch. The written word became the norm and played an extremely important role in the religion of Israel (van Zyl 1983:80-85). For the Pentateuch, at least, it was recognized and accepted as canon by the community, although before the acceptance, the Pentateuch had acquired canonical status (Cf. Kline 1981:40). We can see the witness of the Old Testament itself to its inspiration by God and authority as the word of God, and the response of the people of God to acknowledge and accept it in the Law (Beckwith 2003:52-53). As House (1998:971-Korean Edition) says, "the text of the Bible itself insists that it is the word of God and thus the faith community has confessed and obeyed the text of the Bible itself as the word of God." From the witness of the Old Testament itself its inspiration by God can be seen, its authority as the word of God, and the response of the people of God to acknowledge and accept as the Law (Ex 24:7; 2 Ki 22-23; 1 Chr 34; Neh. 8:9, 14-17; 10:28-39; 13:1-3) (Vasholz 1990:82; cf. Beckwith 2003:52-53).

The identification of the literary and canonical history is considered as legitimate by some scholars (Vasholz 1990), on account of the many external evidences to the Bible. Ancient Near Eastern religions also show that the divine revelation should be written down as soon as it was given to the people of the god by their god. What can be said, however, is that from the very beginning of its existence high authority was attached to its contents, and as a result it is little wonder that it became the first major section of the Hebrew Scriptures to be accorded unquestioned acceptance prior to subsequent formal canonicity (Harrison 1969:264).

It is impossible, in the light of present knowledge, to state with any degree of certainty exactly when the Pentateuch was finished in its present form. This study agrees with the view that the origin of the Old Testament canon coincided with the founding of the kingdom of Israel by the covenant at Sinai. Kline (1981:27-68) insists that the structure of biblical authority came from the ancient Near Eastern covenants, and insists on a tripartite theory similar to the standard theory of canon formation, with a suggestion on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Beckwith (2003:56) argues for the priority of the Pentateuch to the other parts of the canon. In reality, "the Law of Moses" was accepted as the only Law of Israel in History (Jos 1:7,8; 8:31, 32,

33; 11:15, 20; 14:2; 21:2; 23:6; Jdg 3:4; 1 Ki 2:3; 2 Ki 14:6; 21:8; 1 Chr 34:14; 23:18; 25:4; 35:12; Ezr 3:2; 6:8; Nh 8:1-8; 13:1). This is an evidence that the Pentateuch has been written already and predates the Prophets. In the Prophets, although only the expression 'the law' is seen, because only the Law of Moses was accepted as the law of Israel, the law can be identical with "the Law of Moses" in Prophets. Kline (1981:39) insists that on the concept of a canonical Scripture, the formative factor in Israel's literature in prophetic times is never compatible, because where there is a divine covenant of the classical Old Testament kind, there is a divine covenantal canonical document. What can be said convincingly is that from the very beginning of its existence high authority was attached to its contents, and as a result of it, that "it became the first major section of the Hebrew Scriptures to be accorded unquestioned acceptance prior to subsequent formal canonicity" is little wonder (Harrison 1969:264).

The distinguishing between the history of the literature and the history of the canon is rejected in this study, because it is impossible to separate canon, text and authority (House 1998:47; cf. Childs 1985:25). All individual book of the Bible has been written and accepted as a canon in a historical time. Thus the canon of the Old Testament is the collection of each book, which comprises the Bible (Cf. VanGemeren 1988). From this point of view, this study concerns, firstly, the time when the people of God has accepted an individual of the Bible as a canon. It can be said that for the Pentateuch, it has been accepted as a canon from the beginning of the writing. Secondly, the historical context of the being accepting of the Pentateuch as a canon is the making covenant between God and Israel in the times of Moses (Cf. VanGemeren 1988).

On the formation of the second subcollection of the canon, how can the relation of the literary and canonical history be regarded? Although the evidence from the Old Testament about how it was transmitted does appear meager-this is because transmission is assumed. An exploration of the Old Testament does provide some clues about its transmission (Cf. Vasholz 1990:83ff.). The external evidences are also opposed to the theory of the utterance of the Prophets might be handed down through time orally, before reaching written form, and of oral or written later additions to their oracles without knowledge or permission but still in their name (Kitchen 2003:389). According to Kitchen (2003:390), although "the first stage of almost every prophetic pronouncement was its oral declaration from the mouth of the prophet or prophetess....these messages were commonly of importance primarily to the king and thus officials invariably relayed them promptly back to the royal palace - *not* orally, but in *writing*, and sent on with the least possible delay." An official would send the written-down text of more than one oracle in one and the same letter-the beginning of a "collection" of prophecies, as was to be the case very much later in the Old Testament prophetic books (Kitchen 2003:391). A letter includes some prophecies from some prophets and has some messages with their local historical

context (Kitchen 2003:391). So to speak briefly, “the picture is of individual prophecies quite promptly written down, which subsequently can be brought together into collective tablets for future reference. A named prophetic speakers are in a massive majority over unnamed ones (Kitchen 2003:391).An accurate, independent, and permanent record of the prophecies was needed, to stand as lasting witness for when possible fulfillment might occur or be required to be checked. Late in a Hebrew prophet’s life, or after his death, his oracles may have been gathered in book (scroll) format...suggests very strongly that the record of a prophet’s oracles and deeds was built up as he went along, even if tidied up a little later by himself or others (Kitchen 2003:393).” According to van Zyl (1983:66-77), no essential difference existed between the words of Moses and the prophets. The prophets believed that they were the plenipotentiaries of Yahweh and that he was working with and through them. As Kline (1981:58) points out, it can be said that “the establishment of the prophetic office was itself a matter of treaty stipulation. In the Deuteronomistic treaty, Moses, the prophet-mediator of the old covenant, arranged for his covenantal task to be furthered by a succession of prophets like unto him (Dt 18:15ff.; cf. Ex 4:16; 7:1f.).” This study assumes there was a succession of prophets (Harrison 1969:286f; Beckwith 2003:55). The position of the Prophets of the Old Testament is that the prophets spoke the word of the Lord *ipsissima verba* (Vasholz 1990:83). This was the reason why the prophetic canon could be incorporated into the existing canon.

Is it stated with any degree of certainty exactly how the individual books were incorporated into the present form of subcollection of the canon? Beckwith (2003:54) suggests that it is guessed “for earlier sacred writings to be added to and edited in the manner of the Pentateuch.” Sailhamer (1995:238) guesses with more details how the second subcollection of the canon was redacted. Sailhamer (1995:240) infers from the “connecting links which give the TaNaK its present shape” that link of the first two segments, “the Law and the Prophets” can be found out. Although Sailhamer (1987:307-15; cf. 1995:253) supposes the canonizer, who redacts the final form of the present canon, he accepts the essential part of the Pentateuch was written by Moses. Sailhamer (1995:253; cf. Schmitt 1982:170-189) suggests “the Pentateuch represents an attempt to point to the same hope as the later prophets, namely, the New Covenant. From “the work of the composer or author of the Pentateuch” Sailhamer (1995:241) suggests that the prophets, namely, both former prophets and latter prophets is linked with the Pentateuch (Cf. Jos. 1:8). Sailhamer’s (1995:241) suggestion is very plausible. The identification of the literary and canonical history is, however, considered as legitimate for the second subcollection of the canon. Its formation has to be basically attributed to the individual authors and a individual collector or a group of collectors rather than the redactor of the final form of the present canon (Cf. VanGemeren 1988).

How can the relation between the two subcollection of the canon be established? Sailhamer (1995:238) never asks “whether the Pentateuch preceded or followed the prophets literature.” Nevertheless, from the “order of priority of existing texts” Sailhamer (1995:238) suggests that “the Pentateuch is the fundamental document to which the rest of the Hebrew Bible is related inter-textually...The evident reflection of these texts on the message of the Pentateuch shows that already within the Hebrew Canon, its first section is considered basic and essential.” Sailhamer (1995:239) says that “the Law (Pentateuch) is basic to the rest of the books, which they in turn assume and build inter-textually on the Pentateuch.” This relation between the subcollections of the canon comprises the foundation of intertextuality or inner-biblical interpretation between the Law and the Prophets as part of a connected, canonical and theological whole (Cf. House 2002:269). This study, thus, describes the covenantal thematic relation between the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament canon as follows:

- (1) Genesis to Exodus 1-19 is the prolegomenon to the Sinai covenant (Cf. Kline 1981:53-57; Kitchen 2003:242),
- (2) Exodus 20-24 presents the explicit covenantal law (Cf. Kline 1981:47-53; Kitchen 2003:242-243; Marshall 1993),
- (3) Exodus 25-Deuteronomy is an extension of the covenant prologue (Cf. Kline 1981:53-57; Kitchen 2003:242-243),
- (4) The Prophets with their prophecies acted as plenipotentiaries of Yahweh in the administration of his covenant with Israel (Cf. Kline 1981; Kitchen 2003:295-397) and their prophecies which were written and kept in the archive of King were collected and comprised of the Prophets.

1.2.4 Coming to a conclusion regarding aniconism in these passages

The thesis presented here deals with aniconism. It states that the prohibition of making any image of God, that is, ‘programmatically aniconism’ is formulated in the first and second commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3-6. It furthermore proposes that the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability and the prohibition of making images of God are closely related to each other. This is explicated in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6. In the final instance this thesis indicates that the ‘first and second

commandments construct' found in the two sections of Exodus is also found in Isaiah 40:18-20.

To defend this thesis the following outline will be followed:

Having dealt with the purpose, methodology, and aims of this study in this first chapter, the next four chapters deal with different aspects of this thesis.

Chapter 2 presents an exegesis of the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 and the probability that this is the provenance of the prohibition of making any images of God in the rest of the Old Testament.

Chapter 3 examines Exodus 32:1-6 as the explication of the meaning of the second commandment. Here the exegesis of Exodus 32:1-6, its in-textuality and its the inner-biblical interpretation with Exodus 20:2-6 are dealt with. The presence of 'the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct' in Exodus 32:1-6 will be investigated as well. Lastly, the theme of prohibition to worship Yahweh through images in Exodus 32:1-6 is studied.

Chapter 4 studies with Isaiah 40:18-20 within its macro unit in Isaiah 40:12-31, Isaiah 40-55 and Isaiah as a whole. Attention is given to passages dealing with rhetorical questions followed by a prohibition on idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40:12-31 and in Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 41:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7, focusing their compositional strategy and in Isaiah as a whole, focusing on its genre as prophetic covenantal lawsuit. Its in-textuality,

its thematic and theological approach, and the comparison of Exodus 20:2-6 with Isaiah 40:18-20 to indicate thematic-theological continuity and linguistic affinity by using inner-biblical interpretation are also explored.

Chapter 5 summarizes and concludes the whole thesis and draws a final conclusion.

1.3 Rationale

1.3.1 The final text of the canon

This study focuses on the final form of the present text, neither on the prehistory of the text and a “critically reconstructed” text, nor a “traditionally received text (*textus receptus*)” in the Bible (Sailhamer 1995:223). Thus, the starting point of exegesis is not the reconstruction of the source of the present text or the uncritical acceptance of the “traditionally received” text, but the establishment of canonical text of the Old Testament (Sailhamer 1995:223).

1.3.1.1 Text as divine narrative

The concern of historical criticism - source or literary criticism, form-criticism and tradition-criticism – is, on the one hand, to find the history of a text, rather than the literary meaning of the final text (Cf. Song 1992:11). Lee (2004:164) points out that “historical criticism developed from a ‘literary problem’ (incongruent text), but now, in the process of its development, it is being questioned on the basis of a ‘literary solution’, by a synchronic reading” and that “final text as a coherent unit in the light of literary

unity raises doubts about the validity of historical methodologies that are heavily or exclusively dependent on traditional historical...criticism.” Historical criticism concentrates on finding the original literary units in the Bible and thus lacks the synthetic aspect focusing on the finally constructed text.²⁵ Even redaction criticism does not go beyond the limit of literary criticism, although it also concerns itself with the text’s final form and asks after the redactor’s purpose in composing the text from the various redactional elements within the text.

The appropriate approach to a text is to start by investigating the present form of the text and read the text as it stands (Cf. Morberly 1983:24; Long 1989:19; Song 1992:13).²⁶ This leads us to an approach of reading the text with the positive expectation that a text makes sense as a constructed unit, especially biblical stories (Polzin 1980:17; cf. Frei 1974:324). This positive attitude to the present text is directly related to a literary work in its totality (Song 1992:14). If we appreciate the present text as a whole, we become aware of the detailed literary techniques or stylistic features used in the text (Cf. Patrick and Scult 1990:16). It is necessary to pay attention to

²⁵ This reconstruction of the biblical narrative for the meaning of the biblical text by historical criticism is shown not only in the radical historical criticism, but also in the more conservative scholarship (Cf. Sailhamer 1992:74). However, it is the written text in its final form that is inspired and useful for instruction on the status of the Bible, not the event, which is dealing with in narrative of the text. Although we stress the narrative as history-like, it is the message of this text that is the locus of revelation. According to Frei (1974:46), “the precritical understanding of Scripture, which looked to the narrative text for its clues to meaning, has been gradually replaced by a historical reading of the Bible, that is, one which looked for meaning beyond the narratives themselves to the events they recorded.” The text as depiction of the event is the source of divine revelation in terms of giving an accurate access to the event (Cf. Dressler 1981:113-138; von Rad 1962). Frei (1995:75) indicates that “the shift in protestant biblical interpretation regarding the meaning of biblical narrative was a move away from finding the meaning of the Bible in the biblical narrative themselves and an accompanying attempt to find meaning in the actual events that are the subject matter of the Bible.” However, as Sailhamer (1992:73) says this doesn’t mean that the event recorded in the narrative is not history. Rather, although the event is real historical one, we can get to know the inspired revelation from the narrative of the Bible.

²⁶ Von Rad (1962) induced a fundamental reversal of biblical theologian’s attention to the historical focus in biblical theology to that of the narrative text. Childs (1974:195f.; cf. Westermann 1985:207-209; Schwartz 1991:36) also points out the narrowness of the research oriented by historical concern and the neglect of the present text in literary criticism.

literary techniques and stylistic features within a text and find the theological intention of the author as conveyed by the literary devices used (Cf. Long 1989:37-42; Alter 1981:19). This idea implies that the author's or composer's intended motif and meaning is determined by the structure of the contents and by the shape of the work (Cf. Eissfeldt 1965:156-157; Knierim 1985:395-415). Thus, it is important to trace the ways the biblical writers organized and fashioned literary units into complete unified literary texts and whole books. We have to allow room for understanding the quality of the Hebrew literature not only in the micro aspects of the literature but also in the macro aspects of the whole work (Cf. Song 1992:11). The text's purpose is reflected in its composition. We need to understand the theological characteristics of the smaller and larger compositions and the direction, goal and tendency of an author/composer by interweaving these smaller literary units into the larger whole of the entire work (Cf. Sailhamer 1992:34-45). As Lee (2004:165) points out, "[o]ne uncovers historical meaning neither behind nor beyond the text, but within the intrinsic literary structures and contents of the literary text." This means that we do not have to limit the aim of biblical realism to a mere literary analysis understanding that the narrative were only intended to be "history-like," not real history (Cf. Frei 1974:46-50; Sternberg 1985:82). In reality, a literary approach on the Bible's witness such as Ryken (1984; 1987a; 1987b) who emphasizes "the importance of the concept of the Bible as 'God's Storybook'" has a potential pitfall that "if the Bible is a 'Storybook', it simply cannot be a 'Historical book'", although "[w]ithout denying the historical nature of the Bible, the literary approach may simply assist us...to come to an understanding of the convention of ancient Israelite storytelling (Longman 1987:27ff cited by Lee 2004:178), or serve as a means to provide historical reality behind literary form, such as the portrayal of the patriarchal 'God Shaddai' behind the poet of the book of Job (Polzin 1977:127:ff cited by

Lee 2004:178).” For Collins’ ‘history-like’ approach that says that “the narratives of the Old Testament are not indeed historical in empirical-positivistic sense” (Lee 2004:185), a pitfall that the approach has, can be warned. “An unlimited mental projection may extend from the realm of history to literature without a referential parameter” (Lee 2004:185). While the absolutist understanding of history that doesn’t regard the Bible as valuable historiography because “the Bible is a story rather than a history” (Lee 2004:178) is a pitfall, the pure literary approach on the Bible that regards the Bible as story-like history is another one.

This study maintains that the present text of the canon has to be regarded as representing real history. “The Bible”, as Frei (1974:46-50) points out, “was read literally and historically as a true and accurate account of God’s acts in real historical events. It was assumed that the realism of the biblical narratives was an indication that the biblical authors had described historical events just as they had happened. The real world was identified as the world actually described in the Bible, and one’s own world was meaningful only insofar as it could be viewed as part of the world of the Bible.” But it does not mean that the text of the Old Testament is just history or literary. It is, more accurately, a narrated history, that is, a literary narrative configuration of divine acts in history. Lee (2004:190) suggests that the text of the Old Testament “should not be considered a purely historical book, not pure literature, but a divine narrative.”²⁷ Lee

²⁷ Lee’s (2004) approach to the characteristic of witness of the Bible can be defined as *divine narrative* (as a compound noun) that indicates “the *Word-Revelation* in its final form of canonical texts.” The divine narrative approach, sharing an important element of continuity of the revelation history approach within the reformed tradition, namely the concept of revelation as a divine activity in history, regards the origin of Old Testament as not in human element but in divine revelation and in the sense the modifying word *divine* is added to *narrative* (Cf. Lee 2004:188-189). Lee (2004:202) explains what the term *narrative* implies in related with history as follows: “it [narrative] views history not as a corresponding ‘mirror-image’, but as a ‘literary coherence’ of a ‘written configuration’ about *real events*.” In this sense, the Old Testament is defined as “a narrative [that]...reflects an ancient Israelite literary coherence about corresponding events.”

(2004:191) says that “what appears to [be] irrefutable in present situation of biblical exegesis, is the view that the Old Testament is neither a ‘scientific historical book’ in the modern critical sense, nor ‘pure literature’ in terms of modern literary theories. It involves...a mystery. At this stage one can accordingly postulate that such a categorization was in fact a product of modern rationalism and irrationalism (which was certainly unknown to ancient Hebrew Writers), rather than a projection of ancient Hebrew convention inherent in the Old Testament texts.” What is clear from the Old Testament writing is that “Hebrew writers were not writing literature or historical book in term of modern empirical-positivistic or post-positivistic principle” (Lee 2004:193). Rather, “they were writing an inspired narrative of divine revelation in history” (Lee 2004:193). “The Old Testament writers narrate miraculous events ‘as if’ they are real. The question is not whether or not they did happen, but whether the Old Testament writers interpreted them as real or not, as God’s invention or not” (Lee 2004:197). “[T]he biblical miracle accounts...cannot be subjects to observable verification, which hence becomes, in terms of historical criticism, clearly a ‘story’ and not ‘history’.

However, what we are concerned with here, is not an analysis on the basis of modern categorization, but an interpretation on the basis of what the Old Testament writers tell us to have witness. That is to say there is not internal clue, for example, in the book of Exodus that indicates that miracle accounts are merely a literary invention. The Writer tells the story ‘as if’ it is real. To the writer of Exodus, miracles did in fact happen.” (Lee 2004:197). “Whether miracles are beyond science, or a violation of laws of nature, on the basis of which one may argue that such events cannot take place, it is a least clear that we have no grounds to argue that biblical authors are lying or presenting a fake account...The internal interpretation of ‘extra-ordinary’ events ‘as if’ they were real, reinforces the divine nature of [the] Old Testament narratives” (Lee 2004:1999).

Eslinger (1992:57) thus points out that “the Bible was read as history and its plot was taken for the real sequence of events that it describes.” Maier (1990:332) takes the same approach, placing the priority on the narrative of a text. Maier’s (1990:332) approach is called “biblical-historical” exegesis by himself, trying to distinguish his own method with historical-critical method and express “the priority and uniqueness of the Bible,” but “does not overlook the importance of history.” Maier (1990:333) suggests the method of biblical-historical exegesis as a way to approach to a text, insisting that the biblical narrative itself has a priority on any historical material. Although everything that happened in history was not written down, the matters written in text are, in essence, identical with what really happened in history. Sailhamer (1995:234) says that “Maier calls for an approach to biblical interpretation that is commensurate with unique nature of the Bible itself and yet does not give up important historical interest.” Sailhamer (1995:238) also shows how a present text has to be read under “the narrative purpose of these inter-textual references.” Sailhamer (1995:238) maintains that although the events of some narratives are antecedent, “but not necessarily the narratives themselves” in comparison of two texts containing two events, which one precedes the others. Sailhamer (1995:238) says that it is important to ask, “within the texts themselves, what order of priority of the existing texts is being maintained.” Most of all, the nature of the Old Testament itself argues strongly that the word of God given to his people was immediately recorded and placed at the holy place or beside the ark of the covenant for truthful preservation. We can see in the witness of the Old Testament itself that its inspiration comes from by God and that it bears authority as the word of God, as found in the response of the people of God to acknowledge and accept it in the Law (Cf. Ex 24:7; 2 Ki 22-23; 1 Chr 34; Nh 8:9, 14-17; 10:28-39; 13:1-3) (Beckwith 2003:52-53; Vasholz 1990:82). We can guess that the Prophets also followed a similar process and

evoked their authority as the word of God from the people of God. The prophecies of the prophets were preserved to be tested how they are fulfilled in the future with careful caution in shrine or Temple. In this sense, the history recorded in the text of Scripture is real history and the text is the focal point of divine revelation.²⁸

It is necessary to point out that not only the characteristic of a text as narrative has to be studied but also the history represented in the text.²⁹ This study will accept the order of the biblical narrative, not being restricted by reconstruction of biblical history of biblical criticism in dating biblical texts being studied. This study represents that chronological order of the events in the Bible is identical with one that the final text of the canon recounts, although there are some exceptions.

According to Sailhamer (Cf. 1995:75-79), we can read the Bible on three level: (1) as biblical narratives, (2) according to the historical events depicted by them (Ostensive reference), (3) the world of the reader.

²⁸ A history without a text has no meaning. It can imply that it is only when God addresses his people in real life situations interpreting for them the meaning of those events using them to reveal himself as God of history that they start to have religious meaning. This study, however, sustains that the text can be a word of God not because the people of God accept and authorize the texts as the word of God. Rather, the people of God just recognize and accept the text as the word of God, just because it has an authority as a word of God. The external and internal evidence says that from the very beginning of the biblical text's existence high authority was attached to its contents (Cf. Kline 1981:27-68; Harrison 1969:264).

²⁹ The reports on those events can be said to be sometimes arranged according to theological purpose, not necessarily indicating the order in which things happened. To equal the order of the narratives with the order in which the events took place is criticized as a fundamentalistic fault, which makes faith dependable upon a history reconstructed rather than the literal word of God. Thus, rather, it seems to be the theological linking of some incidents in history that forms the theology of the Bible. However, this study follows the biblical narrative sequence of text as it stands, although this study recognizes the text can be arranged against the order of the real events by author in some case in the Bible. This study retains this point of view to equal the order of the narratives with the order in which the events took place because it is not the case.

Applied to this study it means that the course of the actual historical events can be represented as $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ (Event A causes event B which in turn causes event C and that is precisely what is depicted in the biblical narratives ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$) and is understood as such by the reader ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$). For instance, as we shall see in chapter 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis, when we are reading the biblical narratives in Exodus 19-24, Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20, the actual event consisted of God's first giving the Decalogue and Israel's receiving of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai through Moses (Ex 19-24 (A)). The golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 indicates that the second commandment as a covenant law was violated by his people (B). Isaiah's disputation against making any image of God (Is 40:18-20) (C). They comprise sequential events. According to our approach to the final text and its witness, the events in real life happened exactly in the same order. They are recorded in the biblical narratives (Ex 19-24; 32:1-6; Is 40:18-20) and are understood as such by the precritical reader.

According to critical scholar's view, the actual order of events in history ($X \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z$) are not necessarily identical with the depiction of these events in the biblical narrative ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$). Though the biblical text may recount, the actual event consisted of God's first giving of the Decalogue and Israel's receipt of the Decalogue in Mt. Sinai through Moses in Exodus 19-24 (A), The golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 (B), Isaiah's critique on making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 (C), the actual course of events may be represented quite differently. According to a common modern reconstruction, for example, there were a theological crisis of Israel's monotheism in the post-exilic period (X). As a response against the theological crisis, a theologian or a group of Yahweh monotheist tried to write Israel's history of Yahweh Monotheism (Y). The event at Mt. Sinai of God's giving the Decalogue and Israel's receipt of it, the golden

calf episode and Isaiah's critique on making any image of God was written or modified as a response against the theological crisis of Yahweh monotheism in post-exilic period (Z). One can see easily that such an account does not mesh with what is recounted in the Bible. In the critical view the reader actually understands the meaning of the biblical account, not in its own terms (A→B→C), but in terms of its ostensive reference to "real" events (X→Y→Z). The narrative meaning (A→B→C) is replaced by the meaning of the actual events (X→Y→Z) as if that was really what the biblical narratives were about. The source of the Bible's meaning was no longer the meaning of the narrative itself (text) but the meaning of the historical events behind the text.³⁰

1.3.1.2 The establishment of canonical text of the Old Testament

The reconstruction of original text of the Old Testament is another standpoint of this study on the canonical text (Sailhamer 1995:223). We have to recognize the problem of discovering the original text of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, this aim can be attained by using mainly textual criticism and even others (Sailhamer 1995:223). The verbal inspiration of the Bible has to be applied to the level of the text at the point of the composition of each biblical book, which is reconstructed by criticism (Sailhamer 1995:219).³¹ The text of the Old Testament has to be translated because "problems in

³⁰ It simply says that an event on its own does not have any meaning. This study's point of view is also different from the view that it is only when it is theologically interpreted that has a revelational meaning. This study's point of view is exactly that in the events dealt with above mentioned, at least, the source of the biblical narrative's meaning is the texts reporting historically and chronologically happened events.

³¹ Sailhamer (1995:218) depicts this work as "a text-archaeology" and thus suggests that "we should attempt to peel back the postbiblical layers until we uncover the layer of the canonical text (or canonical texts), and from there attempt to isolate both the compositional layer of the individual books and the canonical redaction." Sailhamer says that while Blum (1990) tries to "feel one's way back from the compositional level to the sources," he is concerned "in working in other direction: from composition [level] to canon. This study follows Sailhamer's (1995:218). However, this study doesn't fully agree with Sailhamer's (1995:218) supposition that attempts "to isolate both the compositional layer of the individual books and the canonical redaction" because the levels of a text which he assumes is just a

the Masoretic text and other ancient versions... pose [some] difficulties in our attempts for a proper translation of the biblical texts.” and thus if needed, “various historical and exegetical methods, such as textual and philological analysis, literary criticism, and even form and redaction criticism”, even though each tool has to be examined for its methodological validity, need to be concerned (Lee 2004:204-205).

1.3.2 Inner-biblical interpretation between texts

A biblical text normally has a long history. Every text in Scripture has its own history of interpretation. After the text became part of the growing canon, it became part of a long history of interpretation. This means that the way the Bible came into existence throws light not only on the complexity of its genesis, but also on the complexity of the meaning inherent in the text. The Bible witnesses self-referential allusion, which can be regarded as “a product of the Bible’s lengthy production history which is related with the Bible’s compositional history.”³² Inner-biblical interpretation can provide the rich

theoretical hypothesis, not a proven fact.

³² There is an important distinction between the text and the subsequent interpretation of that text. This study proposes a list, which guides the relation between the text and the subsequent interpretation of the text as following: First, the meaning of the text of the Old Testament is the original biblical author’s one. In general, biblical scholars accept that a text from the any passages of the Bible is not necessarily the product of one single author. However, the meaning of the text basically remains that of the original author and not the secondary interpretation of a later generation. This is true even when the later interpretations happen to be included in the Bible itself, that is, being “inter-biblical.” (Cf. Sailhamer 1995:84). The intention of the original author of the text can still be seen in the text. Secondly, there is an important distinction between the text of Scripture and its socio-religious context (Sailhamer 1995:84). The socio-religious role of the Scriptures may be of historical or sociological interest, but it is not a part of the inspired meaning of the text. Thirdly, there is an important distinction between the text of Scripture and the truth of reason and personal experience (Sailhamer 1995:84). The relationship between author, text and reader is defined as follows: The text means what the author intended it to mean. It means what he says. There is a text, that has an author, who writes for his readers (Nielsen 1990:90). For the relationship between author and reader, the role of author as a producer of meaning can be identified by its reader. Although we are aware of an intentional fallacy, it doesn’t imply that the author is dead (Nielsen 1990:90). Rather, a reader has to try to find out the intention of the author from the explicit evidence of the text (Cf. Vanhoozer 1998:201-280). The meaning of a text is produced from what the author intends and reader understands. Inner-biblical interpretation as ongoing dialogue between older and younger texts is not only the invention of later readers but also is intended from the very beginning

knowledge how the literary interconnection of the Bible was formed in the form we have it today” (Eslinger 1994:47).³³

1.3.2.1 Theoretical consideration

Fishbane (1985) asserts that there is a possibility of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis.³⁴ According to Fishbane (1985), inner-biblical exegesis, like its rabbinic

(Nielsen 1990:92). As Nielsen (1990:92) points out, although “there may be other kinds of intertextuality than author himself is aware of, new readers may add to this dialogue as well, but new intertextuality does not abolish the first one, the one intended by the author.” This study considers that the task of the exegete is to try to trace this dialogue, but to trace it through history. Thus inner-biblical interpretation done in this study comes from the historical situation in which the text was written, used and reused.

³³ It is, however, not easy substantiating the interconnection between texts in the Bible. Aside from the some issues of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis for the study of the relation between two passages in the Bible, deciding on the dating of texts and the sufficient conditions for indicating a parallel borrowing, may be uncertain. Nevertheless, the Old Testament has a long and hermeneutically rich process in its composition. Sailhamer (1995:298) contends that “[b]ooks [of the Old Testament] were written (e.g., the Pentateuch), supplemented (e.g., Dt 34:10ff.), exegeted (e.g., Nm 9; Ps 8; Hs 12:5), applied (e.g., the prophetic books, borrowed (e.g., Chronicles), and developed (Dn 9)”.

³⁴ Fishbane (1985:6) suggests that “the content of tradition, the *traditum*, was not at all monolithic, but rather the complex result of a long and varied process of transmission, or *traditio*.” He identifies inner-biblical interpretation as post-biblical interpretation. The Hebrew Bible is a composite source, so that discerning the traces of exegesis in this Scripture is not a matter of separating biblical (the *traditum*) from post-biblical (the exegetical *traditio*) materials but of discerning its own strata (Fishbane 1985:10). Similar to the post-biblical exegesis, in the Hebrew Bible itself citations are made before a new interpretation of the older text is represented (Fishbane 1985:11). In the process of reinterpretation and reuse of the older *traditum*, new procedures or insights are incorporated into the formulation of the older revelations. But does the new revelation or reinterpretation of the older revelation necessarily poses the insufficiency of the older revelation, not just the explication of the meaning of the older revelation? Moreover, is it right that the actual acknowledgement in the latest historical strata of the Hebrew Bible that a human *traditio* had exegetically changed the divine *traditum*? (Fishbane 1985:15). Fishbane (1985:18) represents two issues of inner-biblical exegesis: The first is particularly in divine revelations that are succeeded by human interpretations – of no passing cultural interests. The final process of canonformation, which meant the solidification of the biblical *traditum* and the onset of the post-biblical tradition, was thus a culmination of several related processes (Fishbane 1985:18). Each transmission of received traditions (*traditum*) utilized materials, which were or became authoritative in this very process; and each interpretation and explication was made in the context of an authoritative *traditum*. Further, each solidification of the *traditio* was the canon in process of its formation; and each stage of canonformation was a new achievement in Gemeindebuilding in the formation of an integrated book-centered culture. Inner-biblical dynamic of *traditum* - *traditio* is thus culturally constitutive and regenerative in the most profound sense (Fishbane 1985:19). The second is the question where all biblical sources came from. Jewish tradition answers that the exegetical tradition of the Torah of Moses can be traced to Sinai according to their tradition. Some modern scholars refer to the Alexandrian *oikoumene*, with its editing and exegesis of Homeric texts, and with its highly developed rhetoric and legal traditions as the catalyst and shaper of Jewish ‘oral tradition’ (Fishbane 1985:19). Thirdly it is suggested by Fishbane (1985:15) that “the Jewish exegetical traditions are native and ancient, that they developed diversely in ancient Israel, in many centres and at many times, and that these many tributaries met in the exile and its

successor, tried to make the obscure clear, to expand the applicability of the text, and to bring the sacred traditions up to date. We have to examine Fishbane's (1985) assumption and methodology in two aspects. The first is the rabbinic mode which Fishbane (1985:2) follows to recover the way of inner-biblical interpretation forming literary connections in the Bible.³⁵ Fishbane's (1985) generic scheme has been criticized for forcing inner-biblical exegesis into a rabbinic mold (Eslinger 192:48-49). Kugel (1987:275-276) says that exegesis in biblical times was not terribly different from what we know in postbiblical times; indeed, it was really rather proto-rabbinic." In some respects there are some discontinuity between inner-biblical interpretation and Jewish exegetical tradition.

In Fishbane's (1985) supposition, it is right that he starts from the Sinai, but as far as oldest post-Sinaitic legal exegesis is concerned, he is not right because he doesn't consider it as a divine revelation as the Bible narratives says, but as a human interpretation turned into being a divine revelation having divine authority through a triple process of pseudegraphic exegesis (Fishbane 1985:97-98).³⁶

aftermath to set a new stage for biblical culture which was redirected, rationalized, and systematized in the lively environment of Graeco-Roman world."

³⁵ As Fishbane (1985:2) says, some questions can be asked: "Does the early Jewish exegetical dynamics of *traditum* and *traditio* has continuity with inner-biblical exegesis? Does the Jewish exegetical tradition come to be formed as soon as the stabilization of canonformation is finished. Does Jewish exegetical tradition root in the biblical past itself, not fostered by competing sects with different claim on the biblical heritage? Does the Hebrew Bible also reflect the prehistory of those post-biblical phenomena whose contents are so new and often 'unbiblical'?"

³⁶ The law collections in the Pentateuch present a distinct context for inner-biblical legal exegesis (Fishbane 1985:163). Fishbane (1985:256) asks how the older legal *traditum* retain or lose its authority in the face of a legal *traditio* which transforms and revises it, or, furthermore, how a legal *traditio* attain or assert its authority and to what degree it emerge as a *datum* in its own right. Fishbane (1985:257) maintains that "a dialectic between revelation and tradition" in logistic circles was the prevailing technique of the Pentateuchal legal corpora and may be termed *pseudepigraphic exegesis*. The incorporation of legal interpretations into the corpora, with and without technical formulae, does not simply mean the subordination of the ongoing human tradition to the established and authoritative legal *traditum* (Fishbane 1985:257-258). It is a dignification and elevation of human exegesis to the status of divine revelation (Fishbane 1985:257-258). For the voice of the human teacher is reauthorized through the voice of Moses, who speaks or repeats the divine revelations given to him. A triple process is thus at

The second problem of Fishbane's (1985) approach is a historical approach supposing historical-critical literary history. For Fishbane (1985) literary integrity would be an example of exegetical ingenuity, not of the text's integrity (Eslinger 1992:51). A more serious weakness in Fishbane's (1985) approach arises from his reliance on historical-critical literary history (Eslinger 1992:51). However, Eslinger (1992:52) says, "recent historical work on the Bible is increasingly pessimistic about using it as a source for writing about its own or ancient Israel's history." This pessimistic view stems from the reconstruction of ancient Israel's beginnings (Cf. Whitelam 1986:45-70; Thompson 1987:27; Garbini 1988). Fishbane's (1985) categorical analysis is already premised on the diachronic assumptions of historical-critical literary history (Eslinger 1992:52). If

work here: first, each element of the human legal *traditio* is legitimated by its transformation into a part of the given authoritative divine *traditum*; second, Moses is thereby transformed from the mediator of specific revelations to the mediator of whatever was spoken in his name, or taught as part of his teachings; and third, the word of YHWH becomes as comprehensive as the *traditum* itself, there being nothing of a cultural-religious authority which is not part of the divine revelation" (Fishbane 1985:258). Every legal *traditum* and every legal *traditio*, thus becomes part of 'the word of YHWH to Moses'. In the narrative historiographies, in fact, where exegetical traditions were not incorporated into any corpora, new human teachings and exegetical blends were authorized as according to the word of YHWH through Moses' (Cf. 2 Chr 35:6), or 'written in the book of Moses' (cf. 2 Chr 35:12) (Fishbane 1985:258). The development of this process of authorizing or reauthorizing legal traditions by pseudographically ascribing them to Moses from YHWH can be traced, of course, to non-exegetical legal tradition (Fishbane 1985:258). Pseudographic exegesis thus has its parallels in pseudographic attributions within the legal *traditum*, which cannot be considered exegetical by any means (Fishbane 1985:260). The Pentateuch is the synthetic result of such proceedings. The growing consensus among the people on how to correlate the written legal *traditum* would thus have been as much a factor as any other in the eventual limitations put on its growth (Fishbane 1985:265). Thus, Fishbane (1985:265) supposes that "the Pentateuch used the legal achievement of early-exilic legal rationality, or that it is the inner-biblical expression of synthetic legal exegesis *par excellence*."

However, what Fishbane terms as *pseudepigraphic exegesis* can be said as the various amendments to the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and the so-called the Book of Covenant (Ex 20:18-23:33) as constitution of the Sinai Covenant. "Many of the laws in Numbers were indeed revealed by God after the Israelites left Sinai, but not a secondary "afterthoughts." They were, rather, a variety of statutes memorably imposed during the wilderness wanderings in response to specific needs as they arose." (Stuart 2006: 439) Moses "a sort of amanuensis...a scribe with no authority of his own to issue a single word of law but one who must always get everything he wrote down from the direct revelation of Yahweh." (Stuart 2006:33; cf. Watt 1998:415-426). He had no authority to issue an answer himself (Cf. Nm 15; 27). "The strictly covenant portion of the book (Ex 20:1-31:18) find completion not in Exodus but in the book of Leviticus as indicated by the closing word of Leviticus [27:34]... Exodus gets the Sinai covenant underway but does not complete it...the laws in Numbers continues the process of the revelation of legal guidance under the covenant made at Sinai, as Israelites experiences the need for divine guidance on matters not yet revealed even as of the end of Leviticus" (Stuart 2006:439).

the model of the Bible's literary history is wrong, the analysis of inner-biblical exegesis can only compound the fallacy (Eslinger 1992:52). Eslinger (1992:52) expresses his pessimism concerning "the diachronic assumptions of historical-critical literary history", not merely "the diachronic assumptions of literary history of the Bible narrative".³⁷ Eslinger (1992:52, 56-58) argues that the only legitimate approach to inner biblical allusion is a "self-consciously literary analysis" that reads texts "atemporarily and without assumptions about vectors of dependence." It might seemingly be understood as an abandonment of diachronic approach and a accepting synchronic approach. Eslinger (1992:56-58), however, sticks to the diachronic approach on the relation between text, proposing a self-consciously literary analysis of the textual interconnections in biblical literature. A self-consciously literary analysis used in his saying might be a key to understand his view. Eslinger (1992:56) insists that "most biblical literature already follows the sequence of the Bible's own plot...a plot line in which almost all biblical literature is implicated or within which it can be situated on the basis of literary

³⁷ Often, as Sommer (1996:479-489) and Leonard (2008: 257) do, Eslinger (1992) is misunderstood to abandon diachronic approach altogether. Eslinger's position is not born out of a skepticism over the Bible's value as a historical resource (Cf. Leonard 2008:257), but out of optimism over its value as a historical resource and pessimism over reconstructing of the historical plot of the Bible itself because "there is little basis for consensus about Israel's history, once we set aside the plot of the Bible itself, and even less for a dependent scheme of biblical literary history" (Eslinger 1992:52). Thus, his saying has not to be understood as a pessimistic view about the possibility of diachronic approach on the relation between two texts in the Old Testament or as a purely synchronic approach (Leonard 2008:257). Rather, it is an effort to use a chronological sequence of the Bible narrative, not on the reconstruction of the Bible history of the historical-critical method. So, the criticism that Eslinger (1992:49) derides diachronic approach as literary naiveté is also not right because he attacks only the assumption of *historical criticism* by Fishbane (1985), allowing only straight description, without asides or any sort of expository comment, in any unilaterally authored document, that is, an author does not write an interpretive gloss on his own text. Eslinger (1992:49-50) just rejects Fishbane's way of diachronic interpretation with complete disregard for narrative voice structure, especially diverse modalities available in a narrator's voice of the Bible itself, not diachronic approach following a narrator's voice of the Bible itself. Eslinger (1992:50) just want to say about Fishbane's (1985:47) idea on the formulaic marker of gloss (1985:44-45): "Why later?, Why not by "original" author? Does it not make as much sense, maybe more, for the "original" author to clarify an ambiguity? Or do we assume that ambiguity is dysfunctional and always expunged instead of clarified when perceived by an author?" Eslinger (1992:55; cf. Dozemann 1989:207-209, 216, 223) points out that "Fishbane's (1985) methodological rule betrays the operation of fundamental assumptions about text sequencing in the Bible."

evidence in the book.”³⁸ As far as we follow the plot of the Bible, even Fishbane (1985) and Day (1988) do this, it can always be supposed that the relation between two texts must be identified according to the Bible’s own plot line (Cf. Eslinger 1992:57). Thus, Eslinger (1992:57) points out that the study of the Bible has moved through at least two stages and a new third stage:

First, it was read as history and its plot was taken for the real sequence of events that it describes. Second, in a reactionary movement still dominated by concern for history but now suspicious of the history of the plot it portrays, the Bible was read as a reflection, both of history that its plot lay out and more clearly, of the period and society in which it was written....Lastly, the Bible is being read without regard for the issues of history and historicity. This shift in focus should not, as it so often is, be taken as a rejection of historical study: it is not. Rather, it is a conscious decision to focus on a given, biblical literature, and a rejection of an appropriation of this given for inappropriate purposes-the writing of history from a literature whose historiographical purpose, if it has one, is unstated and, so far not demonstrated. In the study of i.b.a. we can turn again to the sequence of events actually described or implied in much of biblical literature and follow the chain of reverse trajectory allusions through from creation and to apocalypse.

It is Eslinger’s (1992) way taking the chronological sequence of the Bible narrative in relation between two texts, which is different from the diachronic approach of historical criticism. Eslinger’s (1992) approach rejects a diachronic approach, not the chronological sequence of the Bible narrative and thus cannot be categorized as a purely

³⁸ Eslinger (1992:56 n.14) refers Jacobson (1982) as an example for that case.

literary approach that takes “*areferential-ahistoric*” (Lee 2004:186) attitude and “the question of “in relation to what or to whom” can lose its central force” (Lee 2004:186). Thus, this study represents not a diachronic approach based on the negative attitude on the sequence of biblical narrative, but a synchronic approach on the text based on a positive attitude on the sequence of biblical narrative and not a “*areferential-ahistoric*” approach.

In reality, Fishbane’s suggestion is a trailblazer in focusing on the re-use of the text, not on tradition (Cf. Holter 2003:16; Levinson 1997:3-22). Sommer (1998:9) says “[i]nner biblical allusion and exegesis can investigate which text is earlier than others or later, that is, who is alluder or who is source, while the intertextual critic would not need to ask whether the author of one text borrows from other text, or vice versa.” According to Sommer (1998:6ff), however, inner-biblical exegesis has to be separated from inner-biblical allusion. “The interpretation of the older text functions silently, even unconsciously because the prophet Isaiah revises ideas from the older texts, readers may begin to understand the older texts in a new fashion” (Sommer 1998:173).³⁹

Scholars who suppose that a reference to a biblical story is not necessarily an allusion to a biblical text represent that it may be a type of tradition. Scholars agree that Isaiah like the other prophets, reused Pentateuchal tradition.⁴⁰ Sommer (1998:133) considers Israel’s use of such elements as belongings to the study of tradition history, rather than

³⁹ Each case can be subdivided as follows: For the former, was it written or oral source, albeit be considered to be redacted to the present final form. For the latter, was it redacted completely into the present form of the text, or written in the present form of the text by a single author up to that time?

⁴⁰ Not only the exodus from Egypt, but also other traditions, like creation, pre-patriarchal, patriarchal, wilderness tradition, are alluded in Isaiah in 40-55 (Tull Willey 1997:28-29; cf. van der Merwe 1956; Anderson 1962; Zimmerli 1963). Anderson (1962) points out that the Sinai tradition is not cited in Isaiah 40-55. The question, however, still remains whether it comes from a separate document or from an oral tradition.

to the study of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis.⁴¹ Sommer (1998:133) points out that “vocabulary items do point to a particular text, but the link between them may result from common use of a theme rather than from one text’s borrowing from the other.” It was concluded that Isaiah used widespread Israelite stories or ideas, rather than any particular text in which those stories appear.⁴² Isaiah makes a thematic linkage between the Pentateuch and his own writing. The thematic category of polemic occurs only in his allusion to Pentateuchal material (Sommer 1998:151). Sommer (1998:151; 273) suggests that the Pentateuchal tradition alluded to was not in the present final text, but in an oral or separate source. Many scholars suppose that authors utilize oral and popular traditions, as well as certain documents, not from a final text, but preserved in writing in a pre-final form not known to us. They suggest that Isaiah had a particular form of Pentateuchal text before him with recognizable vocabulary and stylistic features, not necessarily the present final form as we have it today.⁴³

For the prophet’s reusing of Pentateuchal material, some scholars (Chavasse 1964; Ogden 1978; Janzen 1989; cf. Tull Willey 1997:32) argue that the prophet reused the

⁴¹ “Tradition-history moves back from the written sources to the oral traditions from which the originated. Inner-biblical exegesis starts with the received Scripture and moves forward to the interpretations based on it. In tradition-history, written formulations are the final of many oral stages of *traditio* during which the traditions themselves become authoritative; By contrast, inner-biblical exegesis begins with an authoritative *tradtum*.” Inner-biblical exegesis takes the stabilized literary formulation as its basis and point of departure (Fishbane 1985:7). Responses to it are thus interpretations of a basically fixed *tradtum*, despite the somewhat fluid record of the most ancient manuscripts and versions (Fishbane 1985:7-8). Dynamics between *tradtum* and *traditio* can be reformulated as those between authoritative teachings or traditions whose religious-cultural significance is vital, and the concern to preserve, render contemporary, or otherwise reinterpret these teachings or traditions in explicit ways for new times and circumstances (Fishbane 1985:8).

⁴² Several cases in which Isaiah depended on texts from the Pentateuch have been noted and discussed by Kaminka (1938; cf. Sommer 1998:151ff) who already recognized the problem of distinguishing between allusions to a specific Pentateuchal text and the use of widespread traditions. Although Weinfeld (1991:82) notes possible cases of the book of Deuteronomy’s influence on Isaiah, Sommer (1982:273) contends that “most of these are examples of Deuteronomistic phrasing or ideology that come not from a specific verse but from the deuteronomistic stream of tradition.” Furthermore, Sommer (1998:273) says that “most of the phrases or ideas in Isaiah cited by Weinfeld could easily have been based on Deuteronomistic sections of Jeremiaiah or Ezekiel.”

⁴³ The evidence from Isaiah’s allusions does not allow us to know whether Isaiah knew these as separate documents or in a redacted form (Cf. Sommer 1998:149).

Pentateuch as a written source by means of intertextuality, not along the way indicated by tradition-historical study.

Fishbane (1985:415-416) argues that the way the prophets reused a text was the form of aggadic exegesis.⁴⁴ Fishbane (1985:285) asserts that “the vast majority of cases of aggadic exegesis involve implicit or virtual citations” that can be identified more frequently on the basis of “multiple and sustained lexical linkages between two texts... where the second text (the putative *tradition*) uses a segment of the first (the putative *tradtium*) in a lexically recognized and topically rethematized way” (Cf. Tull Willey 1997:31). Eslinger (1992:47), moreover, says that it can be supposed that the Pentateuch was already in its final form before the writing of the book of Isaiah took place.⁴⁵ Eslinger (Cf. 1992:52-53) argues that the dependence on the Pentateuch was in the form of a final written text. It was not used as a mere tradition, although it doesn’t mean that the particular text was quoted word by word from the Pentateuch. It could have been the Pentateuchal material in its final form (Cf. Eslinger 1992:47-58).

As stated many times now, there is no way of asserting whether Isaiah’s source is identical to our present form of the Bible or not. The statement that the text Isaiah used may have been the same as the present final form we have today can only be made if we had that original manuscript Isaiah had before him. Any conclusion that the present text is the same as the text Isaiah had before him is therefore wishful, but cannot be proved.

Although we are dealing with a growing canon, it doesn’t mean that the text of the

⁴⁴ As Tull Willey(1997:30) says, Fishbane (1985) argues that in many prophetic texts, some texts were created as aggadic reinterpretations of already authoritative texts, necessitated by new social contexts and disseminated in new prophetic genres.

⁴⁵ Eslinger, however, does not explain how his supposition can be verified.

Pentateuch as part of the canon as it stands today is placed before the Prophets Isaiah, cannot be supposed. We, however, think that the final form of the Pentateuch or its essential parts appeared before the era of the prophets (Cf. Kitchen 2003; Vasholz 1988; Harrison 1969).

Fishbane's (163-230) inner-biblical legal exegesis and explication in the Pentateuchal legal corpora will be used to explicate the relation between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Fishbane's (163-230) suggestion for inner-biblical legal exegesis and explication in the Pentateuchal legal corpora can be summarized as follows: "Despite the integrated and developed traditions of law in ancient Mesopotamia, new legal collections are not exegetical revisions of earlier ones, and that a body of legal exegesis has not been discovered as yet (Fishbane 1985:96)...In contrast to the case of ancient Mesopotamia, despite the proposition that biblical legal corpora are formulated as prototypical expressions of legal wisdom, the internal traditions of the Hebrew Bible present and regard the covenantal laws as legislative texts (Fishbane 1985:96)...Thus, each of the various legal collections in the Hebrew Bible is subject to repeated exegetical revision. Later collections reflect (in many cases) what are (in part) exegetical revisions or clarifications of earlier ones. The biblical legal traditions developed a body of legal exegesis preserved in non-legal texts (Fishbane 1985:96)...Later legal draftsmen reformulated an old legal *responsum* which was received by tradition and incorporated into matters perceived to be analogous, or otherwise related -to the basis of pure legal speculation or practical legal tradition (Fishbane 1985:104)...Inner-biblical legal exegesis is broadly lemmatic in nature. This exegesis is related to an authoritative *traditum*, which is manifested in several stylistic forms: formal lemmatic exegesis, informal lemmatic exegesis, implied lemmatic exegesis (Fishbane 1985:266-268). Although there is a lack of information on the life setting of inner-biblical information, it can be supposed that there would always have been occasions where the mere fact of a written *traditum* provided the life-context of interpretation, being a textual context. Its verbal and semantic character, in a single word, its textual character provides the setting for new exegesis (Fishbane 1985:269)...Legist would study the text, recognize ambiguities or loopholes, and supplement the text with new materials; historians would study the text, or learn about its ambiguities from legist; and polemicist would study the text, or comb it for allusions, in order to justify their cause or promote their interests (Fishbane 1985:269-270)...However, "the mental matrix of the interpreter must be recognized. Exegesis is not simply an event in the social world, or one which arises out of texts. It is also one which presupposes certain mental attitudes (Fishbane 1985:270)...Thus, the real life setting of inner-biblical exegesis is layered and interrelated. Having a triadic structure, comprising of mental, textual and social-historical modes (Fishbane 1985:270)...In the case of the exegesis of cultic laws without formulae of citation and comparison, a shift from a divine voice to its prophetic explication in an aggadic exegesis of an old law is supposed (Fishbane 1985:301)...A lemmata from the old law can be absorbed into a prophet's reinterpretation of it without any technical formulae. The analogical relationship between the Pentateuchal and prophetic materials is therefore not that of a simile but rather of a metaphor (Fishbane 1985:303)...The Pentateuchal legal materials dealing with the rules and regulations of the given topic, serve as the linguistic and ideological matrix for their inversion and reapplication in a prophet's discourse (Fishbane 1985:305)."

Fishbane's (1985:276) view that "the historical development of the idea of a legal-exegetical *traditio* endowed with religious dignity is a direct consequence of the growth of the human legal *traditio* under the auspices of the legal *traditum* believed to be of divine origin." is problematic. Nevertheless, it is acceptable that "the representation of the legal *traditio* as part of the legal *traditum* has the effect of transforming the closed sense of the *traditum*. The legal *traditum* would inevitably appear as a historical *datum* which sponsors and incorporates new and often transformative exegetical meanings" (Fishbane 1985:276).⁴⁷

Fishbane's (1972:300-307) inner-biblical aggadic exegesis of cultic laws without formulae of citation and comparison will be used to explicate relation between Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20.

Fishbane (1972:281-317) suggests inner-biblical aggadic exegesis to indicate the way in which older texts were re-used in younger texts, that is, the legal texts were re-used in the prophetic texts in the Old Testament.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Fishbane (1985:276f.) explains the process of how the legal *traditio* transforms the closed sense of the *traditum* as follows: "The legal *traditio* would appear as that which explores and even reveals the full potential of the legal *traditum* dealing with new historical circumstances. In a word, an exegetical tradition faithful to the determinants of the *traditum* would be preserved and acknowledged as its true historical ally-not as an alien factor (Fishbane 1985:276)...The tradents and draftsmen of ancient Israel may even have perceived the *traditio* as having some divine status from its very onset - if only in the sense that the *traditio* was understood as part of the full potential of the legal revelation (Fishbane 1985:276-277)...Hence, obscurities in the *traditum* had to be clarified; its (real or apparent) implications drawn out; its incomprehensiveness supplemented; and its contradictions shown to be more apparent than real (Fishbane 1985:277)...There would thus develop the notion that the original written legal *traditum* may be supplemented by a legal exegetical *traditio* which is inspired by it, and that the continuous inspiration of the *traditum* upon its faithful exegetes is nothing other than the continuous revelation of God through that *traditum* (Fishbane 1985:277)."

⁴⁸ Fishbane's (1972:281-317) suggestion for inner-biblical aggadic exegesis can be summarized as follows: "The sphere of aggadic exegesis is clear when it is compared with legal exegesis (Fishbane 1985:282)...First, while inner-biblical legal exegesis is singularly concerned with the reinterpretation of pre-existing legal texts, inner-biblical aggadic exegesis utilizes not only pre-existing legal materials, but also the broad and detailed use of moral dicta, official or popular theologoumena, themes, motifs, and historical facts. Secondly, while inner-biblical legal exegesis is distinctively concerned with making pre-

Fishbane (1985:291) represents the methodological guideline, not the absolute requirement to recognize aggadic exegesis as follows: First, “[t]he easiest and most explicit means of recognizing aggadic exegesis is where it is formally indicated through technical formulae. By means of explicit citations or text referral the *tradtum* is set off from the *tradtio* which reapplies or reinterprets it.” Secondly, “[a]ggadic exegesis may also be noted and isolated by comparing parallel texts within the MT, or between the MT and its principal versions.” Thirdly, “[a] third means of isolating aggadic exegesis depends on a more subjective text-critical judgment. In these cases a *tradtum* is incorporated into a *tradtio* - which transforms it or re-employs it. Of particular aid and

existent laws applicable or viable in new contexts and with actions based on the received *tradtum* or its revised *tradtio*, inner-biblical aggadic exegesis is primarily concerned with utilizing the full range of the inherited *tradtum* for the sake of new theological insights, attitudes, and speculations, but action is not a necessary characteristic of aggadic exegesis (Fishbane 1985:282)....Aggadic exegesis is not content to supplement gaps in the *tradtum*, but characteristically draw forth latent and unsuspected meaning from it. In this way, aggadic exegesis utilizes the potential fullness of received formulations and makes this potential actual (Fishbane 1985:283)....For inner-biblical legal exegesis particularly serves to fill a felt lack in the *tradtum*, and to clarify for all practical or theoretical purposes the plain sense of a Scriptural dictum, while inner-biblical aggadic exegesis gives particular emphasis to its *sensus plenior*, its fullness of potential meanings and applications: the legal exegesis shows how a particular law can be clarified and reinterpreted *qua* law; while aggadic exegesis shows how a particular law, whether it is a particular law or whatever, i.e. *topos*, theologoumenon, moral dicta and so forth, can transcend its original focus, and become the basis of a new configuration of meaning (Fishbane 1985:283)....An analysis of the strategic reuses of prior *tradtio* - *tradtum*-*tradtio* dynamic - is the core of aggadic exegesis, which presupposes a careful methodological distinction between the sponsoring *tradtum* and the creative *tradtio* of it, showing a variety of ways that prior *tradtio*, i.e. creative combination of earlier words or *topoi*, even complex transformations of them (Fishbane 1985:283)....Not only explicit citation or referrals (e.g. Ezk 18:4-32; Jr 3:1; Hg 2:11-14) - few instances of inner-biblical aggadic exegesis, but also implicit or virtual citations - the vast majority of cases of inner-biblical aggadic exegesis, are the way which occur in the Bible (Fishbane 1985:284-285)....We can recognize the inner-biblical aggadic exegesis by a close comparison of the language of a given text with other, i.e. earlier Scriptural dicta or *topoi* (Fishbane 1985:285). Where such a text (the putative *tradtio*) is dominated by these dicta or *topoi* (the putative *tradtum*), and uses them in new and transformed ways, the likelihood of aggadic exegesis is strong (Fishbane 1985:285)....Identification of aggadic exegesis where external objective criteria are lacking is proportionally increased to the extent that multiple and sustained lexical linkages between two texts can be recognized, and where the second text (the putative *tradtio*) uses a segment of the first (the putative *tradtum*) in a lexically reorganized and topically rethematized way (Fishbane 1985:285)....Even on the basis of far less lexical evidence, it could have been contended that a redefined phrase ‘re-employs, literally or equivalently, words or formulas of earlier Scriptures, that is, that earlier biblical texts are exegetically reused, or ‘reactualized’ in new context (Fishbane 1985:286). The aggadic reinterpretation is only the idea of any given topic that is transposed and it can be not a legal exegesis but an aggadic exposition of a legal *tradtum* (Fishbane 1985:306). In the aggadic tradition, the true meaning of any law is delineated, but its original meaning is not violated (Fishbane 1985:307).”

importance in this judgment is the dense occurrence in one text of terms, often thoroughly reorganized and transposed, found elsewhere in a natural and uncomplicated form.”

1.3.2.2 Practical consideration

This study will investigate the possibility that it can be determined just “how textual allusions are to be confidently identified in the first place, and then evaluated in terms of their direction of dependence” (Leonard 2008:242). Two matters are raised: “What evidence is needed to establish a link between one biblical text and another text or tradition?” and “if a link between texts can be established, what evidence is needed to ascertain the direction of the textual or traditional influence?” (Leonard 2008:242; cf. Hays 1989:14-21; Sommer 1998:6-10; Tanner 2001).

When evidence emerges for one text’s dependence on another, some standard is needed for gauging the strength of that evidence (Leonard 2008:245; cf. 2006:26-35; Hays 1989:29-32; Edenburg 1998:72-74). For studying one text’s dependence on another, Leonard (2008:246) proposes seven principles as methodological guidelines to follow:

- (1) Shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection.
- (2) Shared language is more important than nonshared language.
- (3) Shared language that is rare or distinctive suggests a stronger connection than does language that is widely used.
- (4) Shared phrases suggest a stronger connection than do individual[y] shared terms.

- (5) The accumulation of shared language suggests a stronger connection than does a single shared term or phrase.
- (6) Shared language in similar contexts suggests a stronger connection than does language alone.
- (7) Shared language need not be accompanied by [a] shared form to establish a connection.

The principles outlined above offer guidance for the difficult task of identifying textual allusion. Equally difficult, if not mere so, is the matter of determining the direction of these allusions (Leonard 2008:257). When dealing with passages in the Old Testament , it is rarely possible to establish so definitely the priority of texts (Leonard 2008:257). For the determining of the direction of these allusions, Leonard (2008:257) suggests a series of fundamental questions:

- (1) Does one text claim to draw on another?
- (2) Are there elements in the text that help to fix their dates?
- (3) Is one text capable of producing the other?
- (4) Does one text assume the other?
- (5) Does one text show a general pattern of dependence on [another] text?
- (6) Are there rhetoric pattern[s] in the text that suggest that one text has used the other in an exegetically significant way?

Hays (1989:29-32) also suggests seven rules of thumb for the critic who looks for borrowings in Paul. The rules can also be applied for fathoming borrowing between two texts of the Old Testament. Hays's (1989:29-32) guidelines are as follows:

- (1) Availability-whether the author could have known the alleged source
- (2) Volume-determine the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactic patterns
- (3) Recurrence-whether the author uses the passage elsewhere
- (4) Thematic coherence-whether the allusion fits into the tenor of the work as a whole
- (5) Historical plausibility-could the author have intended such an allusion, and would the audience have understood it?
- (6) History of interpretation-have other noticed it?
- (7) Satisfaction-whether the proposed reading makes sense?

If two texts share vocabulary items that are commonplace in Hebrew, the parallel between them is most likely coincidental. If they share terms that often appear together in biblical or ancient Near Eastern texts, then there is strong likelihood that they independently draw on a traditional vocabulary cluster. But these doesn't necessarily satisfy the genuine borrowing from other text. In some cases, they can't fit the category of aggadic exegesis while in some cases they are indeed cases of aggadic exegesis. If a text repeatedly reflects the wording or ideas of earlier texts, then examples of shared vocabulary which display those tendencies are likely to represent genuine cases of borrowing (Sommer 1996:485; cf. Seidel 1955-1956:150). The aim is to show the borrowing of one text from another and to find such a pattern in a convincing way, e.g. a stylistic trait with great frequency (Sommer 1996:485). Such a pattern helps to show that one's text is the borrower and which source is borrowed, since the text in which one observes the pattern is the text that re-uses older material (Sommer 1996:485).

Applying these principles mentioned above will present a link between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 and between Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The thesis proposes that the idea of Yahweh's incomparability and the prohibition of making images of God are closely related to each other. This is explicated in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6. In the final instance this thesis indicates that the 'God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God construct' found in the two sections of Exodus is also seen in Isaiah 40:18-20

The aim of this study is to highlight the significance of aniconism in the form of the prohibition of making any images of God in Exodus 20:4-6, which is linked to the introduction in Exodus 20:2 stating God's redemptive history and the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 commanding exclusive worship to God in the Decalogue. The way it is formulated there is the explicit provenance of the prohibition founded in the rest of the Old Testament, especially in Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. We can refer to the prohibition in Exodus 20:2-6 as the 'construct of the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue'. Its significance of this prohibition construct in Exodus 20:2-6 can be elucidated by comparing it with the prohibition of making any image of God in the rest of the Old Testament. Inner-biblical interpretation will be used as a tool indicating this relationship.

The thesis of this paper is that there exists a direct and conscious dependency on aniconism as formulated in the Introduction and the first two commandments of the

Decalogue construct by the Old Testament Prophets when they presented a prophetic covenant disputation such as stated in passages like Isaiah 40:18-20.

After having indicated the terminological, theological and thematic parallelism between the relevant texts of Exodus and Isaiah, the relation between the passages will become clear, indicating a clear dependence of the Isaiah text on the Exodus text. Showing the similarities between the first and second commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 and the passage in Isaiah 40:18-20 will enable us to delve deeper into the relationship arguing that the Isaiah text is the alluding and the Exodus text the alluded text.

The similarity between the two texts can indicate a common principle of worship in Old Testament assemblies, which can in return guide present-day worshipping communities. When we apply the principles of the second commandment, we can understand that God demands not only negatively that we do not worship Him through images, but also positively to worship God according to His revelation. Given the unanimity of biblical legal codes and prophecy concerning the prohibition of making any image of God, the question can be raised what reason was for the prohibition on making any image of God in early Israel and its later period including Isaiah's. The answer to this question provides a possible clue to the distinctiveness of Israel's early religious cult. These laws on prohibition to make any image of God are of the essence for (mono) theism. The incomparability of God's sovereignty determined the way to worship the infinite, transcendental God, provided the principles of worship in the Old Testament assembly, as well as in the New Testament church, and even today. The principles of worship of the Old Testament assembly can be applied to the New Testament church and will

include the Reformed or the Presbyterian Church in Korea rooted in the Puritan tradition of having a regulative principle for corporate worship. The present-day worshipping community has the essential task to study the Bible and to apply the meaning of the text in their worship. This study will provide a hint for the dispute of scholars who are arguing what the principles of Presbyterian worship are to be. This study suggests that the thesis of this study can contribute to the argument of scholars who study Presbyterian worship, supplying a biblical foundation for its worship.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ While it will be necessary to consider some of the historical material involved in the formation of the Puritan regulative principle of worship, this study is not intended to be the exhaustive treatment of the historical issues. This is intended to be primarily an exercise in exegetical and theological research. Since a true theology of worship must depend upon the teaching of Scripture, certain passages will be considered as the need arises to structure more accurately biblical teaching on the regulative principle. Therefore, this study will focus on the exegesis to lay my position among various controversial positions with adequately citing key sources. Though this is a study of regulation of worship, it is not primarily a work of worship or liturgics in general. In this research, I will not intend endorsement of any principle of worship a priori. Rather, the goal is an open discussion of the biblical and theological basis for regulating worship. This will be accomplished by an approach on some texts in relation with the regulative principle of worship in exegetical and theological. My hope is that this analysis will point the way toward a greater coherence in Puritan and Presbyterian regulative principle of worship, as well as greater happiness and satisfaction in truth as divinely command.

CHAPTER II. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS 20:4-6

2.0 Introduction

The primary motive of this chapter is to focus on the present text itself and try to find the rationale why the text in Exodus 20:4-6 itself presents the second commandment of the Decalogue as the prohibition of making any image of God. The secondary one is to examine that this unit forms the provenance for the aniconic tradition found in the rest of the Old Testament.

This chapter first presents a detailed discussion of the prohibition on making any image of God as found in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. The main question of this section is whether the immediate reference of the second commandment is to images of other gods or to image of Yahweh. This study maintains that the prohibition of image in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is that of making any image of God. The prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue as well as the prohibition of making and paying homage to other gods including their images in the first commandment of the Decalogue.⁵⁰ The prohibition in the second commandment is

⁵⁰ This can be applied to all texts related with prohibition of making an image of God in the Old Testament. All passages in the Old Testament should to be studied with this methodology. But this is beyond this thesis. 'The introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct' will be applied to the episode of golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 in the Pentateuch in chapter 3, and in chapter 4 compared with the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God construct in Isaiah 40:18-20.

sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue.

This chapter will deal with the exegetical investigation of the meaning of the prohibition of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 in relation with the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment of the Decalogue Exodus 20:3 against the background of the unity of the Sinai pericope in the present text as the final form.

This chapter secondly poses the hypothesis that all other instances found in the Old Testament prohibiting the fabrication of any image of God is related to this ban in Exodus 20:4-6.⁵¹ This study will therefore investigate whether Exodus 20:4-6 can be considered as the provenance of the prohibition of making an image of God in the rest of the Pentateuch and the rest of Old Testament, or not.

Dealing with the argument on the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God and its probability as the provenance of the programmatic aniconism in the Old Testament, attention has to be given to the date of this provenance of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and that of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. Many modern scholars ask whether the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 comes from a still earlier stage of biblical religion or from a much later stage (Cf. Mettinger

⁵¹ Even though Patrick (1985:45) maintains that one cannot find explicit Old Testament support for the idea that God is a purely spiritual, immaterial being and therefore incompatible with any representation, one can find the related line of thought in the second commandment in the rest of the Old Testament.

1995:174-175; 1997:175-178). We will, therefore, lastly deal with the argument in related with a provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6: the relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20:2-17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 in relation with the composition of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11), that is, the problem whether the Decalogue comes from an early stage of Israel's history or later; the formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God, that is, the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is included in its original form, or inserted or incorporated into it later.

2.1 Exegetical consideration of Exodus 20:2-6

2.1.1 The unity of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) in the present text as the final form

Many scholars recognize that the Decalogue is not isolated from the context in the present form of the text and that by taking a literary passage out of its context they can debar themselves from understanding it out of context (Cassuto 1967:238). Taking up the issue of the literary context, Durham (1991:278) says “the single most important point about the canonical form of the Decalogue is its location under consideration.”

Although this point is very important, “it has become too easy to miss, that the Decalogue has so often been taken out of this sequence” (Durham 1991:278).⁵²

⁵² Even “the book [Exodus] itself is not a separate, independent work but a subsection of what has virtually always been understood as five-part work, the Pentateuch...Exodus follows closely on Genesis, so that Exodus 1 constitutes not the beginning of an entirely new work but the beginning of a new section of a larger work that has yet other sections (Stuart 2006: 20)...Exodus 40 hardly brings to a conclusion the major written enterprise Moses had in mind for his audience but concludes only the portion that brings

According to Childs (1974:365), the redactional structure and theme in framework of the Decalogue in Ex. 20:1-17 are as follows:

1. Israel's arriving at Sinai and encampment, (Ex 19:1-2)
2. God's covenant with Israel announced (Ex 19: 3-9)
 - (a) Conditions of the covenant (Ex 19:3-6)
 - (b) Israel's response of acceptance (Ex 19:7-8)
 - (c) Moses' special role defined (Ex 19:9)
3. Preparations prior to the third day (Ex 19:10-15)
 - (a) Instruction for purification for two days (Ex 19:10-11)
 - (b) Guarding the people from the mountain (Ex 19:12-13a)
 - (c) The signal for approaching the mountain is set (Ex 19:13b)
 - (d) Commands executed by Moses (Ex 19:14-15)
4. Preparations on the third day (Ex 19:16-25)
 - (a) The beginning of signs and the people's reaction (Ex 19:16)
 - (b) Moses leads the people out to the foot of the mountain (Ex 19:17)
 - (c) Further signs increasing (Ex 19:18)
 - (d) Moses speaking with God (Ex 19:19)
 - (e) Moses summoned for further instructions (Ex 19:20-24)
 - (f) Instructions reported to the people (Ex 19:25)
5. Proclamations of the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17)

the reader to the point that the tabernacle is built and ready for use as Israel's worship center. When we speak of the structure of Exodus, therefore, we must remember that it is a substructure-the bigger picture is that of the first five books of the Bible, one integral part of which is the section we call Exodus" (Stuart 2006:20-21). "Exodus is a subunit of a greater literary work, still, that is, the whole of Scripture" (Stuart 2006:21; cf. Fee & Stuart 2002:34-42; Sailhamer 1992).

6. Establishment of Moses' covenant office (Ex 20:18-20:21)
 - (a) The people's reaction of fear (Ex 20:18)
 - (b) The request for intercession addressed to Moses (Ex 20:19)
 - (c) Moses explains the manner of revelation:
 - (i) Do not fear (Ex 20:20a α)
 - (ii) God comes in order to test (Ex 20:2a β)
 - (iii) God comes in order to establish obedience (Ex 20:20b)
 - (d) Moses accepts mediatorship for the people (Ex 20:21)
7. Further stipulations of the covenant (Ex 20:22-23:33)
8. Sealing of the covenant (Ex 24:1-18)

Durham (1987:278) also points out that “the Decalogue is given as an integral part of the larger Sinai narrative (Ex 19:1-24:11) and as an essential segment of the account of Yahweh's representation of himself to Israel within the sequence.” Durham (1987:278) insists that

The [T]en [C]ommandments must first of all be seen in the way Exodus presents them, words addressed by Yahweh himself to Israel gathered by his command at the perimeter of holiness about the base of Mount Sinai.

Durham (cf. 1987:256-348) analyzes the structure and theme of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) as follows:

- A. Israel prepares for Yahweh's coming (Ex. 19:1-15)
- B. Yahweh comes to Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:16-25)

- C. Yahweh's principles for life in the covenant (Ex 20:1-17)
- D. Israel's response to Yahweh's coming (Ex 20:18-21)
- E. Yahweh's application of his principles: "The Book of the Covenant" (Ex 20:22-23:33)
- F. The making of [the] covenant: The people and their leaders (Ex 24:1-18)

Many scholars regard the location of the Decalogue in this present text as fitting in harmoniously with the other units. In recent, commentators focus on the thematic, literary, and theological links between the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and its surrounding units: The location of the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) as the stipulation of the covenant in the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) in the present text as the final form.

There is a difference between the ways scholars explain the arrangement in the present text. On the one hand, some scholars (Blenkinsopp 1997:109-125; Johnstone 1980:358-363; van Seters 1988; Dozeman 1989; cf. Chirichigno 1987:457-479) assume a redaction for the arrangement of the present text. On the other hand, some scholars (Cf. Sailhammer 1992; Song 1992; Niehaus 1984) assume the strict historical composition by Moses as an original authorship for the present text. Although it is not easy to settle down this discussion, as none of the theories discussed above is conclusive, I would prefer to read the Decalogue as a single literary unit within the context of the Sinai pericope.⁵³ I therefore turn to the sub sections of the Decalogue indicating their interrelationship in the Decalogue forming a larger unit.

⁵³ This means that the author will have to study the first two commandments of the Decalogue within the context of the Decalogue itself, as well as within the larger context of the Sinai pericope in the following sub sections.

2.1.2 Exodus 20:2 (The introduction to the Decalogue)

In the opening words of the Decalogue Yahweh presents Himself (Ex 20:2) in terms of his act of deliverance: ‘I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage’ (Cf. Durham 1991:283).⁵⁴ As Patrick (1985:230) points out, “[t]he covenant texts do not distinguish between Yahweh’s authority to command and his authority to enforce his commandments. It was undoubtedly assumed that the one entailed the other.” The statements concerning Yahweh in the covenant context, “(1) identify him by name and describe his character and (2) grant him authority to command this people and enforce his commandments” (Patrick 1985:283).

2.1.2.1 Exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:2

The introduction to the Decalogue which begins with Yahweh’s autokerygmatic statement, “I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you forth from the land of Egypt” describes “Yahweh’s relationship with Israel as a gift of grace” (Durham 1991:300). ‘I am Yahweh your God...’,⁵⁵ functions as an assertion of the authority of Yahweh.⁵⁶ Zimmerli (1953:20) writes “all that Yahweh had to say and proclaim to his people

⁵⁴ Before the Decalogue is addressed to Israel, God is already present. Cf. Exodus 19:19a: “the sound of the ram’s horn meanwhile was moving, and growing very strong.” Then God spoke all these words, saying, “I am Yahweh, your God’.” The literary construction ends with the same theophany in Exodus 20:18-20. According to Durham, “this memory of Yahweh speaking from Sinai in the ears of all the people is common to every account of the Sinai theophany in the Old Testament. It is an emphasis integral both to the Sinai narrative sequence and to the larger narrative sequence, which consistently sets Yahweh at the center and leaves no doubt that the proof of his Presence and the climatic revelation of himself is first and foremost with the people of Israel. The clear assertion of the Sinai narrative is that Yahweh’s first words to Israel at Sinai were spoken directly by himself to all the people, assembled for that very purpose.”

⁵⁵ Zimmerli calls it a “self-presentation formula” (Cf. Zimmerli 1953:179-209). The autokerygmatic phrase אֲנִי יְהוָה, “I am Yahweh” is a “primary formula” (Elliger 1966:214; cf. Zimmerli 1969:14; Durham 1991:283)

⁵⁶ The revelation of God’s name to Moses was tied to the promise that he would deliver Israel from Egypt (Ex 6:2).

appears as a development of the basic announcement: I am Yahweh”. In this regard Elliger (1966:213-216) has suggested that the addition of אֱלֹהֵיךָ, “your God” to יְהוָה אֲנִי, “I am Yahweh” changes a “holiness or sublimity formula” into a “saving history or grace-formula.” This expression, as Cassuto (1967:241) understands it, has the connotation of “in this manner, [as] by announcing their names, the Eastern kings were accustomed to begin their solemn declarations that respect their deeds” and “the King of the universe commences His declaration to man - in man’s style: I, the Speaker, am called YHWH, and I am your God specifically.” Elliger (1966:213-216) further elaborates on this phrase. He divides the objects of salvation-grace - the people of Israel as indicated by Yahweh’s opening word of the Decalogue - into numbered sentences as follows: “(1) who Yahweh is, by use of the self confessional phrase יְהוָה אֲנִי; (2) who they are, by the addition of the self-giving phrase אֱלֹהֵיךָ since Yahweh can only have become *their* God by his act of giving himself; and (3) that these assertions are validated by their completely discontinuous new situation, as a people brought forth from Egypt, and from the non-status of slaves to the status of a people to whom Yahweh has given himself.

As Labuschagne (1969:136) points out, “by his intervention in history, of which the deliverance from Egypt is the example *par excellence*, Yahweh did something that no other god ever did: He delivered a nation for Himself in a miraculous manner. Through this miraculous act of redemption the incomparability of Yahweh came to light. This act of redemption became the foundation of the Israelite belief in God, and it has remained vividly alive in Israel’s memory.”

2.1.2.2 The connection between the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the rest of the commandments of the Decalogue

God identifies *himself* in relation to a particular history, which functions to tie the following law to the prior narrative (Cf. Fretheim 1991:224). According to Childs (1974:401), “the introduction of the formula at this place in the narrative not only points back to his history of redemption, but it also points forward to a new stage in [the] relation between God and his people.”

For Israel, the most characteristic quality of their God was exactly this quality of acting in history, and the fact that it is closely linked to his incomparability (Labuschagne 1969:136). It is indicated that Israel saw this particular characteristic as the distinguishing mark between Yahweh and other gods (Labuschagne 1969:136-137). This characteristic of the God of Israel, revealed in his intervention in history as the Redeemer, renders Him unique and identifies Him as the Only God (Labuschagne 1969:137).

This prologue verse introduces the Ten Commandments as a series of principles concerned with the relationship between Yahweh and humankind, in particular with the people of Israel. Especially important is that Yahweh when speaking to them points out that He has given himself to them; He has made them who were no people into a people; He has given freedom and identity to those who were formerly slaves (Durham 1991:284). As Childs (1974:401) says “the prologue serves as a preface to the whole law.” It is not tied to the first commandment only. “It makes absolutely clear that the commandment[s] which follow are integrally connected to God’s act of self-revelation”

(Childs 1974:401).⁵⁷

The law is evidently directly connected to God's grace as the introduction to all the other commandments of the Decalogue. At this point Childs (1974:401) states as follows:

The commandments are prefaced by the formula to make clear that they are understood as the will of Yahweh who has delivered his people from bondage. Yahweh has identified himself as the redeemer God. The formula identifies the authority and right of God to make known his will because he has already graciously acted on Israel's behalf.

The lawgiver is God Himself, presenting himself to the people and giving them a glimpse of the divine mind and will. As Sarna (1991:142) puts it, "morality is the expression of the divine will." God made himself known by his name. He revealed his nature and entered into a covenant with his people. The Decalogue reveals God's nature. It spells out what God requires from his covenant people, whom he liberated without demanding their prior commitment (Childs 1974:402).

Harner (1988:12-13) represents the close relation between the introduction of the Decalogue (Ex 20:2) and the commandments followed (Ex 20:3-17). In the Decalogue as a document of the covenant, introduced by the word Yahweh as the name of God (Ex

⁵⁷ Muilenburg (1964:39, 42) states it that these "first words" of Yahweh to Israel, "indispensably prior to all that is to follow," are "the center and focus of the whole Pentateuch" and "the very heart of the whole Old Testament." In connection with what follows it is, "the association of proclamation and teaching: kerugma kai didache."

20:1-2), God, without any obligation, took the initiative to deliver his people from bondage and tells his people to live according to his law within the covenant relationship that he established (Harner 1983:13). These commandments in turn are to be read in relationship to the introduction of the Decalogue, expressing God's deliverance of his people from Egypt (Harner 1988:61). The structure of the Decalogue, consisting of an introduction and different commandments, seen within the larger context of Exodus 19-24, represents these commandments as requests to obey the covenantal law as a response to God's redemptive grace. God's incomparability as shown redemptive history in the introduction is a motivation for the obedience to the commandments followed. Their liberation is presupposed in each of the Ten Commandments of this covenantal document.

2.1.3 Exodus 20:3 (The first commandment of the Decalogue)

The same is to be applied to the connection between the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment in Exodus 20:3. The first commandment is to be considered in this specific context. The first commandment immediately follows on the statement in the introduction to the Decalogue, requesting undivided loyalty of those who will respond to Yahweh's gift (Durham 1991:300). As Enns (2000:413) says, this loyalty is not primarily "payback for God's deliverance; rather, God is worthy of it." The primary meaning of the first commandment of the Decalogue has to be sought in this context and then the question that "the other gods" includes their images or not has to be considered.

2.1.3 The exegetical meaning of Exodus 20:3

“The initial problem of the first commandment is the translation of the much debated phrase *עַל-פָּנָי*.” On this phrase, Childs (1974:402) points out that “a wide variety of translations of *עַל* have been suggested in addition to the traditional rendering ‘beside me’ of the Authorized Version, and each of them can find some biblical warrants.” Durham (1991:284; cf. Knierim 1965:25; Stamm and Andrew 1967:7-81) puts it another way: “*עַל* has variously been rendered as expressing preference, defiance, proximity, exclusion, opposition and the like.” The traditional translation ‘beside me’ can be faulted for carrying the connotation ‘except me’, which is foreign to the original sense of the text as Childs (1974:402) points out. *עַל* in connection with *פָּנָי*, Yahweh’s “face” or “presence” refers to Yahweh’s coming to Israel (Durham 1991:284-285).⁵⁸ Labuschagne (1969:139) points out “here *עַל* means ‘on account of, because of’, suggesting that the word *פָּנָי* does not only mean ‘face’, but also ‘presence’”. In the light of the concept of Yahweh’s incomparability, as Labuschagne (1969:139) points out, we might as well accept the following translation: “You shall have no other gods because of my presence.” Thus, the reason why Israel should have no other gods is clearly because of Yahweh’s presence, because only He initiated Israel’s history. After introducing Himself as the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, Yahweh forbids Israel to have other gods, because through his redeeming intervention in history he has proved Himself incomparable. It has been made clear that God cannot be put on the same level as other gods, and, therefore, can tolerate no other god in his presence (Labuschagne 1969:139).

⁵⁸ Durham insists “it is possible that “in my presence” is an expansion of a brief earlier form; if so, it could be an expansion, especially appropriate to the Sinai-Theophany context.” But this study doesn’t assume that.

The rest of the first commandment לֹא יְהִי־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים with the singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, “gods”, as Durham (1991:284) says, is a problem for the application of the first commandment.

The first difficulty in the interpretation is the phrase אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, “other gods”. Fretheim (1991:224) comments on that as follows: “This commandment with its reference to “other gods” exhibits a henotheism or monolatry, essentially identical words that denote belief in or worship of one God without denying the existence of others.” Childs (1974:403) points out that the claim of Yahweh’s exclusiveness in the sense that He alone exists as God is not contained in the first commandment. Durham (1991:285) says that “the first commandment is not an assertion of the monotheistic conviction, that Yahweh is the only God, and hence the sole choice, in spite of the assumed nonexistence of other gods.” Childs (1974:403), however, adds that in the first commandment the prohibition describes the relation of Yahweh to Israel by categorically eliminating other gods as far as Israel is concerned. Cassuto (1967:241) states something different concerning this point as follows: “The expression other gods became a regular, stereotyped term for the gods of gentiles, who are no-gods. Every deity apart from the Lord is another god. The adjective other came to assume in Hebrew the significance of something strange bizarre, something that is other than it should be.”

Childs (1974:403) understands that the singular form used in לֹא יְהִי־לְךָ emphasizes the restricted nature of the reference. According to Cassuto (1967:241), “the text read, לֹא יְהִי־לְךָ, in singular, in order to emphasize the prohibition of association with even one

god...literally, 'there shall not be', the plural [rendered: 'have no']; אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, [‘other gods’, plural], not [‘another god’, singular], so as to make it clear that not only is it forbidden to associate with one deity but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be.”

The conclusion to be drawn here is that “the commandment’s language is theologically compatible with a high monotheism, whatever one’s historical judgments is on the people of God who were drawn into disloyalty to God” (Fretheim 1991:225). Cassuto (1967:241: cf. Enns 2000:415) also concludes that “the first commandment was, in a sense, called for by the many gods who demanded Israel’s allegiance, which Yahweh alone had the right to command.”⁵⁹

Cassuto (1967:241) decodes the message of the first commandment in verse 3 where God requests his people to be his partners in the covenant as follows: “I shall not tolerate your associating Me with any other god from among the divinities of the peoples round about you: *You shall have no other gods.*” The prohibition in the first commandment must be seen in the light of Israel’s experience in history that Yahweh is incomparable (Labuschagne 1969:138).⁶⁰ We may conclude that the implication of

⁵⁹ At this point Enns (2000:413) states as follows: “Some have suggested that the first commandment is not an explicitly monotheistic statement but a command to be monolatrous. (Monotheism is the belief that there *is* only one God; Monolatry implies the existence of more than one god, but we must worship only one.)” The commandment does not specify that no one is to have “other gods,” but that Israel is to have no other gods. It is connected with Yahweh’s “jealousy” or “Zeal”, which is described more fully in the expansion of the second commandment in Exodus 20:5a-6.

⁶⁰ Scholars tried to solve the problem by qualifying Old Testament monotheism as ‘monarchical’, ‘ethical’, ‘theoretical’, ‘realistic’ and ‘absolute’, or by distinguishing between monotheism, henotheism and monolatry. Vriezen (1966:25) uses the terms ‘mono-Yahwism’ and ‘monotheistic Yahwism’ and he points out that the term ‘monotheism’ is useful-provided we do not lose sight of the historical development, and that the term is interpreted somewhat liberally. But the real problem and the principal controversy among scholars does not lie in the phenomenon commonly known as monotheism itself, but rather in the interpretation of the term ‘monotheism’ (Labuschagne 1969:143). Labuschagne (1969:143) points out that “the problem of Old Testament monotheism only becomes real when some philosophical system or some

God's incomparability in the Decalogue stems from Israel's experience in history that is delivered from Egypt.

Secondly, the question that "the other gods" includes their images or not has to be considered. Zimmerli (1963:234-248) says "the 'other gods' of the first commandment are, by implication, images made by human beings. Making and worshipping of images is, by implication, a violation of the exclusive claims of YHWH on Israel's loyalty. The

preconceived religio-historical theory is adopted as the starting point and as the criterion in the approach to historical fact. Thus it is important to approach the factual data without any preconceived system or '-ism', to examine them in their historical context and to keep an eye open for the historical development of the idea of God through the centuries of the Old Testament history." If we accept this, as Labuschagne (1969:143) proposed, we can avoid the incorrect conclusion that the prophets created monotheism, which is still maintained by some scholars. The confession of Yahweh's incomparability probably had its origin already during the earliest period of Mosaic Yahwism (Labuschagne 1966:146). On this point Labuschagne (1966:148-149) says as follows: There was no evolution from pre-Mosaic to the Mosaic concept of God, but certainly a revolution, an incomparable One, the only true God. Only in the Mosaic period do we find all the conditions required by true monotheism: the appearance of a revolutionary reformer, recognition of one single God, rejection of polytheism, intolerance of other religions, a complete negation of the significance of other gods, and a tendency toward universalism.

From this concept, which is basically a new conception representing a spiritual revolution and is found in the transcendental view of the Godhead, flows that "God cannot be depicted by any tangible substance whatsoever, for every form resembles a natural object, and cannot even remotely accord with the absolute, transcendental character of the God of Israel" (Cassuto 1967:236-237). In the rest of the Bible, as the Decalogue of Exodus insists, the Supreme Power ruling the universe is totally different from his creation. God cannot be represented by any form in the universe, and cannot be manipulated by any those forms. The inevitable result of such a belief is monotheism (Oswalt 1998:175). As Sarna (1986:144-145) observes,

The essence of monotheism is that God is absolutely sovereign precisely because He is wholly independent of the world He created, and He does not inhere in it. To present an invisible God in any material and tangible form whatsoever is by definition to distort the divine reality.

Without giving a full exposition of what the Old Testament proclaims about the service of one God and faith in one God, we need only to summarize the results of our investigation of the concept of Yahweh's incomparability, in order to deduce therefrom what light it sheds on Old Testament monotheism. When Israel compared her God with other gods, it is assumed that there were gods in the polytheistic world, and their existence is taken for granted (henotheism). Whenever the Old Testament refers to idols, irrespective of what judgment is being passed on them, it presumes that they are really there and they are real, at least for their worshippers. There was no monotheism or monotheistic religion that did not reckon with polytheism and took the existence of other gods seriously. The negation of the existence of idols in a monotheistic religion is in fact secondary; primarily it rejects polytheism and negates the significance of other gods. The fact that Israel did, as a matter of fact, compare its God with other gods, confirms that they took the existence of other gods seriously. The view that the idea of Yahweh's incomparability is nothing more than an honorific ascription, and that any definite comparative notion had fallen into the background, is to be rejected. Israel used other terms and epithets as honorific ascriptions to express the greatness and sublimity of Yahweh, e. g. 'God of gods and the Lord of lords', 'the Most High', 'King', 'Lord' and 'Zebaoth' which do not connote either Yahweh's incomparability or his uniqueness. On the other hand we can see that the comparative expressions primarily express Yahweh's 'being different', emphasizing the contrast between Him and all other beings (Labuschagne 1969:144-145).

Ten commandments, promulgated at Mt Sinai, fused together the prohibition against ‘other gods’ and the prohibition against images in such a way that they interpret each other (Ex 20:3-6).” Zimmerli (1963:234-248) distinguished between the commandment against images and the prohibition against worshipping other gods. The fluidity between “gods” and “images,” however, suggests that a good deal of overlapping and merging, occurred through history.

2.1.3.2 The connection between the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 and other commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20.

In the same way the introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 is to be read in conjunction with the first commandment in Exodus 20:3, the first commandment is to be considered in terms of the rest of the Decalogue.

As Patrick (1986:43) indicates “the first commandment protects Yahweh’s sovereignty as well as his religious prerogatives in Israel by establishing a basis for the rest of the Commandments.” Durham (1991:284) points out that “the first of the Ten Commandments is basic to the nine that follow it and to the relationship the Decalogue is designed to ensure.” It is, thus, the basis for all the others, explaining “what loyalty to God entails in the various aspects of their relationship.” (Fretheim 1991:224) It has absolute priority to other commandments as “a first and fundamental requirement of those who desire to enter into the covenant relationship with Yahweh” (Enns 2000:414).

This undivided loyalty is the foundation of the nine commandments that follow, especially in the three commandments that deal with the worship of God. Durham

(1991:285) represents the relation as follows:

The first of the commandments is the essential foundation of the building of the covenant community. Yahweh had opened himself to a special relationship with Israel, but that relationship could only develop if Israel committed themselves to Yahweh alone. Yahweh had rescued them and freed them, delivered them and guided them, and then came to them. The next step, if there was to be a next step, belonged to them. If they were to remain in his Presence, they were not to have other gods.

2.1.4 Exodus 20:4-6 (The second commandment of the Decalogue)

Enns (2000:414) points out that ‘the first commandment provides the conceptual framework in which the other commandments are to be understood. Yahweh alone is God, and he is speaking to the people who belong to him.’ Durham (1991:285) says “the second commandment, with the other two commandments that follow” describes “special dimensions to their relationship with him.” While the first commandment forbids any association with other gods, three specifications of how Yahweh *is* to be worshiped are followed. “The first of these specifications is the prohibition of the use of images in the worship of Yahweh” (Durham 1991:285).

2.1.4.1 Exegetical consideration of Exodus 20:4-6

In verse 4, the making of a פֶּסֶל, “idol” is prohibited. According to Childs (1974:404), “it is generally agreed that the prohibition of making a פֶּסֶל refers, first of all, to an

image carved from wood or stone, but which later came to include metal figures as well (Is 40:19; 44:10).” In this regard Durham (1991:285) suggests that “פסל means to “cut or shape” something, stone in particular, and the noun פסל refers to an image, of whatever likeness, and involving a variety of materials, made for use in the worship of deity.”

Nevertheless, some questions on the meaning of verse 4 still remains : “Is it a separate commandment or only an elaboration of verse 3?” (Fretheim 1991:225)⁶¹ Labuschagne (1969:139) asks whether images of Yahweh should also be included in this prohibition. Other Scholars also point out the core of this issue as either: “Does “idol” refer to an idol of one of the gods [previously] spoken of in verse 3, or does it also include any sort of representation of Yahweh?” (Enns 2000:415; Fretheim 1991:226) and “whose image is being forbidden to Israel in the second commandment, Yahweh’s, or those of the gods rivaling Yahweh?” (Durham 1991:285) All these questions deal with the same problem and can be dealt with simultaneously.

As Childs (1974:407) points out, “the initial problem to be recognized is that the reason

⁶¹ Fretheim points out that Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews have different views on the division of the first and second commandments from the majority of Protestants including the Reformeds. Roman Catholics and Lutherans count Exodus 20:3-6 into the first and one commandment; Jews consider Exodus 20:2 to be the first and Exodus 20:3-6 the second, considering it as one commandment. This question is deeply rooted in pre-critical religious traditions, with many groups designating verse 3-6 as a single commandment (Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Jews). Sailhamer (1992:283) sees the first and second commandment as one commandment. He points out that all of Exodus 20:2-6 can be read as merely one commandment, a prohibition of idolatry, and counted it as the first commandment as in Augustine, Luther, MT. Sailhamer (1992:283) suggests the expression “other gods” is taken to mean “idols.” Thus for him, the prohibition in verse 4-6 means the prohibition against idolatry. In that, Sailhamer agrees with Jewish tradition, although the former recounts it as the first commandment, the latter sees it as the second commandment. On the issue of the enumeration and division of the Ten Words/Commandments, which has differed notably between Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, this study follows the Protestant tradition, “not because it is a tradition but because ...it reflects the better analysis of the structure of the Ten Words.” (Cf. Stuart 2006:448; Youngblood 1994:30-35, 50, 52).

which lies behind the commandment is never fully explained.” There is a key point from which the intent can be inferred, like the meaning of the commandment in the context of Exodus 20:3. It furnishes a key for the solution of the problem. A couple of scholars also deal with this question.

Obbink (1929:264-274) defended the thesis that the images which were prohibited did not refer to images of Yahweh, but rather to images of foreign gods, whose use was rejected in Yahweh’s cult. Obbink (1929:264ff.) argues with reference to Yahweh’s jealousy: how could Yahweh be jealous of a picture of himself? Obbink (1929:264-274) suggests that the second commandment forbade the making of images of any kind, that it meant that Yahweh’s worship was to be kept pure of defacement with “all kind of heathen material.”

This interpretation seems plausible and cautious, yet it requires further examination. The reasons against this thesis are stated by Childs (1974:406):

[T]he need to distinguish between the issues involved in the first and second commandments has not been met by Obbink’s artificial distinction between cultic prohibition... and the worship of foreign gods in general....

Some scholars suggest the possibility that it can also be considered as command prohibiting making any image of God. There is a significant difference between the meanings of the first and second commandments in what they prohibit. In regard to the question whether the second commandment (Ex 20:4-6) is a separate commandment or only an elaboration of Exodus 20:3, it can be said that “Exodus 20:4 is a separate

commandment from the first commandment because the inclusion of an image of Yahweh in Exodus 20:4-6 can be explained when it is seen as a separate commandment.” (Fretheim 1991:225) It is not easy to to establish the valid reason why the images of other gods are prohibited in verse 4 because it is already mentioned in verse 3. “Those who view verses 4-6 as an elaboration of verse 3 encounter problems with the inclusion of images of Yahweh, which is an apparent move beyond verse 3.” (Fretheim 1991:226) As Fretheim (1991:226-227) says, “this can be overcome if worshipping images of Yahweh is in fact understood to be idolatry.”

Thus, “those who view verse 4 as a separate commandment tend to regard it as a prohibition of images of Yahweh, stressing the ‘for yourself’ (i.e. Israel’s worship), other divine images having been dealt with in verse 3.” (Fretheim 1991:225; cf. Craigie 1976:153; McConville 2002:126)

Durham (1991:286) says concerning this point:

The first commandment states definitively that each individual who would enter the covenant with Yahweh is to have no other gods. Only disobedience of that commandment would allow the use of image[s] of foreign gods, a point von Rad recognizes in his connection of the two commandments. Further, the emphatic לְךָ “for yourself,” surely unnecessary if v 4a is only an extension of v. 3, may be a clue to the direction to the second commandment is taking: the worshiper who has made a commitment to worship only Yahweh must not compromise that worship by making it easy, that is, by adopting for his own use shaped images to provide a concrete center for worship, a practice common to all of Israel’s neighbors. The personal reference of

this and indeed all the commandments must be kept clearly in mind. A paraphrase of the commandment might even be, “not one of you is to have a shaped image for the worship of Yahweh.

Bernhardt (1956:88, 93f.) investigates the problem and then concludes that it originally did refer to an image of Yahweh. There is no ready answer why the making of images was forbidden. The reason given in the Decalogue is that Yahweh is an **אל קנא** (Labuschagne 1969:140; cf. Kuechler 1908:42-52; Renaud 1963:7-159). These theories, which consider the prohibition of the image in verse 4 as other god’s image, as Durham (1991:286) criticizes, “do not allow the difference between the first and the second commandments, or for the differences between the essential statement of the second commandment (v. 4a) and the lengthy and layered expansion of it (vv. 4b-6).” The reason for it is that an image of God is emphasized in the context of God’s incomparability expressed by **אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ** (Ex 20:2, 5a). When the grounds for the commandment are given, they are in terms of the intense anger, which is aroused in God. From this, one can deduce that the worship of images is understood as an encroaching on the prerogative of God, but precisely how is not stated (Childs 1974:407).

There are also some indications within the rest of the Old Testament that do shed some light on interpreting the commandment. It seems clear that the second commandment must originally have functioned different from the first commandment which prohibited the worship of other gods. It is reinforced by numerous parallels to the

commandment throughout the Pentateuch, although the parallels repeat and expand the prohibition without aiding greatly in explaining the fundamental reason behind the commandment (Childs 1974:407).⁶²

2.1.4.2 The connection between the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 and the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3, and the second commandment in Exodus 20:4-6

In the Decalogue it is clearly stated that “not only the making of images but also their worship was forbidden. Yahweh’s jealousy of the idols as such would imply that He took their power and influence seriously, which is, of course, absurd.” (Labuschagne 1969:141) Therefore the prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh’s incomparability: no image of him, or else He might find Himself standing in the company of idols; no image and no worship of the idols, or else He, the incomparable, would have to compete on a level with the idols for his rights as far as Israel was concerned (Labuschagne 1969:141).

According to Patrick (1985:44), “the second commandment was rather narrow in scope, excluding iconographic representation of Yahweh. Images of other deities would be

⁶² “The most helpful parallel is Deuteronomy 4:9ff which attempts to probe into the reason behind the prohibition. Here the author argues that because God did not reveal himself in a *form*, but only in a voice, Israel should beware of making a graven image. Images are prohibited because they are an incorrect response to God’s manner of making himself known, which was by means of word. In the rest of the Old Testament the stress on the word is particularly characteristic of Deuteronomy, and the prophets also share it. The second parallel to the second commandment to shed any light on its meaning are the expressions in the rest of the Old Testament, which are consistent with the Decalogue in tying the prohibition to the self-introductory formula “I am Yahweh your God.” The third parallel to the second commandment is the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6. It reiterates the intolerance against images, most probably in an earlier and later level of tradition, without addressing the question of the ground for the command” (Childs 1974:407). God, thus, testified to himself with his voice, which is the particular extension of the argument in Deuteronomy 4:2.

excluded by the first commandment, but a separate prohibition was required to ban images of Yahweh.”⁶³ At this point Childs (1974:409) says “in the second commandment the central issue is the nature of legitimate worship.” As Durham (1991:285) says, “the second commandment being the first of these specifications to which the first commandment is applied is a prohibition of the use of images of God in the worship of Yahweh. With regard to this prohibition, one should think of images of Yahweh himself (Labuschagne 1969:139). Thus there is also a close connection between the prohibition of making any image of God and the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability (Labuschagne 1969:139).

The issue, therefore, turns on Yahweh’s testimony to himself, over against man’s arbitrary witness to God, that is to say, witness on the human idea about God (Childs 1974:409). The prohibition of images is grounded in the self-introductory formula, “I am Yahweh,” which summarizes God’s own testimony to himself (Childs 1974:409). In contrast to this true witness, its substitution with images is judged to be a false witness, and hence a delusion (Childs 1974:409).

The second commandment has to do with Yahweh himself and the gift of his presence in Israel. Israelites are forbidden to make images for the worship of Yahweh because he is Yahweh. He is in a way present in all creatures Yahweh created, but, what is more important, he is also beyond them all. No image conceivable to them could serve to represent him. They must worship him as he is, not as they can envision him or would

⁶³ Patrick points out that we can see the original meaning behind the condemnation of Gideon’s ephod (Jdg 8:27) and the images, ephod, and teraphim made by Micah and stolen by the tribe of Dan for its sanctuary (Jdg 17-18), and it probably stands behind the condemnation of “golden calves” at various times in the narrative (Ex 32; 1 Ki 12:28-30; Hs 8:5-6; 13:2).

depict him to be (Durham 1991:286).

The comparison of God with other gods in the Old Testament always indicates that there is no god like Yahweh, that none can be compared to him, that no one and nothing can be placed on the same level as Him.

In the second commandment of the Decalogue (Ex 20:4-6 and Dt 5:8-10), “emphasis of the [f]irst commandment is not the “other gods”, but Yahweh’s uniqueness, and, likewise, the emphasis of the [s]econd commandment is not the “image’, but how to secure Yahweh’s uniqueness.” (Holter 2003:112). Holter (2003:12) says that the other foreign gods are identified with and known through their images and likewise Yahweh can be sought to be known in the same way. The second commandment is the way to securing Yahweh’s uniqueness, as preventing Yahweh from being understood like the other gods. It can be cahrtd as follows:

Prologue: the historical background of God’s incomparability (Ex 20:2)

The 1st commandment: the statement of God’s incomparability (Ex 20:3)

The 2nd commandment: the first way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:4-6)

The 3rd commandment: the second way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:7)

The 4th commandment: the third way securing God’s incomparability (Ex 20:8)

2.1.5 Summary

In this section, this study indicated the theological rationale for the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment. It was linked to the idea of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue and the exclusion of other gods in the first commandment. The prohibition in the second commandment can only be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction of the Decalogue as well as the prohibition of making and paying homage to other gods including their images in the first commandment of the Decalogue. The prohibition in the second commandment is sometimes backed up by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue.

2.2 In-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6

² אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

³ לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פָּנָי

⁴ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל מִתַּחַת בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת
וְאֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

⁵ לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד

עֵוֹן אֲבֹת עַל-בְּנֵים עַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רִבְעִים לְשָׁנָא

⁶ וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֵלֶפֶים לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

The in-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6 shows, firstly, the God who speaks to his people, Israel (v. 1) is Yahweh who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The formula "I am Yahweh your God, אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ is used to express the incomparability of God in Exodus 20:2 (Cf. Harner 1988:62). Furthermore, according to

Keiser (1996:490), “the combination of the phrase יהוה אלהיך with אנכי gives the decisional use to the meaning of the name of God. The expression יהוה אלהיך is a formula of God’s self-declaration used in the context of God’s incomparability with other gods.”

Secondly, לא יהיה-לך in verse 3 makes clear and emphasizes that God is the one who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2b) and became her king (v. 2b). The phrase אלהים אחרים על-פני in verse 3 can mean that no other god brought Israel from the land of Egypt, while God is the one who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). אלהים אחרים (Ex 20:3) with the singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, “gods” which differ from אלהים אחרים, [‘other gods’, plural], not, אל אחר, [‘another god’, singular] makes it clear that not only is it forbidden to associate with not only one deity but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be” in verse 3a (Cassuto 1966:241). Cassuto (1966:241) decodes the message of the first commandment in verse 3 which means that God requests his people to be his partners in the covenant as follows: “I shall not tolerate your associating with Me any other god from among the divinities of the peoples round about you: You shall have no other gods”, showing explicitly that God is incomparable with other gods who can be replaced by images. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:2-3 clearly shows the incomparability of God. It requires his people to remember.

Thirdly, the ground for the prohibition of making any image, לא תעשה-לך פסל, is the “I am Yahweh your God, יהוה אלהיך. It functions as a motive for the prohibition

on the image of God in verse 4 by using the phrase in verse 5, which was used in verse 2. Thus, the prohibition of God's image has to be understood in the context of the incomparability of God. אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵל קַנָּא in verse 5 shows us that making an image of God stands in contrast to the incomparability of God. Thus, making any image of God is prohibited to his covenant people.

2.3 A provenance for the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6

As stated above many scholars support the opinion that the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4 including Deuteronomy 5:8-9a represents prohibiting making any image of God as it is found in the present text. Nevertheless, opinions differ on the stage when the prohibition on making image of God started to appear. Many modern scholars (Cf. Dohmen 1985:236-277; Zimmerli 1974:247-260; Mettinger 1997:175-178) do differ on its origin, that is, whether it occurred for the first time in earlier tradition or incorporated into it later. They argue that the explicit prohibition of making image of God, formulated in all the legal codes of the Hebrew Bible seems to be of late origin (Mettinger 1995:16). They “wish to make the prohibition of making an image of God in the second commandment a late feature of the biblical religion, largely because they assume that such a concept must have been risen as a result of a long process of theological evolution” (Oswalt 1998:63). Von Rad (1962:216) notes as follows: “Here the commandment is drafted wholly with reference to the commandment forbidding the worship of other gods.” He describes it as a late and specialized prohibition against representing Yahweh by “an image belonging to another deity” (Von Rad 1962:216) Dick (1999:2) says:

The classical formulations of the *Bilderverbot* are found in the Decalogue, Exodus 20:3-4 and Deuteronomy 5:7-8. The syntactical irregularities in these texts strongly suggest that this pivotal commandment has undergone evolution.

Dohmen (1985) and Dick (1999) maintain that the prohibition of cult image was largely a product of 6th-century redaction and thus the passages dealing with the prohibition of cult image shared the same theological theme with each other, although they stem from different traditions (Dick 1999:2). Dick (1999:14) says the second commandment emerged during the Exile as the chief defense of newly emerged monotheism, supposing the redaction of the second commandment of the Decalogue as a final stage of the redaction by the Deuteronomistic editor. It is Dick's (1999:15; cf. Dohmen 1987:157) supposition that "the '*Bilderverbot*' had originally arisen as a special instance of the commandment against other gods, but now was to dominate." Before the finalizing the '*Bilderverbot*' as the dominant meaning of the prohibition in the final stage, the prohibition existed as a form of "double commandment" condemning both the worship of foreign gods and making images (Dick 1999:14). Through the process of combining two commandments into one and giving priority to the prohibition of making images as in the 'golden calf' story in Exodus 32, at last, arrived at the final stage as in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus and Deuteronomy (Dick 1999:14). Moreover, according to Dick (1999:15), "during the late exilic period, there also was a tendency to expand this prohibition to all artistic representations, the final stage in the evolution of the *Bilderverbot* in the Hebrew Bible" and "the original prohibition against cult images was extended to embrace all types of cult object" (Dick 1999:16).

Mettinger (1997:175) says that “the attempts undertaken by scholars to find the provenance of the negative attitude towards making any image of God in the Old Testament is mainly aimed at working out the main lines of the development of aniconism suggesting different stages of development.” Mettinger (1997:175) regards Exodus 20:4 and Deuteronomy 5:8 as “the programmatic aniconism in its uncompromising form.” Nevertheless, Mettinger’s (1997:175-178) presupposition on the formation of the programmatic aniconism in both the Decalogue, is basically the same line with other scholars. Mettinger (1979:22-25) sees the prohibition of making any image of God as the development of an existing tradition of aniconism practiced in daily life, and as a Deuteronomistic product.

In this section, the sharp contrast between these views on the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 will be discussed. Several observations should be made concerning the argument. The first one is that the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69), that is, the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24 as a strict historical composition, that is, an original writing of Moses or an insertion by the redactor, Deuteronomist or whatever in later period of Israelite history. The second one is that the relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, that is, the Decalogue exists from an early period of Israel’s history and plays an important role in Israel religion as mother law or stems from the ideological work to represent in later period of Israel history. The third one is that the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 was placed in the present text by an original author in early period of Israel religion or redactor(s) in later period. The last one is that the formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any

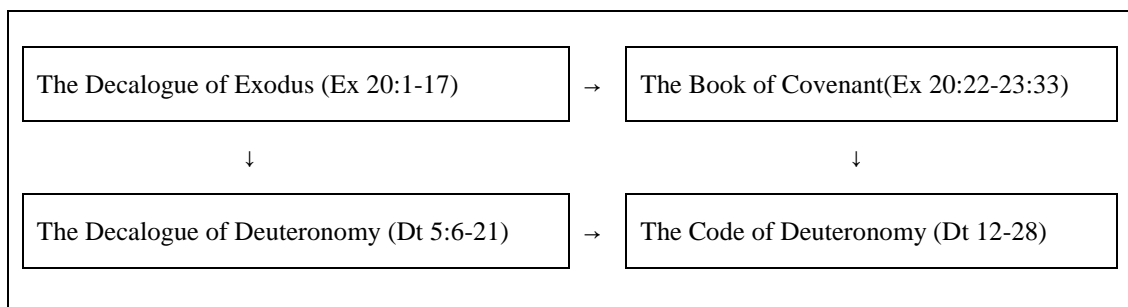
image of God is found in the Decalogue from the beginning or inserted in it by someone in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period of the Israelite history.

2.3.1 The relation between two Decalogues in Exodus 20:2-17 and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 in the context of the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69)

Blenkinsopp (1997:109-125) considers the Sinai-Horeb Narrative in Exodus 19-34 as an insertion by the Deuteronomist. Johnstone (1980:358-363) views the Sinai narrative as rather a theological interpretation on the past than a strict historical composition. Seters (1988) sees the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11 as based on the theophany of Horeb in Deuteronomy contrary to the general view that the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) is based on the Book of Deuteronomy which was written in the times of Josiah. Dozeman (1989) is of opinion that Exodus 19-24 developed in three stages: first, pre-exilic (the God's mountain tradition), second, late pre-exilic / exilic (Deuteronomic), third, late exilic or post-exilic (priestly tradition). Theologically these three differ from each other (Cf. Chirichigno 1987:457-479).

Scholars who suggest Deuteronomic Pentateuch built their theories on the hypothesis that the Deuteronomy is produced after 6th century and the Exodus is written for the prologue of Deuteronomy. They share the view that “until the period of the Exile at the earliest there was no ‘Pentateuch’: in other words, whether the earliest stages through which the material now contained in the Pentateuch may have passed, the first comprehensive work, covering the whole period from beginning to Moses, was composed not early than the sixth century BC.” (Whybray 1987:221). Childs

(1974:351) and Nicholson (1997:422-433), as Van Seters (1994:270) says, focus on the similarity between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and Moab covenant of Deuteronomy (Dt 4:45-28:69).⁶⁴ They represent the structural similarity between them as an evidence that the former was formed by the latter by Deuteronomistic history redactor(s).⁶⁵ The Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) and the Book of Covenant (Ex 21-23) are represented as covenantal document in the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) to anticipate the Decalogue of Deuteronomy (Dt 5) and the Deuteronomic code (Dt 12-26) and inserted in the present location (Cf. Noth 1981:1-25; von Rad 1956). It can be charted as follows:



Scholars supporting a Deuteronomistic Pentateuch on the making of the Pentateuch, which postulates that “the main narrative of Genesis-Numbers ‘belong to the environment of the Deuteronomistic-Deuteronomistic...literary activity’”(Schmidt cited by Whybary 1987:223) and that “the first comprehensive edition of the Pentateuch was ‘marked with a Deuteronomistic stamp’”(Rendtorff cited by Whybray 1987:223) share a

⁶⁴ English versions of the Bible represent Deuteronomy 28:69 as 29:1. ‘Moab covenant’ in Deuteronomy 28:69 is an unique expression in Deuteronomy and parallels ‘the Horeb covenant’. Its scope is Deuteronomy 4:45-28:69. See Song 1992:188-198 for detail.

⁶⁵ Scholars (Cf. Noth 1943, von Rad 1947, Nicholson 1967, Weinfeld 1972) who investigate the Deuteronomic history prior Noth (1981) regard the former prophets (Joshua-Kings) as work stemming from the Pentateuchal material and redacted by Deuteronomic history redactor in exilic period. Noth (1981) argues that Deuteronomy –Kings is a consistent history written by Deuteronomic history redactor in exilic period, while some scholars (Cf. O’Brien 1989) argue that the Deuteronomic history was redacted more than one times.

view about the nature and purpose of the Pentateuch. It presupposes that “the notion that Israel was bound to Yahweh by a *b^erit* or covenant, did not exist in Israel in early times but was an invention of the Deuteronomist in the seventh or sixth century BC” (Whybray 1987:223).

Most of all, Perlitt’s view (1969) on the covenant theology of Deuteronomistic Pentateuch is contrast to the Sinai Pericope, which “speaks of a covenant established on the mountain” (Whybray 1987:223) and thus suggests that “Genesis-Numbers never exist as an independent work: rather, it was deliberately composed as an introduction to an already existing Deuteronomistic History” (Rendtorff cited by Whybray 1987:224).

Whybray (1987:225) shows the process of arrangement of Genesis-Numbers into the Deuteronomic History:

Since the Pentateuch as we have it is basically a Deuteronomistic work that it would be necessary to demonstrate that the material which it contains has been arranged and edited in its entirety in accordance with a comprehensive and consistent plan and has a structure which is wholly in accordance with a Deuteronomic theology, it [Genesis-Numbers] was composed as a complement to the Deuteronomistic History in a looser and less strictly theological sense: that it is the work of an historian whose intention was to provide-not necessarily under the influence of any one ‘theology’-an account of the origins of the world and of Israel that would supplement the Deuteronomistic History so that both work together would tell the whole story from the beginning to the fall of the Israelite kingdoms.

Kitchen (2003:299-304) differs on the hypothesis suggested by modern scholars. He says that that the bulk of Deuteronomy in form and content is irrevocably tied to usages in the late second millennium is a fact that clashes horribly with the hollowed speculations about the origin and history of “Deuteronomic” thought”, insisting Deuteronomy itself is a wholly separate and foundational work before the works of so-called Deuteronomic history.

Furthermore, some scholars (Cf. Alexander 1999) beg to differ the redaction of the Pentateuch in later of Israelite history assuming a strict historical composition by an original authorship for the present text. Patrick (cited by Alexander 1999:10) acknowledges ““point of contact” between the narrative framework of the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy/Deuteronomistic literature.” Nevertheless, Patrick (cited by Alexander 1999:10) regards “the latter as having been influenced by the former, and not vice versa.” Phillips (1984:43-44 cited by Alexander 1999:11) arguing with Nicholson (1973), also observes that Deuteronomic version of Decalogue “shows clear signs of having been altered from the Exodus version in order to comply with Deuteronomic legal concerns.”⁶⁶ As Alexander (1999:11) says. “the arguments presented by both Patrick and Phillips against a Deuteronommic redaction of the Sinai narrative are more convincing than those offered by Nicholson in favour of such, and several recent studies [Weinfeld 1991:242-319; Kratz 1994:205-238] have also come out strongly in support

⁶⁶ His argument has to be modified in two points: one is that he calls the redactor of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) Proto-Deuteronomist. The redaction of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) can be dated more earlier than Phillip’s dating because it reflects the earlier covenant ceremony prior to the establishment of Israel Kingdom (Cf. Alexander 1999:1-13). The second one is that the essence and extant of the redaction in Exodus 19-24 is not automatically guessed, if the existence of the Deuteronomistic material in Exodus 19-24 is rejected as supporting that the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) was composed prior the Deuteronomy (Alexander 1999:13).

of the priority of the Exodus version of the Decalogue.” Alexander (1999:20) says that some observations evince that “the narrative frame work surrounding the divine speeches in Exodus 19:3-6 and Exodus 20:22-24:2 comes from the author who shaped the entire Sinai narrative in Exodus 19:1-24:11.” Alexander (1999:20) suggests the date of the composition of the Sinai periscope (Ex 19:1-24:11) from the evidence considered in his discussion: firstly “the Sinai narrative in Exodus 19:1-24:11 already exists before the book of Deuteronomy was composed”; secondly “it could have been penned as early as the pre-monarchic period.” Marshall (1993), who is opened to the possibility that the Book of Covenant is arranged in the early period of Israelite history, also dates the redaction of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) to the earlier time of Israelite history on the dating the arrangement of the Book of Covenant to the early period. Although the latter is not a warrant for the former, the redaction of the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) cannot be dated later than the arrangement of the Book of Covenant, because the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19-24) is presupposed in Exodus 20:22.

Moving away from the older antitraditional approach, there are now “a variety of competing viewpoints on the authorship of the Pentateuch” (Stuart 2006:29; cf. Wenham 1996:3-13; Peterson 1995:31-45; Whybray 1995:12-28). Patrick (1995:108) questions the adequacy of hypotheses, like that of scholars that presupposes an evolution. As Patrick (1995: 108) says,

It is possible, of course, that the pattern was imposed at a late stage in the composition of the extant text, but that is a matter of speculation.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ There are some reservations about certain details. These views do not give convincing answers to many questions in regard to the origin of the prohibition of images in the Decalogue, e.g. why is the view that the prohibition of images in the Decalogue originated from the early period of Israel from Moses’s

Stuart (2006:29) points out that we can recognize the “substantial philosophical and methodological distance” that is laid between “those following the traditional approach, who regard Moses as the author of Exodus, and those who believe that the book was produced partly after the introduction of the monarchy in Israel (i.e., not until at least the tenth-ninth centuries), partly another century or so thereafter (i.e., sometime in ninth or eighth century) and partly after the Judean exile (i.e., essentially during the late sixth and/or fifth century BC).”⁶⁸

According to Vasholz (Cf.1990:26-27), history in the Pentateuch may, for our purpose, be divided into three periods: “pre-Abraham history (Genesis 1-11); patriarchal history (Genesis 12-50); and national history (Exodus-Deuteronomy).” In the last category, as Vasholz (1990) puts it, “we have the history describing events almost all of which took place during Moses’ lifetime. In summation, the legal material in the Pentateuch drew on various sources for information but one source for its authority.”

time rejected? There are various views on the age of the Decalogue. See for the times of Moses, Gressman 1913:471-474; Driver 1911:413-417. For the exilic times, Beer 1939:103-104; For post-exilic times, Hölscher 1952:129, According to Durham (1987:278ff.; Rowley 1963:1-36), in recent times, scholars tend to assume that the times of the Decalogue is earlier than exilic or post-exilic times and insist on the possibility or probability of the time of Moses.

Phillips (2002:3; cf. Mendenhall 1954:24-46, 50-76) argues that the Decalogue in an original short form given at Sinai constituted pre-exilic Israel’s criminal law, connecting this thesis with Mendenhall’s assertion that the description of the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai in the Exodus narrative and its theological interpretation was modeled on the form of the Hittite suzerainty treaties. Phillips assumes that although the suzerainty treaty form does influence the later compilation of the Sinai narrative in Exodus, as well as Deuteronomy, it only entered Israel’s theology following the fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria. Thus, according to Phillips, consequently if the Decalogue derives from earliest times, the [Hittite suzerainty] treaty form plays no part in its original composition and interpretation. Phillips considers the Hittite suzerainty treaty form of the Sinai narrative in Exodus as the result of addition of a later period. But this study argues that the characters of the Hittite suzerainty treaty form in the Decalogue as the product of earlier times can be seen. Theirs are a matter of speculation (Cf. Kitchen 2003:289-299).

⁶⁸ Stuart (2006:29) gives an overview of the source criticism and asserts that “the interrelationship between the preference for style variation in ancient Israelite writing and the criterion of vocabulary preference that has been a foundational means of differentiating sources by those who hold to the Documentary Hypothesis (:30)...and concludes “Moses was the following the popular tendency of ancient literary convention in employing varying vocabulary forms and orthography ” (:32).

Whybray (1997:233) says that “the recent application of the techniques of modern literary criticism to the study of the Old Testament has served to emphasize the literary qualities of the Pentateuch understood as a single composition.” For Alter (1981 quoted by Whybray 1997:235), the literary artistry can be ascribed to “that of an author or a redactor.” The argument of the authorship of Moses of the Pentateuch still is debate, but more persuading in recent.

This study, therefore, shares the view point that the dating of the Sinai periscope should be attributed to the time of Moses.⁶⁹ Even the way it is formulated now can be attributed to Moses.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Garrett (quoted by Stuart 2006:29) argues that “the Pentateuch shows no knowledge of later Israelite experience over the centuries in the promised land of Canaan; all its five books [i.e., Pentateuch] are consistently anticipatory, looking forward to occupying the promised land just as they at points look back to bondage in Egypt-but they are always in between Egypt and Canaan in their perspective.”

⁷⁰ Two questions can be asked here. Firstly, the fact that the formulation of the Pentateuch was done to the time of Moses does not necessarily indicate to his authorship of the Pentateuch. The argument that does not discern between the issues of time and authorship can be criticized as it can not be any proof that these are the words Moses wrote. It is therefore just as impossible to prove that these are the words of Moses himself as it is to theorize that these words are the outcome of a tradition in which the words were changed or added to.

It can be guessed that Moses wrote Exodus “during the times period between the Israelites’ departure from Sinai and his death and exactly how many days or weeks he spent doing do is impossible to reconstruct” (Stuart 2006:28). “Exodus would have been produced in writing sometime near the end of the forty-year period after the Israelite left Egypt and before they enter Canaan, that is, when Moses himself was nearing the end of his life.” (Stuart 2006:28) “One reason for the description of Moses as still possessing all his faculties up to the time of his death (Dt 34:7). May have been the assurance it would give to readers of the Pentateuch that he was fully capable of sophisticated, accurate authorship and reliable remembrance of the events that constitute the subjects matter of the five books to which Deuteronomy provides the conclusion” (Stuart 2006:28). “Exodus describes events that took place mainly over a period of about eighty-one years (i.e., starting with the time of Moses’ birth as described in Exodus 2:1ff. to the time of the completion of the tabernacle as described in [Exodus] 40:1-35. When Moses was about eighty-one years old). It gives the background of the Israelite’s sojourn in Egypt... and provides as well a small bit of “foreground” in [Exodus] 40:36-38, describing how the glory cloud of God moved spatially relative to the tabernacle to lead the Israelites through the wilderness, something that could have taken only a few weeks or months to establish as a pattern but a phenomenon that was in fact experienced by the people all during the wilderness wanderings of that roughly forty-year period” (Stuart 2006:28-29). “Nothing in [Exodus 40:36-38] requires that conclusion that Moses penned the book toward the end of his life, i.e., toward the end of the forty years in the wilderness since the wording “during all their travels” (Ex 40:38) could effectively means “all their travels to this point,” meaning the point at which Moses wrote the book.” (Stuart 2006:29). “On the other hand nothing prohibits the possibility that he wrote some of Exodus, or at least the last few verses of it, while in Moab during the time he was

Some scholars, on the one hand, assume the priority of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 to the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and regard the latter as the result of the redactional hand(s) as based on the former. Scholars who argue that the Decalogue in Exodus 20 depends on the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 say that “[t]he formulation in the Book of Exodus is dependent on its counterpart in Deuteronomy...The form in Deuteronomy is *lectio difficilior* and claims priority...The version in Deuteronomy is the older than of the two” (Mettinger 1997:175).

Some scholars, on the other hand, assume that the formulation found in Deuteronomy is dependent on its counterpart in the Book of Exodus. Kratz (1994:205-238; cf. Levin 1985:165) also concludes that in the relation between the Decalogue of Exodus (Ex 20:1-17) and the Decalogue of Deuteronomy (Dt 5:6-21), the former is original and latter follows the former.

To speak of the relation between two Decalogue in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 in the related with the relation between the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11) and the Moab

preparing to preach Deuteronomy to the people in anticipation of their entering the promised land” (Stuart 2006:29). Most of all, “Moses described himself as the author of what he had written ”(Cf. Stuart 2006:32-33). That Moses was described in the third person in the Pentateuch and didn’t make any statement of his authorship within his works can be understood against background of the ancient Near Eastern convention (Cf. Stuart 2006:32-33). Although we can not prove that what he had written can be identified with the Pentateuch as it stands on the present text, it increases the probability of the authorship of Moses of the Pentateuch.

Secondly, our oldest manuscripts come from the 4/3rd century BCE and only contains the words in the form of the Masoretic Text. However, we can say the text of the book of Exodus is on the whole rather well preserved in the Masoretic tradition (Stuart 2006:26). The reason for this good states of preservation textually is that many generations of Israelites revered the books including Exodus as holy Scripture. The care with which they were preserved stems from this reverence (Cf. Nehemiah 8) (Cf. Stuart 2006:26). Although “the text of Pentateuch was copied many dozens of times thereafter before it became into the form now known as the Masoretic Text and exelified by the most commonly used manuscript from that tradition the Lenningrade Codex of AD 1008” (Stuart 2006:26).

covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69), this study takes the position believing that the form in which we have received the Ten Commandments comes directly from the hand of Moses.

Cassuto (1967:236; cf. Patrick 1985:39-40) also declares that

There is nothing in the essential content of the Decalogue that could not have been expressed in the generation of Moses, and therefore it should be attributed to Moses in its original form, which contained only short, lapidary sentences like: I am the Lord your God – You shall have no other gods... and so on and so forth; whilst all the rest, according to this view, is to be considered merely as accreditations that accumulated in the course of time, particularly under the inspiration of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The aim of the study is to trace the provenance of the prohibition of making images of God in the Old Testament and evince that it stems from the second commandment of the Decalogue in the earlier period of Israelite history or religion- whether it is the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 or in Deuteronomy 5:6-28, in contrast to the later period of Israelite history, that is, in late exilic or in early post-exilic period, it does make a difference. Thus, it is not necessary to deal with the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy as far as the Decalogue in Exodus is earlier than the Decalogue in Deuteronomy.

2.3.2 The arrangement of the Decalogue in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:11)

That the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 was placed in the present text by an original author in early period of Israel religion or redactor(s) in later period is argued. Some

exegetes deal with the Decalogue as an isolated document, i.e. an independent unit. Some literary critics have even suggested the relocation of the Decalogue, supposing that it was an unlucky insertion because it destructs the narrative sequence of the narrative of which it now forms part (Nicholson 1982:74-86). There are many interpretations trying to rearrange the present arrangement of the Sinai narrative (Ex 19:1-24:11), because the Decalogue was regarded as an insertion by redactor(s) for the purpose of theological work. According to Song (1992:99), one theory is that “the original order was (1) Exodus 19:1-25→(2) Exodus 20:18-21→(3) Exodus 20:22ff.” The theory explains that “the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17) was inserted at a later stage into the present position, between Exodus 19:1-25 and Exodus 20:18-20 (Noth 1959:124f, 139; 1962:155f, 168).” Reichert (1972:150ff.) even says that “Exodus 20:18-21 is also an insertion into the present position along with Exodus 24:3-8.” This theory denies being of the direct speech of God itself, although it accepts being of the direct speech of God. Song (1992:99-101) says:

Although this theory has some merit, it does not answer the following question. “If Exodus 20:19 and 22 do express that God was directly speaking to them and if the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17) was not originally part of the sequence, what does the direct speech of God refer to them?” The referred direct speech of God (Ex 20:19, 22) is in fact the Decalogue which was originally there even before Exodus 20:19, 22.

Song (1992:101) points out that “another interpretation is that the original order was (1) Exodus 19:1-25→(2) Exodus 20:18-21→(3) Exodus 20:1-17→(4) Exodus 24:1ff. (Kuenen 1881:177, 189ff.; Smend 1963:42f.; Eissfeldt 1966:213).” The second theory represents that “when the Book of the Covenant (Ex 20:21-23:33) was interpolated into

the Sinai pericope before Exodus 24:1ff., the order (2)-(3) was inversed into the present text order of (3) 20:1-17 followed by (2) 20:18-21 to function as an introduction to the Book of the Covenant. Originally 20:1 followed 20:21 and this means that the Decalogue was given indirectly through Moses” (Song 1992:101). As Song (1992:101) points out, “by putting Exodus 20:1-17 after Exodus 20:18-21” the second theory also “has the same difficulty that Exodus 20:19, 22 together with other texts especially in Deuteronomy (e.g. Dt 9:10; 10:4; 19:16) say clearly that God has spoken directly to the people.”

They consider the Decalogue as fitting in harmoniously within the present context, directly connect Exodus 20:1 as the narrative introduction with the previous section (Ex 19:16-25) (Cf. Song 1992:99-101). The Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-21 should include the epilogue of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:18-21). Although not part of the Decalogue itself, these verses are clearly to be understood as connected with it, because Exodus 20:22 begins with: “Then the Lord said to Moses,” which implies that a new dialogue has begun (Enns 2000:410).⁷¹ The Ten Words (Enns 2000:410)⁷² are presented in a given framework, and should be considered within this literary context.

Patrick (1977:145) shows how Exodus 19:3b-8, 20:22-23 and 24:3-8 form parallels in the structure, language and theology, and together form a perfect unity in the Sinai pericope, with the same covenant frame. Song (1992:99) suggests that Exodus 19:1-24:11 is a passage dealing with the making of a covenant between God and Israel.⁷³

⁷¹ See Enns 2000:425ff on the relation between Exodus 20:18-21 and 1-17.

⁷² In our day they are referred to as the Decalogue instead of the Ten Commandments (lit., “ten words”, עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים). The “ten words” is actually a more accurate title, since this phrase appears in Exodus 34: 28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4.

⁷³ Song (1992:99; cf. Kitchen 2003:242-244) suggests that the theme of the controversial Sinai pericope

Song (1992:185) suggests that there are thematic, literary and theological links between these units. Song's (1992:185; cf. Alexander 1999:3) suggestion is that the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 as God's direct speech is located between the direct meeting of covenant partners and the people's asking Moses to be the mediator of the covenant. Alexander (1993:38) also sees the present Exodus 19:1-24:24 as describing the ratification of a covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving a divine theophany at Mount Sinai. In the literary context of Exodus 19:1-24:24, describing the ratification of a covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving a divine theophany at Mount Sinai, the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-21 is located between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff. It is found in the story of the making of the covenant between the Lord and Israel, proposed to Israel, according to Exodus 19:5-6 (Cassuto 1967: 238).⁷⁴ The location of the Decalogue between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff explicates that this segment was intentionally put here in this position to show what the nature of God is and what type of law are to be obeyed by the people of God. The reason for the location of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 as the stipulation of the covenant can be seen in the Sinai pericope (Ex 19:1-24:18) from the relation between the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and its surrounding unit (Cf. Song 1992:99-101; Patrick 1977:145).⁷⁵

With regard to the thematic, literary and theological links between these verses of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 and the Sinai covenant in Exodus 19:1-24:11, it has to be

(Ex 19:1-24:11) is the first covenant between YHWH and Israel.

⁷⁴ The Ten words are not the substance of the covenant, nor its conditions, but the introduction to each commandment.

⁷⁵ While Childs (1974) and Durham (1987) both suppose the hand of a redactor in the present form of the text, dealing with the making of a covenant in Exodus 19:1-24:11, some scholars suggests that the unity of the Sinai narrative is attributed to an author during the early period, i.e. at Moses' times. Patrick (1985:64) says that the divine speeches in this pericope are parallel in style and thought, and can be ascribed to the same author.

read according to the narrator's presentation as God's direct words, spoken in the meeting of his covenant partners when the people asked Moses to be the mediator of the covenant.

2.3.3 The formation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as the prohibition of making any image of God

Mettinger (1997:175; cf. Zimmerli [1963]1969:236-238; Moran 1967:553; Levin 1985:170; Veijola 1996:258-260) argues that "the prohibition of images in Deuteronomy probably was not found in the Decalogue from the beginning." They commonly share the view that originally the prohibition of image of God in the second commandment was not in the text of Deuteronomy 5:8 and it was inserted in it by someone, for example, the Nomistic redaction, DtrN or Bundestheologische Redaktion, DtrB in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period (Cf. Mettinger 1997:175-176).⁷⁶

Mettinger (1997:176; cf. Houtman 1996:29-37) says that although "the Decalogue commandment presupposes the aniconic nature of the cult of YHWH...the commandment refers to images of other deities, not primarily to images of YHWH."

Mettinger (1997:176-177) regards "the insertion of the prohibition into the first commandment and the close link between the veto on images and the ban on foreign gods in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 3-4, 19 and esp. 23) indicate that the Decalogue's

⁷⁶ Mettinger (1997:175) depends on the argument of Hossfeld (1982:21-31). Hossfeld (1982:21-31 cited by Mettinger 1997:175) argues that the last two words in the expression *כָּל-תְּמוּנָה*, in Deuteronomy 5:8 are in apposition to the first, while Exodus 2:4 has a juxtaposition with *וְ*: reading *כָּל-תְּמוּנָה וְ*.⁷⁶ As Graupner (1987:311-315) criticizes, Hossfeld's (1982) argument can, however, be rejected. Graupner (1987:314) argues as follows: "Hat das umstrittene *waw* (>>und<<) nicht ehre nur explikativen Sinn (>>und zwar<<)...so daß an diesem Punk gar kein sachlicher Unterschied zwischen beiden Dekalogfassung besteht? Diese Erlärung bietet zwei Vorzüge. Zum einem kommt sie mit dem geringsten Aufwand an Annahmen aus. Zum andern erlaubt sie es, in den Relativsätzen Dtn 5:8 mehr zu sehen also lediglich eine unvollkommene und inhaltlich entbehrliche Anpassung an Ex 20:4."

prohibition of images is primarily directed against other deities. YHWH cannot permit the presence of other deities in his sanctuary (Cf. אֲנִי יְהוָה 'ittî, 'in my presence', Ex 20:23)." Mettinger (1997:177) says, "in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 12, 15-16) it is clearly an image of YHWH that is forbidden: the veto on images is based upon the fact that the Israelites saw no form when the Lord spoke at Horeb." Mettinger (1997:177) is "inclined to speak of the 'second commandment' as an *implicit* attestation of a programmatic aniconism of Yahwistic faith. The aniconic nature of the cult for YHWH is presupposed, simply assumed." Mettinger (1997:177) suggests that "the commandment prohibiting the contamination of [the] Yahwistic cult with images of other deities [is] thus formulated on the basis of the practice of the aniconic cult for YHWH. The prohibition of images of other gods is *a fortiori* a prohibition on images of YHWH and it has been thus understood in the *Auslegungsgeschichte*."⁷⁷

Mettinger (1997:177), thus, maintains on the date of the prohibition of images: "the prohibition of images is a Deuteronomistic phenomenon from late exilic or early post-exilic times," relating it to the "Deuteronomistic Name theology" that "Yahweh is represented in his sanctuary by his Name, while other deities would have been represented by their images" (Mettinger 1997:177; cf. 41, 54-56, 59-66, 78).⁷⁸ Moreover, the prohibition of image of God is just presupposed *implicitly* in

⁷⁷ The fact the second commandment doesn't say explicitly a programmatic aniconism of Yahwistic faith and the other passages, for example, Deuteronomy 4, says it explicitly is not always understood as an insertion of an interpretation in the exilic period or post-exilic period. It is a speculative matter. The passages, for example, Deuteronomy 4 can be written as an interpretation in pre-exilic period, for example, in the context of renewal of the Sinai Covenant.

⁷⁸ After doing discussion about the possibility of existence of programmatic aniconism in the pre-exilic period, Mettinger (1997:184) says that "it is difficult to argue that there was a living tradition of programmatic aniconism to the exilic period." However, the passages dealt with in this section are selected by his own subjectivity, dropping many passages witnessing the programmatic aniconism of the pre-exilic period and the judgment on whether they represent the programmatic aniconism in the pre-exilic period or not can be different. For example, Mettinger (1997:178; cf. 1995:138; Dohmen 1995:182-184, 257) says that "Exodus 20:23 and 34:17 can no longer be adduced as evidence for the existence of a

the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 and also in Exodus 20, and then interpreted in Deuteronomy 4 as the prohibition of image of God *explicitly*. The explicit representation of prohibition of the image of God stems from the interpretation of redactor in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period. Mettinger's (1997:178) conclusion is represented:

The prohibition of images is found in a late Dtr layer in Deuteronomy 5 (DtrB), and Exodus 20:4 should be dated even later. In absolute terms this Dtr strand should probably be dated to the second half of the 6th century BCE. In Deuteronomy 5 the prohibition of images forms an insertion into a first commandment. In Deuteronomy 4 the prohibition is a prohibition of images of YHWH. This layer of Deuteronomy presents programmatic aniconism.

They analyze the mixture of the two layers of redaction in Deuteronomy 4: while in Deuteronomy 4:3-4, 19 and 23 “the veto on image is closely linked up with the ban on foreign gods” (Mettinger 1997:176), in Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15-16 “it is closely an image of YHWH that is forbidden, that is, the veto on image is based upon the fact that the Israel saw no form when the Lord spoke at Horeb” (Mettinger 1997:177). Mettinger (1997:177) explains the cause that the layer of Deuteronomy 4:12 and 15-16 “derives

prohibition of images [of God] prior to the Decalogue formulation.” Mettinger (1997:178) says that not only the prohibition of image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4 but also the prohibition of image of God in Exodus 20:23 and 34:17 can no longer be regarded as evidence for the existence of a prohibition of image of God in the pre-exilic period. These passages, however, can be regarded as the interpretation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4. Exodus 20:23 as part of the Book of Covenant that was given as the law of covenant of the Sinai Covenant with the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-17), reflects the prohibition of making any image of God (Song 1992:98-99). Exodus 34:17 also reflects the prohibition of making any image of God in the early period, because it deals with covenant recovering, that is, the restoration of the Sinai Covenant after the golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) (Baltzer 1960:48-51). See 3.3.3 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11 for detail.

from the redactor who inserted the prohibition of images into its present place.” Mettinger (1997:177) suggests that whereas the former represents the prohibition of image of God *explicitly*, the latter *implicitly*. However, his division between the two layers in Deuteronomy 4 is arbitrary. Moreover, his argument is following Veijola’s (1996:258-260) that “the redactor responsible for this insertion [of Deuteronomy 4:12b, 15, 16a] was the very redactor who also reworked a basic layer in Deuteronomy 4 rendering it [Deuteronomy 4:12b, 15, 16a] into a rationale for the prohibition on images [of Yahweh].”

Dick (1999:7) also reconstructs the process of the evolution, following the dichotomy suggested by Dohmen (1985) as follows:

Perhaps an original ‘you shall not make for yourself an idol’ has undergone a later broadening by the addition of an ‘any form’, perhaps derived from the Deuteronomistic paraenesis in Deuteronomy 4. In any case, the *Bilderverbot* as recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy seems to be the end of a long development and not its beginning.⁷⁹

Holter (2003:4), however, points out that “the terminological and structural organization of these examples of allusions successively follows the order of the second commandment itself.” Holter (2003:6) argues that Deuteronomy 4 is arranged by following the second commandment in Deuteronomy 5, demonstrating that Deuteronomy 4 is arranged by following the second commandment in Deuteronomy 5 as follows: “(i) that Deut 4 contains a number of allusions to the Second commandment,

⁷⁹ See Dick 1999:7-9 on Dohmen’s reconstruction on the evolution of the *Bilderverbot* in the Old Testament and 14-16 on Dick’s view on the evolution of the second commandment of the Decalogue. (Cf. Phillips 1984:39-52, 282-294 on the two Decalogues in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5: 6-21)

and (ii) that the terminological and structural organizing of these allusions successively follows the order of the [second] commandment [in Deuteronomy 5] itself,” and that “central part of Deut 4 is made up of some sort of a word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase successive interpretation of the [second] commandment [in Deuteronomy 5]”. “From a chronological perspective, Deut 4 traditionally been understood as younger than [in] the Deut 5 Decalogue version of the second commandment.” The view that “some of the authors responsible for Duet 4 have also touched the final version of the second commandment [of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy]” is rejected by Holter (2003:15). Considering the chronological relationship between the two texts, Holter (2003:15) says that “the [second] commandment [of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 is]...the source text and Duet 4 a text alluding to this source text.” Moreover, arguing that the prohibition of making any image of God of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 was not from the beginning, scholars also regard Deuteronomy 4 as reworked by the redactor rendering it into a rationale for the prohibition on images (Dt 4:12, 15, 16a). Holter (2003:2-3), however, points out that the exegetical approach that “emphasizes literary critical questions related to generic models for a supposedly textual growth of Deut 4, often with a quite atomizing result” (Cf. Dohmen 1987:200-210; Knapp 1987; Schmidt 1995:75-105; Mettinger 1997:173-204) and religio-historical approach that “paraphrase text, or, at best, echo the generic models of the exegetes and then build them into broader models for understanding the development of the religion of ancient Israel ” (Cf. Schroer 1987:161-163; Keel and Uehlinger 1992:344, 363, 396; Mettinger 1995:15,25; Berejung 1998:38) are all “a lack of sensitivity for the overall structure.” Holter (2003:7-8) shows that “the various sets of criteriology in the hands of some interpreters...have been tools serving to advocate a many-layered interpretation of Deut

4...whereas they in the hands of others...have been tools serving to advocate a literary unity of the chapter.”

Nevertheless, this study doesn't totally agree with Holter's (2003:6-19) argument on that “how does Deut 4's interpretation of the commandment relate more generally to the questions of the textual genesis and literary organizing of the chapter [Deuteronomy 4:1-40],” because Holter (2003:6-13) regards the context of Deuteronomy 4 as the interpretation of the second commandment by a redactor in the exilic period and that “a methodology for approaching this successive interpretation of the [s]econd commandment, not because a diachronic approach *itself* of alluding text's re-use of the source text, but because his presupposition on the relation between two texts, that is, Deuteronomy 4's re-use of the second commandment (Cf. Holter 2003:14-19). This study regards the Deuteronomy 4 as part of the prologue of the Moab Covenant (Dt 4:44-29:1). Thus, the prohibition of image of God in Deuteronomy 4:9-31 is an interpretation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 and is correspond the second commandment of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5:8-10 because Deuteronomy 5:8-10 as well as the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 are following the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 as well as the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 (Cf. Song 1992:197-198; Stuart 2006:439-440).

This study argues against scholars' hypothesis that the prohibition of image of Yahweh in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is inserted into it in the late exilic or the early post-exilic period. This study argues against two statements in their hypothesis.

Firstly the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 on the prohibition of making images of God is not seen as the product of the Exilic period of the 6th-century B.C.E., or the early post-exilic period, but as the product of the early Sinai covenant tradition, later handed over to the Prophets.

Secondly the second commandment was not formulated after the time of the writing prophets. It already existed and was handed over the Prophets. The parodies of the prophets on idols or idol-fabrication comes from an existing second commandment in the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. My presupposition is that the prophetic texts are dependant upon the Decalogue text.⁸⁰

My motivation is as follows:

As Kitchen (2003:243-244, 284) points out, the Sinai Covenant has its extension or its many renewal in the Pentateuch: in Leviticus, the direct continuation of the content of Exodus; in Deuteronomy, a record of the covenant as renewed; In Joshua 8:30-35 and 24, an event and its detail of the content of the renewed covenant. Most of them contain prohibiting of making any image of God in it (Cf. Ex 20:4; 20:23; 34:17; Lv 19:4; 26:1; Dt 5:8; 27:15). The connection between the incomparability of God and prohibition of making any image of God is also seen in both the Decalogue of Deuteronomy 5:7-10 and the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. According to my point of view, the Bible's narrative is a factual report of the sequence of history. The Decalogue in Exodus presents the older form of the commandment. This point of view stands in direct

⁸⁰ The question can still be raised: was the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 handed over in the form of an oral/literary tradition of aniconism, or word by word in the present form of the text as we know it today, whether in redacted form or the form written by a single author?

contrast to other scholars' view thinking that Deuteronomy's Decalogue is the older one and the representation in Exodus comes from a later time.

The details on the shared elements between two covenants can be seen in Song's (1992:99) comparison between the Sinai covenant and the Moab covenant where a renewal of the Sinai covenant took place:

	Sinai Covenant	Moab Covenant
definition of the partners	Ex 19:5-6	Dt 26:18-19
meeting of the partners	Ex 19:9-25	Dt 5:2-3
covenant-law giving and [its] accepting	the Decalogue / Ex 20:1-17	the Decalogue / Dt 5:6-21
direct covenant-law		
indirect covenant-law	the Book of Covenant / Ex 20:22-23:33	the Book of Covenant / Dt 6-11/12-26
ratification ceremony	Ex 24:3-8	Dt 27
celebration of the ratified covenant	Ex 24:9-11	Dt 27:7

There are some differences between the two covenants. For example, only the Moab covenant has stipulations on the blessing and curses (Deuteronomy 28), while the Sinai covenant hasn't got any, although the episode of the golden calf in Exodus 32 is followed by God's judgment and God gives stipulations of blessing and curses in Leviticus 26 in the same way as in the Moab covenant. The Moab covenant also has some elements, which are not found in any other ancient Near Eastern covenant, like

God's special forgiveness for Israel, who destroys the relation of the covenant. It founded the institution of sacrifices through which Israel obtains peace with God. The sacrifice is prepared for the renewal of the Sinai covenant. There has been some discussion on whether Deuteronomy 5:2-3 is the representation or the actualization of the covenant renewal. Song (1992:193; cf. Zimmerli 1972:45; Noth 1960:76-88) points out: "It is not just for the 'Vergegenwärtigung' or the 'actualization' of the past event, the first covenant, but it is another covenant which is the same as and at the same different from the first covenant. In this sense we fully agree with the understanding of the Moab covenant as covenant renewal." It is said that the past event of Horeb becomes the present event in Moab, the real sense is not simply that the past event is actualized (or revitalized or rehabilitated) by preaching. Although the admonitional or preaching style is important in Deuteronomy, this derives from the more fundamental fact that Deuteronomy describes a concrete cultic activity-the covenant renewal, but not from the (Levitical) preaching as such. Otherwise, the real function of the regulations for the future rituals within Deuteronomy cannot be explained appropriately (e.g. Dt 11:26-32, 26:16-19, 37:1-26; 29:1-69) (Song 1992:210. Cf. Perlitt 1981:408-13; Levin 1985:165).

Song (1992:344) suggests the following historical relationship between the two covenants: the Sinai covenant (Ex 19:1-24:11) first and the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69) next. Song (1992:344-345) maintains that some facts suggests that "the account of the Sinai covenant (Ex 19:1-24:11) is older than of the Moab covenant (Dt 4:45-28:69): "Firstly the witness is not mentioned in the Moab pericope... Secondly the order of building activities in the Moab covenant (the stones and the altar) is different from that in the Sinai covenant (the altar and מַצֵּבָה[pillar])... Thirdly in the Sinai covenant

there is no mention of curse, while in the Moab covenant blessing and curse coexist... Fourthly in the Moab covenant there is no oath of the superior, YHWH, compared with Sinai covenant where we find the oaths of both parties.” The latter is conscious of the former and transforms it according to its own theological concerns.

Although that the Decalogue as a covenant document of the two covenants is inserted later can be suggested, it will be more reasonable that the Decalogue is located in the arrangement of the present text originally by a creative author.

Therefore, if the Decalogue is considered as a covenant document and dealt with according to the arrangement of the present text, then the conclusion that the Decalogue of Exodus is older than the Decalogue of Deuteronomy may be drawn.⁸¹

It appears that Israel’s historiographers were fully aware of the fact that the contrast between the true God and the other gods became apparent only during the time of the exodus and not before it, and that the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability only emerged through the event of the exodus. In this regards Patrick (1995:108) says that the first commandment [and second commandment] was promulgated for the first time at Mt Sinai/Horeb; before the event, it was not in force. The Genesis narrative presents a different picture from that of the Mosaic period.⁸² In this regard, Labuschagne (1966:

⁸¹ The Decalogue of Deuteronomy, which is similar with the Decalogue of Exodus, at least as far as the first two commandments are concerned, belongs in this historical line. What if someone, thus, raises the point that the Deuteronomic presentation of the Decalogue was rather the material used by Isaiah, it doesn’t matter for this study because this study views the Decalogue of Deuteronomy as corresponding to the Decalogue of Exodus in contents.

⁸² In Genesis 31:19, 34-5, as Patrick (1995:108) puts it, “the story of Rachel’s theft of her father’s household gods has to do with objects which violate the second commandment, and probably the first.” Nevertheless, in this narrative, we cannot found any God’s judgment on the transgression. We can say God didn’t judge it, because Israel doesn’t still make a covenant with God and was not judged by the covenantal law.

148-149) says that “this different view and... description of the relation between Yahweh and the other gods presented by the Exodus tradition” is in contrast to prior attitude on them.

Although “one of the major themes of biblical literature is the struggle against paganism,” as Sarna (1986:144) points out,

The patriarchal narratives give no inkling of this phenomenon. They do not feature any tension between the Patriarch[s] and their surroundings as far as religion is concerned. The matter is simply not an issue for them. It is the arrival of Moses on the scene of history that heralds the first appearance of a notion of war on polytheism, expressed by the statement in Exodus 12:12.⁸³

Since Sinai, idolatry became unacceptable, condemned, and judged by God. For that reason Patrick (1995: 116-117) says as follows:

Before the promulgation of these two commandments, there was no accountability. But once the two commandments were introduced as law, there was a transgression and accountability. Once Israel had entered into the covenant with YHWH at Mt. Sinai, they had entered the era of responsibility.

⁸³ Patrick (1995:113) points out that “there are a couple of incidents that allude to the first and second commandments... here[Gn 31:32-34] alone in the entire patriarchal narrative do we find actions that assume the first (and second) commandments.” Patrick (1995:46; 1985:117) also indicates that this is the only violation of the first and second commandments before the golden calf episode (Ex 32: 1-6). He points to “the former in relation with the story of Rachel’s theft of her father’s household gods (Gn 31:19, 34-35) as an example of the violation of the first and second commandments before the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai and the latter, as a violation after the promulgation.”

Barcellos (2001:81; cf. Kaiser 1991:81-22; Reisinger 1997:18-22), however, argues that “although not necessarily in the identical *form* as they appear in the Decalogue”, all ten commandments can be found scattered throughout the book of Genesis, that is, before it was promulgated by Moses in the form seen in Exodus.⁸⁴ But these different forms can be seen as conventional laws before its legislation as a written code. At least the explicit provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God can be traced to the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6, although evidences of the prohibition of making any image of God before the promulgation of the Decalogue at Sinai can be argued.

Many Israelites still made an image of God, as well as other god’s, after promulgation of the Decalogue. It shows that although the Ten Commandments clearly and unambiguously mandate the absolute prohibition of polytheism and idolatry for the people of Israel (Sarna 1986:144; Enns 2000:415), many Israelites fell prey to idolatry (Oswalt 1998:63).

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, this study substantiated the thesis that the prohibition of images in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is the prohibition of making any image of God. The prohibition of making any image of God is originally expressed in the second commandment when the Decalogue as covenantal law in the Sinai

⁸⁴ According to Kaiser (1991:81), “in spite of its marvelous succinctness, economy of the words, and comprehensive vision, it must not be thought that the Decalogue was inaugurated and promulgated at Sinai for the first time. All Ten Commandments had been part of the law of God previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis.”

Covenant (Ex 19:1-24:18) was given to Israel, not incorporated into it in the 6th century, or the late exilic or the early post-exilic period by redactor(s). This study supposes that the dating of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Decalogue should be attributed to Moses' times as stated in the text. Israel's historiographers were fully aware of the fact that it was only during the time of the exodus and not before it that the idea of Yahweh's incomparability emerged. Since Sinai, idolatry became unacceptable, condemned, and judged by God. This study concluded that at least the explicit provenance of the prohibition of an image of God can be traced to the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

In the literary context of Exodus 19:1-24:11 that describes the ratification of the covenant between Yahweh and the Israelites, involving the divine theophany at Mount Sinai, the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 is located between Exodus 19:16-25 and Exodus 20:22ff. Thematic, literary and theological links between the units of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 indicate the Ten Commandments as God's direct speech in a meeting of the covenant partners and the people's request to Moses to be the mediator of the covenant. The location of the Decalogue explicates that this segment is intentionally put here in the present context to show the nature of God and his law for his people to be obeyed as their response to Yahweh who demonstrated his nature, his comparable might and love, and his redemptive grace.

The prohibition of making an **פֶּסֶל**, "idol" in verse 4 was rather narrow in scope excluding iconographic representation of Yahweh. For images of other deities would be excluded by the first commandment in verse 3, but a separate prohibition was required

to ban images of Yahweh. The result of the comparison of God with other gods in the Old Testament was at all times that there is no god like Yahweh, that none can be compared to him, that no one and nothing can be placed on the same level as Him.

The second commandment has to be read against the background of the idea of God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2 and the exclusion of the images of other gods in the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3. It must be seen in the light of Israel's experience in history that Yahweh is incomparable in the introduction of the Decalogue and the image of other gods is prohibited when the worship of other gods was prohibited to Israel in the first commandment of the Decalogue.

As a result of the in-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6, we can confirm that, firstly, the formula "I am Yahweh your God, יהוה אלהיך is used to express the incomparability of God in Exodus 20:2. Secondly, לא יהיה לך יהוה-לך makes clear and emphasizes that God is the one who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2b) and became her king (v. 2b). אלהים אחרים על-פני can mean that another gods is the one who didn't brought Israel from the land of Egypt (v. 3), while God is the one who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:2-3 clearly shows the incomparability of God. Secondly, the ground for the prohibition of image, לא תעשה לך פסל is the "I am Yahweh your God, יהוה אלהיך אֲנִי. It functions as a motive for the prohibition of God's image in verse 4 by using the phrase in verse 2, which is repeated in verse 5a. Thus, the prohibition of God's image have to be understood in the context of the incomparability of God. אלהיך אל קנא אלהיך אֲנִי יהוה in verse 5 shows us that making an image of God are contrasted with the

incomparability of God. Thus, making an image of God is prohibited to his covenant people.

If so, does this unit form the provenance or reason for the aniconic tradition found in the rest of the Old Testament? Exodus 19-24 contains an account of the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. The covenant was conditioned by Israel's obedience to the laws that were given to the people at Sinai. The rest of the Old Testament contains the story of how Israel responded to the demands of this covenantal relationship. The idea of God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2 and the exclusion of the images of other gods in the first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 provides a framework within which the meaning of the prohibition of making an image of God not only in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus, but also in the rest of the Old Testament can be understood.

CHAPTER III. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN EXODUS 32:1-6

3.0 Introduction

In previous chapter, this study dealt with the prohibition on making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6. It was indicated as the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God found elsewhere in the Old Testament. The golden calf episode reported in Exodus 32:1-6 is the first instance of idolatry by the Israelites narrated in the Bible in sequence to the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mount Sinai.⁸⁵ This passage can be used to explicate and confirm the

⁸⁵ Scholars have different view with traditional one on the chronology between the golden calf episode and the promulgation of the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai and between the golden calf episode and the apostasy that established the golden calves in the religious shrines of Bethel and Dan in Jeroboam's times (1 Ki 12:25-33). On the chronology between the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 and other events many scholars argues as follows:

Davenport (1983:5-6) shows that the nature of the golden calf account provides some degree of explanation, because of the contrasting conclusions represented by some scholars. The contrasting conclusions come from different presuppositions and the differing exegetical results regarding the question of the relationship between the text and history. Albright (cited by Davenport 1983:5-6) suggests that "the Pentateuchal historical texts with the assumption that basically the texts report an actual historical memory which can be corroborated by external evidence. Consequently, on the basis of fundamental presupposition, Albright is especially open to any ANE material which can be seen as supportive of this particular understanding of the relationship between the text and history." This study regards the Albright's view as more fit to the witness of the Bible and follows it below.

According to Davenport (1983:6), Pedersen (1940:728ff.) works with the supposition that texts like Exodus 1-15 and 32 did not intend to give a "correct exposition of ordinary events" but instead were cultic legends shaped in the cult and served different objectives in different historical periods. Thus, similar to Exodus 32 which originally serves to combat Yahweh-Baal syncretism, the "Paschal Legend" (Ex 1-15), whose origins point to the nomadic period, received its present shape during the period of the royal temple in Zion, since the "spirit" of the legend corresponds to that era, and since the participants (Moses, Aaron) typify the office of king and High Priest (Pedersen 1940:736ff.) According to Davenport (1983:6-7; cf. Noth 1972:142f.), "Noth bases his work on the belief that the Pentateuchal Narrative basically constitutes a pre-literary compilation of five originally independent themes which were arranged in their present historical sequence in an interpretative manner during the creative oral period before Israel became a state. Each of these themes, however, is thought to preserve the actual historical experience or knowledge of some proto-Israelite group or tribe and so conceivably the golden calf tradition could have had a historical origin and is not merely of purely literary elaboration." For the order of the biblical text, the episode of golden calf in Ex 32 is an ideal reconstruction of a period later than which the historical events occurred. Clements (1972:204-206) suggests that Exodus 32, as well as Exodus 26-31, are composed late in Israel's history, and was initially introduced here by the post-exilic P author. Thus, although they are considered as being based on recollections of actual institutions of

meaning of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 being the prohibition of making any image of God. This chapter deals with Exodus 32:1-6 as an example that interprets the second commandment as the prohibition on making any image of God as interwoven with the idea of God's incomparability.⁸⁶

We will first analyze Exodus 32:1-6 within the context of its macro-unit. Any consideration of the literary form of this unit narrating the making of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6, must take into consideration the relation of this brief but crucial

worship which existed in Israel, especially in the time of the first temple, much that is contained in them is therefore late, and is in part an ideal reconstruction of what Israel's worship should have been, in the opinion of the author. He insists that the reinterpretation of earlier ritual became necessary when situations changed and ideas developed. He suggests it is recognized that much that had passed for worship in Israel's history had not been in accord with the instructions given at Sinai by Israel. According to Hyatt (1971:301-304), what we have in Exodus 32 is a reflection of a pagan element in Israel's worship, which is alien to Israel. The incident of the golden calf provides an example and a warning lesson against a type of worship, which was to recur in Israel not once, but many times, and to become a major reason for believing that the Sinai covenant had been broken by Israel. Thus although we are presented here with a narrative sequel to the law-giving on Sinai, its intention is to show the spiritual sequel of Israel's disloyal attitude to God, its distrust of Moses, and its readiness to resort back to a type of religion which we know to have been prevalent among the Canaanites. Hyatt (Cf. 1971:301-304) suggests that we may briefly raise the question: "does the present chapter have any historical value as the record of something, which actually occurred in the desert period at the foot of Mount Sinai?" According to Hyatt (1971:301-304), our tracing of history of tradition in the chapter shows that it represents developments that took place over several centuries. Aaron is so shadowy a figure in the early history of Israel that it is precarious to make any historical statements about him. Some scholars insist that the episode of the golden calf was written to warn against the idolatry later on in Israel's history, like the apostasy in Jeroboam's times (Cf. Clements 1972:204-206; Davenport 1983:5-6). Carmichael (1992:27) argues that the narrator of the golden calf episode in Exodus 32 is manifestly writing from a stance after long the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of the land, condemning "the installation of the bull calves at Bethel and Dan in reign of Jeroboam" (Carmichael 1992:28). The golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 is anticipated by narrator, that is, written by the author or compiler later to represent "his own religious, ideological and political perspective" (Carmichael 1992:29). Moreover, Carmichael (1992:29) explains "the first part...of the [D]ecalogue [that is, the first two commandments of the Decalogue]" as "a response to the incident of the golden calf [episode]." Thus, Carmichael (1992:28) regards the statement in Exodus 20:2 as a counterresponse to the people's false claim after the creation of the golden calf. Contrary to these views that regard the episode of the golden calf as a theological reflection of the situation in later history, e.g. the golden calves of Jeroboam (1 Ki 12), Cassuto (1967:407-410) insists that "an ancient story of idolatry in the wilderness in Moses' time [is] recalled and used to condemn Jeroboam. As Stuart (2006:665) says, "[i]n all likelihood" Jeroboam knew of or was informed of the tradition stemming from the passage in Exodus 32:1-6 and "capitalized on its continuing popularity in his own day." Thus, Carmichael's (1992:28) argument that regards the statement in Exodus 20:2 as a counterresponse to the people's false claim after the creation of the golden calf can be explained vice versa. The relation between the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and the golden calf episode Exodus 32:1-6 is that Exodus 32:1 is alluding to Exodus 20:2. Israel violated the law that Yahweh proclaimed and gave Israel at Mt. Sinia and was judged by the law given already.

⁸⁶ This chapter shows that corresponding to the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, which the Fathers and the Reformers maintain, how modern exegetical work can activate it.

narrative to the larger literary complex. Exodus 32 forms an integral part of the larger literary complex comprising of chapters 33 and 34. We have to see the chapters of Exodus 32-34 as a whole and make an analysis of them as a unit, indicating the separate scenes and then discuss their relationship. As this larger literary complex is framed by the units of 25-31 and 35-40, the still larger context has to be kept in mind as well. In turn this construction is also linked to the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24 and that should also form part of our analysis. This leads eventually to a review of the entire Exodus composition and its various component parts for the analysis of Exodus 32:1-6. The construction of the wilderness sanctuary is reported in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. The first section in Exodus 25-31 features the account of God's careful, theological instructions to Moses to build the tabernacle; the second section in Exodus 35-40 reports the actual realization of those plans. The episode of the golden calf and its aftermath (Ex 32) stand in the center of these two sections. It will be necessary to examine several details of the narrative of Exodus 32-34, as well as the larger context of 25-31 and 35-40 in which the golden calf episode is found.

3.1 The exegetical consideration of the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6

This study demarcates Exodus 32:1-6, so-called the golden calf episode as a unit of analysis, not all of the chapter (vv. 1-35) because it is enough in showing what is the characteristic of the rebellion as part of covenant breaking in Exodus 32-34 dealing the theme of covenant breaking and covenant renewal.

We can represent the issue raised in this phrase as follows: "Did it represent "other gods" that Israel was now seeking to follow, or was it rather an attempt to make an

image of the one true God, Yahweh, that is, did the golden calf represent polytheism or idolatry?” (Sailhamer 1992:310). According to Sailhamer (1992:310), it is grammatically “possible to translate the passage to reflect either polytheism (worship of many gods) or idolatry (physical representation of God) because the Hebrew text of the narrative is somewhat ambiguous about the intention of the golden calf.” Thus, we must look at the text in context for a solution.

3.1.1 Exodus 32:1

An indication of what the golden calf represents, can be found in Exodus 32:1. As Bloom (1987:116) depicts, this evinces that “the people seem to cry out for a visible manifestation of God rather than for a different god.” The people assembles themselves, approaches Aaron, and commands him, with terse imperative, to make a god, so that it can lead them, taking the place of Moses, who is given credit for leading them up from Egypt. Moses’ protracted absence is stated as justification for their demand (Durham 1991:419). Coats (1968:188-189) points out that in Moses’ absence and the result of making the golden calf, plotting treason against God, “Israel’s problem is not with Moses’ leadership, but with Moses’ absence.” As Stuart (2006:663) says, “a matter of the absence of Moses...was so closely associated with Yahweh’s presence.” Durham (1991:419) touches the core of the subject as follows: “The people may well be asking for “gods”... because their one God seemed to be gone with the absence of Moses.” Moses, the only mediator they know besides the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, is now also absent. His absence stirs up the rebellion in the golden calf episode. When Moses took a long time to return from his meeting with God, Israel had lost her mediator (Fretheim 1991:280-283). Some scholars consider the golden calf as the

substitute of a mediator, of Moses, not of Yahweh (Fretheim 1991:208-283). “In light of this”, as Enns (2000:569; cf. Durham 1987:419; Sarna 1991:215) puts it, “it is possible to read the golden calf story not only as an act of godless rebellion, but also as an act of panic on the part of a people who fear they have lost their contact with God.”⁸⁷ However, Israel did not transfer their loyalty from YHWH to another deity. Although Moses brought Israel up from Egypt, it is Yahweh who brought Israel up from Egypt. Therefore, making the golden calf and saying, “these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from Egypt, אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם” is evidently indicating the change of loyalty from Yahweh to others. Cassuto (1967:413) argues that it is evident for the phrase to be borrowed from the expression, “the God who brought you up from Egypt, אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.” It illustrates the parallel with the only God who rules the history, as Yahweh, “I am Yahweh, your God” (Ex 20:2). As Carmichael (1992:30) says, the Israelite identified the calf as Yawheh, substituting it for the unseen and unseeable. They regard the calf as an emblem of the Lord, and they considered this emblem itself worthy of divine honour, thus making the calf a partner, as it were, of the Lord. Hence the plural (Cassuto 1967:413). Other “gods” are not named, and Israel attributed the golden calf with a Yahwistic pronominal clause, “the God who brought up Israel from Egypt (Ex 20:2). In this regard, Patrick (1995:117) suggests that their “new religion” is virtually “a parody on Yahwism.” Moberly (1983:47) states “the calf does not represent any new god, but is identical with one, that is Yahweh, who has brought the people to Sinai and entered into a relationship with them on the basis of which he will continue to go with them in

⁸⁷ It is commonly accepted by Old Testament scholars today that ancients did not *equate* an idol with god, but it was some sort of earthly *representation* of that god (Enns 2000:569). Enns points out that “when Aaron asks for gold and the people respond willingly, an act that parallels nicely the freewill offering the people will make for the tabernacle. It is becoming more clear that the calf represents an alternate point of contact between God and his people.”

future.” Reference that mentions the bringing up out of the land of Egypt is seen here.⁸⁸

It is Moses that is mentioned as the subject, who brought about the deliverance from the land of Egypt.

According to Morberly (1983:46), a similar implication can be seen in the parallelism of verse 1bβ with verse 4b:⁸⁹

(v. 1) ... כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ...

“Because this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt ...”

(v. 4) ... אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ...

“Here is your, אֱלֹהִים, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

According to Morberly (1983:46), that “the אֱלֹהִים is a substitute for Moses, need not imply that Moses himself has been to the people as an אֱלֹהִים.” In verse 4ff. the acclamation of the calf as the divine agent of the exodus may seem slightly discordant with the concern for having an אֱלֹהִים to go before the people (Morberly 1983:46). Morberly (1983:46-47) contends that “the first is that Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh’s guidance and leadership to the people. It is in and through Moses that Yahweh is known and his saving deeds experienced. The second is that the calf is a challenge to Moses’ leadership. It is a rival means of mediating Yahweh’s presence to the people.”

⁸⁸ According to Cassuto (1967:411), this is one of the “seven references to bringing up out of the land of Egypt in verse 1 (Cf. Ex 32:1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 23, 33:1)”.

⁸⁹ A similar antithesis in verses 7-8 also points to the supplanting of Moses by the אֱלֹהִים.

“Although the calf functions as a challenge to Moses, the parallelism is not exact, nor does it begin to exhaust the calf’s significance. For it seems clear that the calf was actually intended to be a symbol of the divine presence in a more real and direct way than Moses himself could be” (Morberly 1983:46-47).⁹⁰ The people’s request for an אֱלֹהִים on the grounds that Moses has now disappeared is notable, in that it implies that the requested אֱלֹהִים will be a replacement, in some sense, leading them in Moses’ place (Cf. Stuart 2006:663) This shows that the term אֱלֹהִים, was understood as something that could be made, an idol, not a deity as such (Sailhamer 1992:311).⁹¹

The story of the golden calf begins with the theme of Moses’ absence and shows that it is closely connected to the preceding chapter where Moses’s role during the period after the theophany (Ex 19) and during the ratification of the covenant (Ex 24) was very central (Child 1974:564). In Exodus 24:14, Moses appointed Aaron as his substitute

⁹⁰ This is the case that it is customary for the Old Testament to convey a pagan understanding of the deity by the use of the plural of the noun, אֱלֹהִים (Cf. 1 Sm 4:8; Gn 20:13) (Morberly 1983:48). But in several contexts, e.g., Gn 35:7; Dt 4:7; 2 Sm 7:23, any pagan implications would be out of place.

⁹¹ Whereas Bailey (1971), Hyatt (1971) and Morberly (1983) have suggested that אֱלֹהִים should be translated by the singular, “god,” Oswalt (1973:13-20), Sasson (1968:380-387) and Brichto (1983:1-44) have argued against the singular translation “because the plural verb obviates this possibility, because “to read אֱלֹהִים as a plural is supported by the plural verb, יִלְכוּ that follows it” (Cf. Stuart 2006:663). Sailhamer (1992:310) argues this more deliberately. According to Sailhamer (1992:310), “in many instances when the plural “gods” is intended, the verb used with the noun will also be plural, but the sense of the noun אֱלֹהִים is clearly singular and should be translated “God,” even though the verb is plural.” Two textual factors support considering the identity of the golden calf as an image of God, not a foreign god or foreign gods: First, “the Hebrew word noun אֱלֹהִים can be understood and translated either as a plural noun (“gods”) or as a single (“god/God”); Sailhamer (1992:310) says that the book of Nehemiah understood the sense to be singular, pointing out that the singular verb for אֱלֹהִים is used in Nehemiah 9:8 and thus the translation was taken to be, “This is your God who brought you out of Egypt.” Second, “the Hebrew expression “other gods”, אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים or “gods”, אֱלֹהִים is often, if not always, used specifically as a term for idols and not, as we might have expected, for “other gods” *per se*.” (Sailhamer 1992:310). In Deuteronomy 9:8, the expression “other gods” clearly refers not to other deities as such but to “gods of wood and stone”, that is, idols. The expression “other gods”, אֱלֹהִים (plural) meant simply physical images or fetishes (Sailhamer 1992:310-311).

(Childs 1974:564). The people's request is for a substitute to take Moses's place in leading them.⁹² The substitute, however, is not Aaron, but the golden calf.

What Aaron and the people do is in many ways in agreement to what Yahweh has specified in his covenant. Yet "the people's attempt to affirm the identity of the calf with Yahweh by echoing Exodus 20:2 is to be seen as a parody of the true nature and purposes of Yahweh." (Morberly 1983:48) Thus, as Gowan (1994:222) points out, this shows that "Israel has really given up on Yahweh", from God's point of view.

3.1.2 Exodus 32:2-4

As Durham (1991:419) mentions, "the exact nature of the calf and Aaron's work" in creating it, has been the subject of considerable discussion and conjecture, mainly for both "the ambiguity of the text," especially "uncertainty about the proper translation of the term *חֲרָט* and *מִסְכָּה*." Durham (1987:416, 419-420) translates *מִסְכָּה* as "overlaid image" and Stuart (2006:665) also agrees with Durham (1987:416, 419-420), but chooses "plated idol" for its translation.⁹³ According to Sailhamer (1992:311), "the Hebrew word for "idol", *מִסְכָּה* is actually used in this passage to describe the "god" that Aaron made: He took what they handed [over to] him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf (v.4). Cassuto (1967:412) says that "[i]n order to sculpture the finest details on the gold plating, such as the eyes the hair and the like, artistic work

⁹² Childs insists that this reflects the absolute disapproval of the author who, in contrast to Aaron, sees the disaster from the outset (Childs 1974:564).

⁹³ Stuart (2006:665) interprets verse 4a as follows: "he shaped it with a stylus and made it into a young bull metal cast idol." Stuart (2006:665; cf. Oswalt 1973:13-20; Aberbach and Smolar 1967:129-140; Bailey 1971:97-115; Wainwright 1933:42-52) suggests that the idol in the shape of a young bull made by Aaron was "fits with the Egyptian concept of how deity was to be envisioned." For a different theory of the origins of the calf/bull idol worship, see Key 1965:20-26; Lewy 1945-1946:405-489.

required a sharp and delicate instrument, namely, a graving tool. This, then, is the meaning of this verse: and he fashioned it - the gold - with a graving tool, producing by means of this instrument an exact likeness, and made it, when his work was complete, a molten calf - a calf overlaid with molten gold.” In order to understand the details of the narrative, it is necessary to pay attention to the method of making any image of silver and gold in antiquity. Hyatt (1971:304) points out that this rendering of Exodus 32:4 into ‘and cast it in a mould’ is supported by the statement of Aaron in verse 24 that he throws the gold into the fire. According to Cassuto (1967:412), the process can be depicted as follows:

First, they would make a wooden model, and then overlay it with plating of precious metal. The existence of the inner core of wood, which formed a greater part of the idol, serves to explain v. 20, which relates that Moses burnt the calf and ground it to powder; whilst the gold plating, which was made by melting down and casting the metal, elucidate the word מַסֵּכָה, *massekha* [‘molten image’] in v. 4.

Aaron fashioned only one golden calf. The reference to a single calf suggests that it represented one god/God and not many gods. The “god” Aaron made is always referred to with the singular pronoun “it.” Aaron may intend “only to present the people with a palpable symbol, a kind of empty throne, [but] the Israelites went astray after the concrete representation, and treated it as an actual deity.” (Cassuto 1967:413).

It was, therefore, not only against the first and but also against the second commandment they transgressed, by creating God in the image of his creation, namely, fashioning an image of Yahweh and declaring that this created thing is the gods who

brought them out of Egypt (Enns 2000:415). By making the golden calf, Israel has broken not the first commandment, but actually the second one as well. The calf is, thus, not only the equation of an idol with God, but also the pagan representation of the true God (Enns 2000:415; Sarna 1986:203). Many signs suggest the original issue to be syncretistic, by representing Yahweh in the figure of a calf :“Yahweh was not being replaced, but represented” as an image of foreign god (Childs 1974:565). Stuart (2006:665) also says that “Yahweh was now being represented by an idol, the very sort of thing forbidden clearly by the second word/commandment.” We can, therefore, see that there is a close connection between Yahweh’s self-declaration as the only God, the “I am Yahweh,” and the prohibition of making his image from the golden calf story.

3.1.3 Exodus 32:5

The people receive the calf with the confession “these are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt,” an act they had attributed to Moses in verse 1, albeit as Yahweh’s representative (Durham 1987:421). And Aaron, in response, declares a sacred day to Yahweh, not to the calf, or to any other god or gods. Aaron proclaimed, “tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord” not to the calf (Cf. Cassuto 1967:413). That the calf was seen as a real embodiment of the divine presence of the Lord is indicated by לַיהוָה in verse 5 characterizing the altar and its sacrifices during the festival as something done for Yahweh, as is אֱלֹהִים in verses 1, 4 and 8 (Morberly 1983:47). This is made clear in the attributing the grace of the rescue from Egypt to the calf when Aaron constructs an altar for sacrifices, by the declaring of a זָבַח , “feast” for Yahweh (Durham 1987:422).

3.1.4 Exodus 32:6

By the people's worship the next morning by the very offerings the calf was identified with Yahweh in verse 6 (Durham 1987:422). This scene reminds us that the elders of Israel sat down to eat and drink after making a covenant with God in Exodus 24:11. It is evident that the emphasis in Exodus 32:1-6 is primarily on the second commandment. Israel has violated Yahweh's own unambiguous requirement about how he is to be worshipped (Durham 1987:422).

3.1.5 Summary

It is clear that although the calf is intended to be a symbol of Yahweh's presence, this is to be understood as a grotesque parody. Israelites saw the calf as a representation of the Lord rather than another deity (Sailhamer 1992:311). In demanding such an image, the people have firstly violated the second commandment. It is suggested that the calf made by Aaron was not intended to represent the deity, but was to function as the pedestal of the invisible God of Israel (Cf. Sarna 1986:218). Aaron's calf would be an example of the ancient Near Eastern practice where gods were depicted standing upon animals, mostly bulls and lions (Sarna 1986:218). But since the God of Israel may not be represented in any material form, His Presence on the calf would be proven as human imagination (Sarna 1986:218). The calf serves the same purpose as the cherubim in the Tabernacle (Sarna 1986:218).⁹⁴ This could be correct for the original image(s), but in

⁹⁴ Cf. Sarna 1986:211-213, especially in 213, on the function of the cherubim. Sarna explains "the function of cherubim is to guard over the tablets of the Covenant, to signify the presence of the sovereign God, and to act as the perfect embodiment of divine mobility. Although the cherubim were hidden from

the present account, offerings are made on an altar to the image. Thus, the records in their present form consider the images to be idolatrous objects (Hyatt 1971:306).

In Exodus 32:1-6, the term gods, or rather god, as represented by the golden calf, seems to have been understood as an attempt to present the God of the covenant by means of a physical image. The apostasy of the golden calf episode, therefore, was idolatry, not polytheism (Sailhamer 1992:310-311). The calf represents Yahweh but on the *people's* term, while Yahweh had made it clear repeatedly that he could be received and worshipped only on *his* own terms (Durham 1987:423).

As Durham (1987:421) points out, “the composite of Exodus 32:1-6 is not an account of the abandonment of Yahweh for other gods. It is an account of the transfer of the center of authority of faith in Yahweh from Moses and the law and the symbols he has announced, to the golden calf without a law, and without any symbols beyond itself.” Moses is the representative of a God invisible in mystery. The calf is to be the representative of that same God, whose invisibility and mystery is compromised by an image he has forbidden (Durham 1987:421-422).

3.2 In-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6

1 וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם

public gaze, and they did not represent any identifiable, existing reality, while the calf was publicly displayed, and was very much the image of a living entity.” Many scholars maintain that the bull-images erected by Jeroboam, as well as any earlier image erected at Bethel, or in the desert period by the Israelites, were not really considered to be idols. Inasmuch as Near Eastern religions frequently represented a deity in human form standing upon a bull or other animal, the bull is interpreted as being originally only a pedestal upon which the invisible Yahweh stood. Thus the bull-image is considered as an originally northern counterpart of the Ark, which may have been conceived as a portable throne for the invisible Yahweh, or of the cherubim, who upheld the invisible Yahweh (Hyatt 1971:306).

עַל־אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה־לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ
כִּי־זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ

² וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם
וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי

³ וַיִּתְפָּרְקוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֶת־נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֹן בְּנֵיכֶם

⁴ וַיִּקַּח מֵיָדָם וַיַּצֵּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֶּכֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

⁵ וַיֵּרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר

⁶ וַיִּשְׁכַּיְמוּ מִמְחֻרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל
הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק

The result of the in-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6 confirms that the people replaces God's servant Moses as the golden calf, by which Israel have really given up on Yahweh.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ).

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1ba).

The god is the one who walks and leads them (v. 1aβ). It stands in contrast to Moses who brought them from Egypt (Ex 32:1ba).

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֱלֹהִים (v. 1aβ) is the one who walks and leads Israel. In verse 4b, it is identified with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל who brought them from Egypt. Each of Exodus 32: 1aβ and 32:4b, while sharing identical subordinate clauses dealing with a redemptive history: Adverb + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים, attributes it to the same subject. The phrase אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) as the syntactical subject of Exodus 32:1aβ is identical with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b). Considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to true God or not, the phrase אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) is identical with יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b), designating the same thing, the image of God.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

כִּי־זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מִה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

While Exodus 32:1bα depicts Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, Exodus 32:1aβ says that it is the golden calf who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, being in accordance with the statement in Exodus 32:4b designating the golden calf as “Your God , O Israel, who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf” (v.4b).

Each of Exodus 32:1bα and 32:4b, while sharing identical subordinate clauses dealing with a redemptive history: אֲשֶׁר + עָלָה + verb מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, attributes it to different reference. The phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ as the syntactical subject of Exodus 32:1bα is not same with אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b). Considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to true God or not, the phrase מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ

זֶה (Ex 32:1b) is contrast to אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b), designating different reference.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ-רַד כִּי שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:7)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:8bβ)

יְהוָה יַחַרְרָה אַפָּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גְּדוֹל וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה (Ex32:11)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:23a)

מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַענוּ (Ex 32:23b)

אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ עֲלֵה מִזֶּה אֲתָה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 33:1a)

From the stylistic point of view, secondly, it can be indicated that as soon as an image of God functions as a substitute for Moses (Morberly 1983:46), who delivered God's word speaking to his people, it turns into just an image of God, who cannot deliver God's word to his people. As Moberly (1983:46-47) contends, "the first is that Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh's guidance and leadership to the people. It is in and through Moses that Yahweh is known and his saving deeds experienced. The second is that the calf is a challenge to Moses' leadership. It is a rival means of mediating Yahweh's presence to the people." Thus, the following remark can be made:

It is the Lord, your God אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (Ex 20:2) who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt by the servant of God, Moses whom God used as his tool to bring his people from Egypt (Cf. Ex 32:1bα). When the peculiar history of redemption is attributed to

Moses, the servant of God and the deliverer of God's word (Cf. Ex 32:18ff), it is really to the God. However, it is also attributed to a thing whatever not to designate true God (v. 1aβ, 4b).

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֶן פָּרְקוּ נִזְמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשִׂיכֶם (Ex 32:2)

בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהִבִּיאוּ אֵלַי

וַיִּתְּפָרְקוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֶת־נִזְמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֶן (Ex 32:3)

וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מַסֵּכָה (Ex 32:4a)

Verses 2-3 and verse 4a refer to the procedure of making an image of God (Cassuto 1967:412).

וַיֵּרָא אֶהְרֶן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר (Ex 32:5)

וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ מִמַּחֲרַת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל (Ex 32:6)

הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׁתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק

Verses 5-6 depict a ceremony for making a covenant between God and Israel as Exodus 19-24. Thus, it can be considered as a renewal of covenant with Yahweh, not making a covenant with another god.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the golden calf is an image of God. As a result of making an image of God, Yahweh was compared with a god and degraded into a common god.

3.3 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in context

Any consideration of the literary form of the narrative of the making of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 must take into consideration the relation of this brief but crucial

narrative to its larger literary complex, Exodus 32-34 (Durham 1991:416). This episode is also framed by the units of chapters 25-31 and 35-40, its wider context. This construction is also linked to the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24. The link should also be part of the analysis. It leads eventually to a review of the entire Exodus composition and its various component parts to analyze Exodus 32:1-6 (Durham 1991:416). Although it comes from redactional criticism, Durham's insight is helpful for our understanding of the section: "Beyond the valuable data provided by form criticism and tradition-historical studies...there remains the need to consider the text of each pericope of the biblical text in the light of the theological purpose binding the pericope into larger sequences, entire books, and even a whole section of the Bible." (Durham 1999:417)

3.3.1 The golden calf episode (Ex 32:1-6) in the literary context of Exodus 32-34

Chapters 32-34 will be analyzed, indicating the scenes and episodes of these chapters before discussing their relationship. Firstly, an outline of the structure of Exodus 32-34 will be presented and secondly, Exodus 32:1-6 will be analyzed in the context of this macro-unit of Exodus 32-34.

Exodus 32:1-6 has generally been considered as a unit that provided the nucleus for the narrative of chapter 32 (Durham 1991:418; cf. Hyatt 1972:301). In the scenes of Exodus 32:7-30 and 32:31-35 that follow upon Exodus 32:1-6, there are two dialogues between God and Moses. Firstly, God speaks in Exodus 32:7-10, and Moses reacts to God in Exodus 32:11-13. Thereupon Moses speaks to his people and enacted judgment in Exodus 32:15-30. Secondly, Moses speaks in Exodus 32:31-32. God answers in Exodus 32:33-34 and enacted judgment in Exodus 32:35. The paragraph, Exodus 32:11-33:23

deals with Moses' intercession and descent from the mountain. The people's sin below the mountain has been seen. Nevertheless, the focus is on the divine splendour of the tablets, described more fully here than anywhere else. It is stressed that they are the work of God, and that the writing on them is the writing of God. There is perhaps a contrast implied between these and the man-made idols of the people. The metrical cola of verse 18, by attracting attention to the word play, continue to build up suspense for the moment of actual confrontation with the people (Morberly 1983:53-54). Exodus 33:12-23 explicates that God is invisible and his word is heard.⁹⁵ The announcement of the theophany in Exodus 33:18-23, especially in verse 20, shows that God's sovereignty would be compromised by sight (Fretheim 1991:300). It refers to "the epistemic distance between God and human beings, structured into the created order for the purpose of preserving human freedom" (Fretheim 1991:301).

Exodus 32:1-6, however, also sets up "the plot of the entire narrative sequence of Exodus 32-34" (Durham 1991:418; Aberbach and Smolar 1967:135-140).⁹⁶ Childs (1974:562) maintains that "Exodus 32 forms an integral part of the larger literary complex which includes chapters 32 and 34." Its integrity can be easily observed in the series of major themes which run through the three chapters and tie them closely together.⁹⁷ Clement (1972:205) says: "Chapter 32 belongs to chapters 33-34 as a series

⁹⁵ See and compare with Deuteronomy 4:15-19.

⁹⁶ This is one of the telling reasons why the golden calf episode cannot be the propagandistic plant from the Rehoboam-Jeroboam era it has sometimes been made out to be. Stuart (2006:665) suggests that "[i]n all likelihood Jeroboam knew of or was informed of the tradition stemming from this passage and capitalized on its continuing popularity in his own day. In either case, there is little doubt that Israelites of all times believed that it was Yahweh, and no other god, who had delivered them from Egypt."

⁹⁷ The fact that chapter 32 introduces the larger literary unit does not effect its integrity, which forms an impressive example of Hebrew narrative style. Childs (1974:557-558) points out that there are many signs which indicates that chapters 32-34 were purposefully structured into a compositional unit. But here Childs suggests the view that the final form of this passage is one of the final stages of this development. He attributes this compositional unity to the hand of a literary redactor, who composes his story, making much use of older sources, not simply piecing together parallel accounts from the J and E sources. Childs

of narratives that are all concerned with the situation facing Israel immediately after the Sinai laws and instructions have been received.” In relation with the making of the covenant at Sinai, Exodus 32-34 shows the breaking and recovery of the covenant.⁹⁸ Chapters 32-34 cannot be separated into parts without affecting the integrity of the whole. As Enns (2000:568) mentions, to divide this narrative into small units will only disrupt the message they are intended to convey as a unitary whole: rebellion, mediation, and restoration. Baltzer (1960:48-51) also reports that the three elements of covenant formulas dealing with the recovery of the covenant are also found in Exodus 34. Childs (1974:557) points out that “while Chapter 32 recounts the breaking of the covenant, Chapter 34 narrates its restoration. Moreover, these chapters are held together by a series of motifs which are skillfully woven into a unifying pattern.” The tablets are received and smashed in chapter 32, and recut and rewritten in chapter 34 (Childs 1974:558). Moses’s intercession for Israel begins in chapter 32, continues in chapter 33, and comes to a climax in chapter 34. As Childs (1974:558) says, “the theme of the presence of God which is the central theme of chapter 33” joins, on the one hand, “the prior theme of disobedience” in chapter 32, and on the other hand, “the assurance of forgiveness in chapter 34.”

The verbal links between the two passages show that the writer of 34:5ff understood the passage as a conclusion of the former; and the exegetical discussion suggests that the differences between the two accounts may in fact be explicable in terms of literary and theological considerations. The link between images and divine self-revelation is

(1974:557-558) emphasizes the decisive role of the redactor in the formation of chapters 32-34. See 1.3.1 The final text of the canon for the character of the final form in this study.

⁹⁸ The recovery of the covenant is different from the covenant renewal in some aspects. The former has, in form, sometimes only a legal variable element as Exodus 34, while the latter does not only always have legal variable elements, but also cultic variable elements as in Exodus 19-24 and Deuteronomy 5-28 (Cf. Song 1992).

pertinent to this pericope. There is an intimate continuity between God *an sich* and God as revealed; God entirely corresponds to himself in revelation and activity (Fretheim 1991:226).

3.3.2 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and Exodus 25-31 and 35-40

Cassuto (1967:497) asks why the episode of the golden calf and its aftermath in Exodus 32-34 was composed to be placed between Exodus 25-31 and Exodus 35-40. The construction of the wilderness sanctuary is reported in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40. The first section (Ex 25-31) features the account of God's careful, theological instructions to Moses to build the tabernacle; the second section (Exodus 35-40) reports the actual realization of these plans. Between these two sections "the narrative of the golden calf is placed (Ex 32:1-6) with its aftermath (Ex 33:12-23 and Ex 34)." Set in the structure of the three theophanic episodes (Ex 19:3-24:2; 24:3-34:35; 35:1-40:38), the events of the golden calf are part of the second episode (Hauge 2001:156). This connection is indicated by God's command to Moses to go down from the mountain in Exodus 32:7, which continues the story that was concluded in Exodus 31:18. Parallel to and contrasting with the encounter on the mountain, the golden calf distorts the established pattern of events. Compared to the earlier scenes, the descent of Moses and the mediation in the camp are turned into a set of negative events. The mediation of the divine instructions in chapter 35 resumes to the story line that was temporarily halted in Exodus 31:18. The account of the instructions God gave for the building of the Tabernacle closes in Exodus 31:18. "This verse forms the connection with and the transition to the episode of the golden calf." (Sarna 1991:215). It is important to note this because it demonstrates that "the Book of Exodus has been deliberately structured

to place that event between the two parts of the Tabernacle narrative, its instructions (Ex 25-31) and their implementation (Ex 35-40)” (Sarna 1991:215). In this regard, Sarna (1991:215) points out “the intrusion is thus seen to be purposeful, and as such it becomes a sort of commentary on the text. It is of no consequence whether or not the literary arrangement actually corresponds to the chronological sequence of the events which are related.” Seemingly ignoring the events of Exodus 32-34, the divine instructions of Exodus 25-31 are mediated and implemented by the people. Accordingly, Exodus 32-34 seems to have a function as an ‘intermission’. Fretheim (1991:280) indicates that “the meaning of the golden calf episode, therefore, is unveiled by its comparison with the building of the tabernacle.” The impact of the composition is greatly enhanced to by the complex function of Exodus 32-34. As Sarna (1991:191) points out, the conjoining of two different topics indicates that the one illuminates the other. It is necessary to understand the meaning of the narrative of Exodus 32-34 in which the golden calf episode is placed, as well as of the larger context of 25-31 and 35-40 (Sarna 1991:216). The situation in the wilderness produced two different, contradictory, and mutually exclusive responses: the one is the illegitimate and distortive fabrication of the golden calf; the other the legitimate and corrective building of the Tabernacle. This explains why the story of the golden calf was composed to be placed in the Tabernacle theme (Sarna 1986:219). As Fretheim (1991:280) indicates, “Israel’s building of the tabernacle as the place of the worship commanded by God is contrasted with the golden calf episode at every key point.”⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Fretheim (1991:280) points out “the irony between the two accounts is as follows: (1) The people seek to create what God has already provided; (2) they, rather than God, take the initiative; (3) offerings are demanded rather than willingly presented; (4) the elaborate preparations are missing altogether; (5) the painstaking length of time needed for building becomes an overnight rush job; (6) the careful provision for guarding the presence of the holy One turns into an open-air object of immediate accessibility; (7) the invisible, intangible God becomes a visible image; and (8) the personal, active God becomes an impersonal object that cannot see or speak or act.”

There are some parallels between 32:1-6 and 25:1-9, with its directions for building the ark and the tabernacle. In Exodus 25:1-9 Yahweh proposes that a symbol or vehicle of his presence should be constructed from the offerings from the people, willingly contributed, and containing gold and other precious substances. The construction should follow his stipulations and so he will dwell among his people (Ex 25:9). In Exodus 32 they did not obey the commands of Exodus 25. The people, however, willingly offer ornaments of gold (Ex 32:3). Aaron, the representative of Moses (and also designated as priest in Exodus 28:1ff., so being in a position to act with Yahweh's authority), fashions the object which is then interpreted as conveying the divine presence (Ex 32:4b, 5b). The calf thus functions not only as a mediator parallel to Moses, but also as surrogate to the ark/tabernacle. These two are not incompatible, for Yahweh's presence is mediated in more ways than one (Morberly 1983:47). In the present context the intention is clear. The tabernacle worship depicted in chapters 25-31 (and even chapters 35-40), repeatedly suggests its symbolism. This is then thrown into terrifying jeopardy by the shattering act of disobedience in the golden calf episode (Ex 32-34). These events threatened to plunge Israel into a situation far deadlier and more ignominious than the Egyptian bondage at its worst (Durham 1991:417).

Having experienced the violent scene of Exodus 32, the harsh divine words and the people's sorrow in 33:1-6, and the concluding scene in 34:29-35, the reader can accept that the people of the earlier parts of the story have been changed into the exuberantly and meticulously obedient people of chapters 35-39, which ultimately can even be set in a situation of permanent *visio Dei*. The development of the central themes of ascent and locus also reflects the crucial significance of Exodus 32-34 for the connection of

chapters 19-24 and 35-40. Bridging the two parts of the composition, the golden calf and its aftermath are part of the line of events which lead to the climax of the story (Hauge 2001:157). This must have repercussions for our understanding of the function of Exodus 32-34. The story of the golden calf and its aftermath can be perceived both as an intermittent ‘non-story’ and as part of the linear development. But leading to the presentation of a permanent post-Horeb situation centered around Moses’ Tent of meeting, the story also represents a ‘loop’ within the story line as a relatively independent episode (Hauge 2001:160).

3.3.3 The relation between Exodus 32:1-6 and the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19:1-24:11

While Childs (1974:407) deals meticulously with the structure of Exodus 32-34, he attributes the literary construct of the text to a theological editor. This episode of the golden calf, however, is to be elucidated in light of, and in comparison to, the Sinai pericope.

The final form of the text and its present context demand that Exodus 32:1-6 should be read in conjunction with the Sinai pericope in Exodus 19-24. It depicts how Yahweh let the people approach Sinai with the possibility of being “my own possession,” if they will “obey my voice and keep my covenant” (Ex 19:5). Then Moses receives the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-18) and the Book of the Covenant (Ex 21-23), and it ends with a direct warning to the people not to serve the gods of the nations (“their gods”, Ex 23:32-33). Having heard the contents of the Book of the Covenant from Moses, the people respond, “all the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient” (Ex 24:7; cf. Ex 24:3). The next time the people speak in Exodus 32:1 as follows: “Up, make us gods,

who shall go before us.” They emphatically attributed the exodus from Egypt to “this Moses” rather than to Yahweh (Cf. Ex 20:2). It is clear that the narrator of the final form of Exodus 32:1-14 understands the people’s request and Aaron’s action as willful disobedience, which amounts to nothing less than the rupture of the recently established covenant (Ex 24:1-2). It is not coincidental that several of the actions in Exodus 32:1-6 are parallel to those in Exodus 24:1-12. In both instances, people arise early to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon an altar (Ex 24:4-5; 32:5-6), and they eat and drink (Ex 24:12; 32:6). In chapter 24, these acts are accompanied by obedience (Ex 24:3,7), but such is not the case in Exodus 32:6 where the people arise “to play” (Cf. Ex 32:25, which suggests that “the play” was out of control (note the pejorative sense of “play” in Gn 39:14,17). Aaron “made” the calf (Ex 32:4), an act forbidden by Exodus 20:4. When the people hailed Aaron’s creation as the one “who brought you up out of the land of Egypt,” they contradicted Exodus 20:3. The people have broken the first two commandments. They have broken the covenant (McCann 1990:277-278).

There is also a connection with Exodus 24:14 in which Aaron is appointed as Moses’ substitute.¹⁰⁰ The story of the golden calf begins with the theme of Moses’s absence and shows that it is closely connected with the preceding chapter, which relates Moses’ role during the period after the theophany at Sinai (Ex 19) and the ratification of the covenant (Ex 24) (Childs 1974:564). Moses ascended the mountain to finalize the covenant to be made in Exodus 19-24 (Cf. Ex 24:12-18; Sailhammer 1992:310; Childs

¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, in recent years the complexity of the crucial questions has tended to obscure the literary achievement in the final form of the text. Thus, Childs (1974:563) suggests that “several features should be kept in mind as one attempts to understand this chapter within its present Old Testament context. The failure to evaluate properly this literary shaping has often led literary critics to fragment the chapter into multiple layers and sources which lack internal cohesion.”

1974:34).¹⁰¹ Hyatt (1971:301) also points out that “Moses’ breaking of the two tablets symbolizes the breaking of the covenant.” The literary and historical questions concerning the relationship between the covenant sealed in chapter 24 and the one given to Israel in chapter 34, are of significance for our purpose only in that as these materials are combined to form the present book of Exodus, chapter 34 represents the renewal of a broken covenant (Gowan 1994:218).¹⁰² Exodus 32:1-6 is related to both the covenant ratification ceremony in Exodus 24:3-8 and the celebration of the ratified covenant in Exodus 24:9-11 (Cf. Song 1992). In light of this view, the recovery of the covenant in Exodus 34 broken in Exodus 32 is to be elucidated as the legal invariable element of the covenant, while the cultic variable element is omitted.¹⁰³

3.4 Inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Exodus 32:1-6

Comparing Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 in terms of inner-biblical interpretation, both Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 demonstrate the structure of God’s incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God. The following is a collation of the examples presented in the previous chapters and the first half of this chapter.

¹⁰¹ Moses’ ascent and descent are related with the giving and receiving the law. Thus Moses’ ascent and descent testify to the giving and receiving of the law as part of the covenant.

¹⁰² Gowan points out that the question whether these may originally have been two versions of the same covenant ceremony remains a debated subject. The theology associated with chapters 32-34 makes sense only with reference to a rupture and efforts to bring about healing. Once this subject has been bracketed, it becomes clear that most of the theology in this section is contained in the long dialogue between God and Moses, which extends from 32:7 through 34:10.

¹⁰³ In this light Exodus 25-30 is charted as follows:

making a tent of meeting, sacrifice:	Ex 25-31	Ex 35-Lv 25
Covenant breaking & covenant recovering:	Ex 32-34	
covenantal blessing & curse:		Lv 26

Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי (Ex 20:3)

וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם (Ex 32:1aβ)

עַל־אֲהָרָן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה־לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

The inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 32:1-6 with Exodus 20:2-6 confirm the hypothesis of this study.

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

Each of them has a subordinate clause following it by which each subject identifies himself in relation to a peculiar history in Exodus 20:2, 32:1aβ, 1bα and 4b. In the Syntactic point of view, speaking roughly, all of them have the same structure and a shared word or phrase with each other in its subordinate clause.

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

כִּי־זָה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ (Ex 32:1bα)

Exodus 32:1b α and Exodus 20:2 each has an identical structure, sharing some words or phrases: מִצְרַיִם מֵאֶרֶץ + verb + אֲשֶׁר + Subject. The phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ (Ex 32:1b α) is not same as אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2). However, considering the context, which discerns whether the redemptive history is attributed to the true God or not, the phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ (Ex 32:1b α) can be identical with אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2), designating the same reference, although the shared language is not accompanied by a shared form of word and phrase. Thus, a couple of points on the name of God shared in two passages can be presented. It is “I am the Lord, your God (אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ)” who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt in Exodus 20:2. “I am the Lord, your God (אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ)” (Ex 20:2) is replaced by the servant of God, Moses whom God used as his tool to bring his people from Egypt (Ex 32:1b α).

אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים (Ex 20:2)
 בִּירוּחַ מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מִהֲהִיָּה לּוֹ (Ex 32:1b α)

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1b β)

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

The reference mentioned in Exodus 32:1b β and 32:4b, sharing an identical subordinate clause dealing with a redemptive history: Adverb + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים and attributing it to the same reference is not identical with the reference in Exodus 20:2. But Exodus 32:4b and 20:2 has an identical structure, sharing some words or phrases: מִצְרַיִם מֵאֶרֶץ + verb + אֲשֶׁר + אֱלֹהִים. The phrase אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b α) shares the same

word אֱלֹהִים (Ex 20:1). However, considering the context, which discerns to whom the redemptive history is attributed, to the true God or not, the phrase אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) can not be identical with אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2), not to designate the same reference. Rather, it can be identified with אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ), designating the same reference.

While the Lord, your God, אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2) is substituted in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1aβ and 32:4b, each of them share the same words and phrase, the Lord, your God, אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2). אֱלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי (Ex 20:2) is absolutely different to אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) in the reference. The phrases אֱלֹהִים (Ex 32:1aβ) and אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) reverted the fact that the Lord, their God brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 20:2). In reality the phrases in Exodus 32:1aβ and 32:4b attribute the work of salvation to the golden calf, not to Yahweh.

The god is the one who walks, and leads them אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ). It is contrasted with God who only speaks to his people (Ex 20:1) and his word to his people is delivered by his servant Moses (Cf. Ex 32:1b). In reality, each designates different reference.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (Ex 32:4b)

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

While it is in accordance with the statement in Exodus 20:2 that Yahweh himself brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by depicting Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 32:1b α), it is contrasted to the statement of Exodus 20:2 that it is the golden calf that brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by designating the golden calf as Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf (Ex 32: 1a β ; Ex 32:4b).

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ פֶּסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל מִתַּחַת
בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

(Ex 20:5a) לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם

(Ex 20:5b) כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד

עֵוֹן אֲבֹת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־שָׁלְשִׁים וְעַל־רַבְעִים לְשָׁנָאֵי

(Ex 20:6) וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֶלְפִים לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

(Ex 32:2) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֹן פְּרֹקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשִׁיכֶם
בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהִבִּיאוּ אֵלַי

(Ex 32:3) וַיִּתְּפְרְקוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶת־נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֶהְרֹן

(Ex 32:4a) וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה

Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 32:2-3, 4a also a connection of theological themes, like Exodus 20:2-3 and Exodus 32:1a β , 1b α and 4b. Each reveals its theological theme syntactically, and in some respects they can be compared.

The incomparability of God, shown in the form of אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה אֲנֹכִי in Exodus 20:2 prohibits the image of God (פֶּסֶל, Ex 20:4a) which was made by those who were

brought out of the bondage of Egypt. This point is ascertained in the context of the covenant curse as God's incomparability (Ex 20:5a) is mentioned again.

According to Exodus 32:4a, **וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֶּכֶה**, the golden calf was made, nominated and identified by Aaron as Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, **אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם** in Exodus 32:4b.

וַיֵּרָא אֱהֲרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֱהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר (Ex 32:5)

וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ מִמָּחָרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגִּשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק (Ex 32:6)

וְאֶל-אֲצִילֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יְדוֹ וַיַּחֲזוּ אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ (Ex 24:11)

By demanding an image, the people have firstly violated the second commandment. This is made clear in the composition by identifying the calf with the Lord rescuing Israel from Egypt, by Aaron's construction of an altar for sacrifices, by his declaration of a חַג, "feast" for Yahweh, and finally, by the people's worship the next morning with the very offerings Yahweh has specified for himself in verse 6. (Durham 1987:422).

The phrase **וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ** is the same as **הָעֵם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק** (Ex 24:11) not only syntactically but also semantically. Both come from an element of the Sinai Covenant. **וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק** was added in verse 6b. This similarity gives a hint that Israel identifies the feast as an element of the making of the covenant at Sinai. As a result,

they actually make a renewal of the Sinai Covenant with Yahweh through the golden calf.

Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts (Cf. Bergey 2003:52), the variety of syntactic affinities between Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 demonstrate that the first and second commandment of the Decalogue and the golden calf episode are linguistically linked.

Having made a linguistic inventory, it is now necessary to inquire whether intertextuality (borrowing) has occurred (Cf. Leonard 2008:262-263; Sommer 2003:71). The concluding linguistic correlation between Exodus 20:2-3a and Exodus 32:1a β , 1b α and 4b satisfies the guidelines for both the text's dependence on another, as Leonard (2008:246) suggests.

As Leonard (2008:246) says, the phrases in Exodus 32:1a β and 4b are evidences that these passages share some language with other texts i.e. Exodus 20:2-3. Exodus 20:2-3 and Exodus 32:1a β and 4b sharing God's self-predication of his incomparability such as "I am Yahweh, your God", which is almost directly found in the context. Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 32:2-3, 4a are sharing with each other the prohibition of making any image of God. Exodus 19-24 and Exodus 32:5-6 are all dealing with the covenantal meal after making a covenant between God and Israel.

The determining of the direction of these allusions, as Leonard (2008:257) suggests, can be drawn. Considering the sequence of two events actually described or implied in two passages of the present text in terms of a self-consciously literary analysis of the Bible's

own plot line related (Cf. Eslinger 1992:56), Exodus 32:1-6 assumes Exodus 20:2-6. Inner-biblical interpretation of later legal texts on the prior text represents that the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is interpreted in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6 more clearly, because the prohibition of making any image of God, the *traditum* revealed after the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 at Mt. Sinai is reinterpreted as a *traditio* at the golden calf episode. Thus the conclusion can be drawn that Exodus 20:1-6 is alluded to in Exodus 32:1-6.

3.5 Summary

Exodus 32:1-6 can be considered to be an interpretation of the prohibition on making an image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

The issue raised by Exodus 32:1-6 is whether the golden calf represents polytheism or idolatry. Does it implicate “other gods” that Israel was following, or was it rather an attempt to make an image of the one true God, Yahweh?

It is evident that the emphasis in Exodus 32:1-6 is primarily on the second commandment. Israel has violated Yahweh’s own unambiguous requirement about how he is to be worshipped (Durham 1987:422). In relation with God’s incomparability, the prohibition against making any image of God is always tightly bound up with the prohibition to worship God through images. Exodus 32:1-6 that deals with making a golden calf, forbids the use of images to serve God, as well as making any image of God (Labuschagne 1966:139; Holter 1993:78). The passages in Exodus 32:1-6 therefore

confirms the prohibition against serving God through images, as forbidden by the second commandment of the Decalogue. The resume of Exodus 32:1-6 stated that Yahweh is the incomparable; there is none like him. It is, therefore, prohibited to Israel, to represent Yahweh with any image. Because by doing so, Israel compares Yahweh with other gods who are usually represented by images (Harner 1988:152).

The in-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6 confirms this point. While they acknowledged that Moses, the servant of Yahweh, brought them from the land of Egypt (Ex 32:1b α), Israel cancelled it with the statement in Exodus 32:4b, that it is the golden calf that brought them from the land of Egypt, by designating the golden calf to be Yahweh, who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, and attributed redemptive grace to the golden calf (v. 4b). Verses 2-3 and verse 4a refer to the procedure of making an image of God. Verses 5-6 depicts a ceremony for making a covenant between God and Israel as stated in Exodus 19-24 through and with the image of God. Thus, it can be considered as a renewal of the covenant with Yahweh, not making a covenant with another god.

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the golden calf is an image of God. As a result of making an image of God, Yahweh was compared with a god and degraded into a god.

In sum, the calf was a pagan representation of the true God, that is, by making the golden calf, Israel broke the second commandment demanding no presentation of the image of God.

The story of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1-6 explicates the meaning of the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus

20:4-6. The prohibition of making any image of God was suggested in the context of the incomparability of God as the ground of the command. The story of the golden calf explicates that since the second commandment was promulgated at mount Sinai in the form of the Decalogue, the people of God had the principle of worship, as well as the prohibition of making an image of God to worship him, because God is incomparable to idols.

Comparing Exodus 20:2-6 and Exodus 32:1-6 in terms of inner-biblical interpretation, the inner-biblical comparison of Exodus 32:1-6 with Exodus 20:2-6 confirms the hypothesis of this study.

Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts (Cf. Bergey 2003:52), there is a correlation between the second commandment of the Decalogue and the passages dealing with golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6.

Having made a linguistic inventory, intertextuality (borrowing) has occurred (Cf. Leonard 2008:262-263; Sommer 2003:71), the phrases in Exodus 32:1a β and 4b are evidence that these passages share some language with other texts as well, i.e. Exodus 20:2-3.

Considering the sequence of the two events described or implied in the two passages of the present text in terms of a self-consciously literary analysis of the Bible's own plot line (Cf. Eslinger 1992:56), it can be shown that Exodus 32:1-6 assumes Exodus 20:2-6. Exodus 32:1-6 expounds and corroborates Exodus 20:2-6, while the former is more clear in the interpretation of prohibition of making image than the latter and may be a later

elaboration of the simple and original one. Thus Exodus 20:2-6 is alluded to in Exodus 32:1-6.

CHAPTER IV. THE PROHIBITION OF MAKING ANY IMAGE OF GOD IN ISAIAH 40:18-20

4.0 Introduction

Many studies have tried to explain the meaning of Isaiah 40:18-20, which have been one of the most polemic passages in Isaiah and in the whole of the Old Testament (Cf. Spykerboer 1976:35-46; Holter 1995:15; Dick 1999). These studies share the view the idea of God's incomparability stems from the theological crisis of the exilic period of Israelite history. Holter (2003:112) suggests that "Second Isaiah's polemics against idol-fabrication provides clear parallels" to legal commandments prohibiting cult images. Holter (2003:112; cf. Holter 1995:203-206) regards "the series of rhetorical **וְיִשְׁאַל** - questions which introduce the four idol-fabrication passages: Isaiah 40:18/19-20; 41:4/6-7; 44:7/9-20; 46:5/6-7...that the rhetorical function of accentuating Yahweh's incomparability" as the parallel preventing Yahweh from being understood like the other gods, who are known through their image and thus securing God's incomparability. Holter's (2003:112) idea that God's incomparability stems from the background against theological crisis of Yahweh's monotheism in Israel's exilic period is shared by other scholars. Dohmen (1985:38; cf. Dick 1999:2) represents that the strict aniconic monotheism as a late response to the theological crises of the Babylonian Exile (586 B. C. E.) is shared with Deutero-Isaiah's polemic arguments. Dick (1999:2) summaries it as follows:

The theological stress of 586 B.C.E. assured both [the] triumph of Yahwistic monotheism and of aniconic worship: Yahweh's cult had probably always been

iconic, but now there were no god but Yahweh, so there was utterly no room for any cult image. The prophetic parodies respond to the same contemporary crises. Although they stem from different traditions, the legal and the prophetic understandings of a monotheistic and aniconic Yahwism cope with the same catastrophe.

Dick (1999:2) follows Dohmen (1985), who suggests that legal texts in the Old Testament, especially in the legal commandments prohibiting cult images (*'Bilderverbot'*)¹⁰⁴ stems from the theological crisis of Israelite religion in exilic period. Dick (1999:2) starts out from Dohmen's (1985) supposition that legal commandments prohibiting cult images and prophetic idol parodies are all products of 6th-century BCE redactions and are the results of an evolution of prohibiting divine images (Ex 20:4, 23; 34:17; Lv 19:4; 26:1; Dt 4:15ff.; 27:15) and relates essentially it to the prophetic idol parodies.

Dick (1996:16) says that "the voice of prophets of the criticism against the making images come from other independent Hellenistic thought", which is not related the early Sinaitic tradition, is supposed. As Oswalt (1998:63; cf. 1986:34-35; Sarna 1986:144) points out, one who assumes that such a concept was risen as a result of a long process of theological evolution has some burden to prove their thesis: "They must prove that the winners, the anti-idolaters, had to rewrite all the documents of Israel's past to their own advantage, because the present text is univocal on this subject." Nevertheless, it is

¹⁰⁴ According to Dohmen (1985:38; cf. Dick 1999:1), there are five different types of texts in the Hebrew Bible that deal with cult images. Dohmen (1985:36-37) wisely differentiates between the Bild ('image'), Götterbild ('divine image'), and Kultbild ('cult image'). Dohmen (1985:38) insists that "image ban" texts can be dated prior to the fall of the Northern kingdom.

noteworthy for him to pay attention to the fact that the same theological theme on the prohibition of making of cult image is shared with the prophetic parodies (Cf. Dick 1999:16-45).

These studies have mainly concentrated on the critique of idol-fabrication, that is, making images of other gods and comparing Yahweh with an idol of other god or its fabricator.¹⁰⁵ From this passage, there can, however, be a discussion on the prohibition of making any image of God. On account of God's incomparability, interpreting it as the command to forbid any making of an image of God can be justified. This study will try to show that Isaiah 40:18-20, not only prohibits the making and serving of other gods and their images, but also forbids the making of any image of God himself to worship him.

Firstly, this chapter will try to give exegetical confirmation for the conclusion that the incomparability of God requires the prohibition of the "worship of God through an image" in Isaiah 40:18-20, in relation with its macro-unit as the context of the passage.

Secondly, the theological-thematic consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20 will be discussed in this chapter. The prohibition of making any image of God will be dealt with in the context of God's incomparability.

¹⁰⁵ Such passages are intended to establish a comparison between the idol or the created one and the creator, Yahweh (Guillet 1959:428-434; Beuken 1979:215-217; Clifford 1980:450-464; Leene 1984:111-121). Holter (1995:29; Rudman 1999:114-121) argues that the author depicts the idol-fabricators as Yahweh's adversaries, who somehow challenge his incomparability in all idol-fabrication passages. Holter differs with other scholars who say that Yahweh is contrasted with the other gods or idols as his adversaries.

Thirdly, the comparison of the prohibition of making any image of God in Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 will be represented. Both texts show a negative attitude toward the worship of God through an image. This similarity between two texts, firstly, can be seen in respect of its linguistic aspects. Inner-biblical interpretation can be employed as a means of exploring the linguistic aspects of the correlation between the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct and the passage dealing with God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20. Secondly, the theological-thematic continuity of the prohibition of making any image of God within the context of God's incomparability as found in the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct in the book of Isaiah can be indicated. Isaiah's message is in line with the Pentateuch's. The prophet is the plenipotentiary of God to condemn the transgression of the covenantal law. This study will be a try comparing the contents of the prophet Isaiah's accusation with certain of the Pentateuchal laws (Cf. Bergen 1974:161ff.). It illustrates the correspondence in the content between the prophetic accusation and the Pentateuchal legislation.

4.1 Exegetical consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20

Isaiah 40:18-20 is to be read within the context of its macro unit Isaiah 40:12-31. Isaiah 40:18-20 will be analyzed from this perspective against this macro units. It will also analyze other passages in Isaiah 40-55 dealing with God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God: Isaiah 41:1-7, 44:6-20 and 46:5-7, and the book of Isaiah as a whole.

A striking feature of the pericope in Isaiah 40:12-31 is the accumulation of rhetorical questions. The relation between these questions and the answers surrounding these questions have to be focused upon.

Within the larger unit of Isaiah 40-55, the pattern of a rhetorical question emphasizing the incomparability of Yahweh, followed by an idol-fabrication passage, is no exception. The other idol-fabrication passages in Isaiah 40-55 like Isaiah 40:18-20, use the structure of the *”²*-question and an idol-fabrication.

Isaiah 40:18-20 will also be placed in the context of the book of Isaiah as a whole. Treating the book of Isaiah as a unified composition is an adequate way to read and understand it (O’Connell 1994:15). As Oswalt (1986:31; cf. Clements 1982: 117-129) remarks, “the book of Isaiah is a great theological document that can be elucidating when we read the book of Isaiah as a whole. It cannot be interpreted unless we recognize that independent literary units are structured together to form larger units and these again structured into still larger units, forming the book as a whole.” Each unit contributes to the larger unit forming a unity, probably written by a single author dealing with prophetic covenant disputation.

In the following analysis of Isaiah 40:18-20, this study will discuss a few exegetical questions and structural features and confront the findings with the thesis of this study: does this passage show the relation between the incomparability of God and his prohibition of making any image of God to worship him?

4.1.1. The exegesis of Isaiah 40:18-20

4.1.1.1 Isaiah 40:18

Holter (1995:60) shows that the function of the rhetorical question **מִי**,¹⁰⁶ is to emphasize the incomparability of Yahweh in verse 18.¹⁰⁷

According to Labuschagne (1966:29; cf. Young 1972:51), the piel of **דָּמָה** in verse 18a is a synonym for the qal of **עָרַךְ** in v. 18b,¹⁰⁸ meaning “to resemble, to be like in outward appearance, to look like” or “to liken, to compare” (Cf. Labuschane 1966:16-23). As Holter (1995:67) indicates, an interesting feature of **דָּמָה**, is that in all its Qal, Pi’el and Hithpa’el forms it is respectively found in texts that-explicitly or implicitly-affirm the incomparability of Yahweh (Cf. Ps 89:7; Is 40:18, 25; 46:5; Is 14:14). Holter

¹⁰⁶ In general, rhetorical questions address people who already know the answer (Gitay, 1981:81). The point of what these rhetorical questions address is rather the contents of the address, but the form of address. According to Gitay (1981:81), “the primary issue in understanding this series of questions centers on the prophet’s purpose in utilizing such a form of address.” Abrams (1971:149) also stresses this as follows: these questions are asked “not to evoke an actual reply, but to achieve an emphasis stronger than a direct statement.” According to Gitay (1981:88), “although the addressees are not required to answer, the fact that they are addressed with this kind of question causes them to respond, and thus, to take an active role in the persuasive process.”

What is the relationship between these rhetorical questions and the passages between them? Although the answer to a rhetorical question is self-evident, some kind of a reply is occasionally given, especially in poetic texts (Watson 1984:338-342, especially in 338). It is the basic feature of Old Testament rhetorical questions that they do not need “answers”, at least not in the normal meaning of the word. For an introductory survey of how rhetorical questions are used in the Old Testament, Watson (1984:338) defines a rhetorical question as “... a question which requires no answer, since either the speaker or the listener (or even both of them) already knows the answer.” Schökel (1988:150-152) also distinguishes between “rhetorical questions in the strict sense”, into which category he places the questions in Isaiah 40:12ff., and “wisdom questions”. The latter being defined as questions a teacher puts to his students to arouse their interests and provoke their collaboration. For further discussion see Gordis 1932-33:212-217, and Held 1969:71-79. While the stress on the function of rhetorical questions, this study focuses on the contents contained in the rhetorical questions with recognition of the rhetorical function of the questions.

¹⁰⁷ In the wider context, this use of **מִי** “who” can be seen clearer. O’Connell (1994:163f.) represents the use of complex framework which the rhetoric question **מִי** is seen.

¹⁰⁸ According to Holter (1995:70), **עָרַךְ** is used with **דָּמָה** as **דָּמָה תַּעֲרֹכֶנּוּ** in verse 18 and which is paralleled with **דָּמָה**, and corresponds to **תִּדְמֶינִי** in 46:5.

(1995:68) also points out that “the accumulation of קָדְשׁ in the introductory question, which makes it evident that this word plays an important role, is significant in relation with God’s incomparability, being used as a *terminus technicus* to utter dealing with the incomparability of Yahweh.” (Holter 1995:68; cf. Spykerboer 1976:36)

In verse 18 the name אֱל , “El” is used for God.¹⁰⁹ According to Elliger (1978:72), when it is used without an article, it is “comparable with our word ‘God’”.¹¹⁰ In the progress of the argument that runs from verse 18 to verse 20, there is seen the purpose to choose and use El as the name for God (Baltzer 2001:73). According to Oswalt (1986:62), the word אֱל instead of אֱלֹהִים , the most common term for God is identical to that of the high god in the Cananite pantheon. Isaiah intends to indicate the absolute superiority of the Lord and that there is nothing like him in all the universe (Oswalt 1986:62).¹¹¹ From the use of the name of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 which is a disputation type of speech,¹¹² “a very early form of divine self-predication that had its original setting in God’s revelation of himself to Moses” can be found (Harner 1988:147-148).

¹⁰⁹ אֱל is the most transcendent of the God-words, connotating dominion over all (Is 42:5), absolute deity (Is 43:10, 12; 46:9), the unique God of Israel (Is 45:14) and the God of inscrutable purposes (Is 45:15). Cf. for its ironical use, see 44:10, 15, 17; 45:20; 46:6.

¹¹⁰ Baltzer (2001:73) argues that the name “El” differs from the name Yahweh in that it already implies the claim that this is the only God: that the one so named is alone truly God. But it still has no consensus among scholars.

¹¹¹ As Oswalt observes, an interesting wordplay is at work in several of these references where אֱל is also the word used for “idol” (Is 46:6-9).

¹¹² Among the various forms of speech employed by Isaiah in Isaiah 40-55, perhaps the disputation has the tendency mostly to resemble other forms or incorporate motifs from other forms. Begrich (1963:48-52) noted that the disputation is related to the trial speeches, and he observed that it sometimes incorporates themes from Israel’s hymns. Westermann (1981:47, 49-51) also noted the similarity that the disputation showed with the trial scenes and hymns. In his analysis of the disputation in Isaiah 40:12-31, he argued specifically that the “descriptive Psalm of Praise” (*beschreibende Lobpsalm*) underlies the passage as a whole. Some scholars say that Isaiah depicts Yahweh in it as disproving the exiles’ abandoning any hope that they had of returning to their homeland. But in it Isaiah prophesizes Yahweh will give redemption.

According to Holter (1995:69), the word, **דְמוּת** in verse 18 being used with **תַעֲרֹכוּ** in the expression **דְמוּת תַעֲרֹכוּ**, has to be seen in relation with its parallel word, **דְמוּת דְמוּת**. **דְמוּת דְמוּת** is never actually used elsewhere in the Old Testament for an idol except in Isaiah 40:25 (Cf. North 1964:85), but is part of the expression denoting a comparison (Holter 1995:70). Holter (1995:69; cf. 1995:70) suggests that **דְמוּת** can be rendered as an abstract, “likeness”, on the ground of its use, as shown in the expression **דְמוּת תַעֲרֹכוּ** in verse 18. Mettinger (1978:79) also says that **דְמוּת** has an abstract sense in verse 18. Its use is, however, made evidently in verses 19-20, in which its reference is to patently concrete idol. The distinction between the concrete and abstract use of the noun is at least not made in the mind of a Semitic thinker to whom an image represents the power of a god (Spykerboer 1976:36).

On whether **דְמוּת** can mean the image of God or not, Elliger (1978:72) says that it never means the image of God, while Westermann (1946:46f.; cf. Baltzer 2001:73; Spykerboer 1976:36), and most modern commentators translate the word as “likeness” or “image” to refer to the image of God.¹¹³ Whatsoever **דְמוּת** means, concrete idol or

¹¹³ Westermann points out that “the use of **דְמוּת** here could recall Genesis 1:26.” Westermann contends that “the association of likeness with idol as in the following verses, was not the author’s intention.” He was thinking solely in abstract terms, and verses 19-20 are an intrusion here, perhaps from a piece of what now appears in chapter 41. However, “examination of a passage like 2 Kings 16:10, where **דְמוּת** is a model or drawing, makes plain that [the] word, while not limited to “idol”, can certainly have [a] concrete connotation, as it is understood to have here.” (Cf. Oswalt 1998:63) Young (1972:52) points out that “God created man in His image and likeness. We can, thus, say that man is the image of God. But, nevertheless, there is also a[n] absolute distance between God and man, and Creator and creature.” According to Holter (1995:79-89; cf. Dick 1992:22), “in Genesis 1:26 God pronounces his work “good” like the craftsman in Isaiah 41:7.”

abstract sense of likeness, it can include the image of God in that God is compared with something in this context.

According to Mettinger (1978:79), עָרַךְ implies “something more than a mere comparison and means a challenge to the listeners to advance a counterpart to God, that could be claim to be his equal and that could match him in a competition.” Thus Mettinger (1978:79) suggests that ““match” has a range of meaning which is very similar to עָרַךְ.” Although Holter (1995:69) points out that עָרַךְ is never used for erecting an idol in the context of the Canaanite pantheon setting images of gods in a row, it is also attested in the texts dealing with the incomparability of Yahweh, there having the meaning “to compare”, which is parallel with דָּמָה (Cf. Ps 89:7).

In conclusion, verse 18 clearly says that God is not comparable with other gods who can be replaced by images. The incomparability of God is clearly stated in verse 18 (Naidoff 1981:72). Moreover, making of any image of God is prohibited because God himself cannot be compared with an image, even the image of God.

Thus, the prophet is asking in verse 18: וְאֵל־מִי תִדְמֶינּוּ אֵל וּמַה־דִּמּוֹת תַּעֲרֹכּוּ לוֹ “To whom will you [pl.] liken God and to what image will you [pl.] compare him?”

4.1.1.2 Isaiah 40:19

In verse 19: **הַפֶּסֶל נָסַךְ חָרָשׁ וְצִרְיָה בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעְנֻהוּ וּרְתִקוּת כֶּסֶף צִוְרָף**, which is connected with v. 20, the prophet explains the process of how an image was made in those days (Cf. Fitzgerald 1989:426-446). Isaiah presents his own polemics against idolatry and idol-fabrication with it (Holter 1995:35).¹¹⁴ There is a consensus that this passage deals with the description of the technical process of idol-fabrication. Nevertheless, there are problems in translating and substantiating the thesis. Spykerboer (1976:43) summarizes them as follows: “firstly, although it is an explicit depiction of idol-fabrication, it is not easy to decide whether it describes the manufacture of one or two idols. Secondly, it evokes in us the question whether this idol in verse 19 consists of a wooden core, or a metal core. Thirdly, the obscure phrase **הַמִּסְכָּן תְּרוֹמָה** poses a problem for interpretation.” These questions are to be answered by the result of exegesis of verses 19-20.

The first word, **הַפֶּסֶל** contains two exegetical problems. The first is the different renderings of **הַ** added to **פֶּסֶל**, that is, whether it is the definitive article or the interrogative particle (Mettinger 1978:79). For the former, Holter (1995:37-38; cf. Elliger 1978:59-60) thinks that this **הַ** is a definitive article. The questions in verse 18 are followed by two imagined answers in verses 19-20. **הַפֶּסֶל** and **הַמִּסְכָּן** are the direct objects of the verb, **עָרַף** in verse 18 (Mettinger 1974:79). According to Mettinger (1974:78; cf. Holter 1995:34), in the context of verses 18-20, **מִסְכָּן** in verse 20a must in

¹¹⁴ In the other three idol-fabrication passages, Isaiah 41:6-7, 44:9-20; 46:6-7, which show a clear terminological connection between them, the same intention of the author is founded.

some way or another correspond to the word לִּפְנֵי in verse 19a and form a parallelism between them (Mettinger 1974:78).¹¹⁵ Moreover, the word order *object – verb – subject*, which emphasizes the object, supports the rendering of it as a definitive article (Mettinger 1974:78).

There is, however, a reason to choose the rendering of it as an interrogative pronoun. Baltzer (2001:72) shows how the passages can easily be constructed with a double question at the beginning: “With whom...?” and “What...?” corresponding to the double answer “image” (v. 19) and “stele” (v. 20), containing implicit answers to the first two questions. The rhetorical question of the prophet in verse 18: To whom will you liken God and to what image will you compare him?, which is addressed to his audience, is answered by himself in an ironical way, by asking, “An image perhaps?” in verse 19 (cf. Young 1972:52; Labuschagne 1966:16-23) and may be “craftsman?” in verse 20.¹¹⁶ As Williamson (1986:14; cf. Köhler 1923:19) observes, verse 19 and verse 20 may thus be related in terms of “whether... or” by the double use of the interrogative מִי , in answer to the question in verse 18. This rendering, however, has to overcome the disadvantage that the combination of an interrogative מִי plus a noun is not attested elsewhere in Isaiah 40-55 (Holter 1995:38; cf. Talstra 1981:42).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Mettinger states that verses 18-20 are a unit with an inner structure. Verse 18 consists of two questions. These two questions are taken up by verses 19-20, which contain two imagined answers and thus form a corollary to verse 18.

¹¹⁶ See NRSV: “An idol?— A workman casts it”. Oswalt suggests that this punctuation is probably too strong, since MT does not even have a mild stop on the word. But it does highlight the author’s emphasis (Oswalt 1998:57).

¹¹⁷ In most cases in Isaiah 40-55, The מִי is used as an interrogative with a negated verb.

Two renderings can make sense in the present text. This study, however, prefers to take the הַ as a definitive article as rather than an interrogative pronoun. In the context of emphasizing the incomparability of God by rhetorical questions, its answer is so explicit and doesn't need to be stated. However, the idop-fabrication passage followed functions as an answer to the rhetorical question.

The second problem concerns whether the meaning of פֶּסֶל is used in an abstract sense or of concrete idols. Many scholars have difficulty with the interpretation of the image, פֶּסֶל, which is translated as the image of a god in verse 19.¹¹⁸ The word פֶּסֶל, always refers to a cult-image which could be made of stone, wood or metal (Dohmen 1985:692).¹¹⁹ When it was considered that it always refers to a complete statue, as Korpel (1991:220) points out, it cannot refer to a hollow part which was subsequently put together to form the complete statue. In general, in Isaiah 40-55, especially in the idol-fabrication passages in Isaiah, פֶּסֶל is explicitly used for a (non-Yahwistic) “god” (Holter 1995:37). But when it is used in relation with the incomparability of God, it can also imply the image of God (Labuschagne 1966:141)

In verse 19a, the description of the fabrication of פֶּסֶל starts with נָסַךְ and thus, a craftsman, חָרַשׁ casts, נָסַךְ a פֶּסֶל.¹²⁰ According to Korpel (1991:220), “it can...be

¹¹⁸ But this interpretation offers apparently insurmountable obstacles in verse 20a (Baltzer 2001:74).

¹¹⁹ According to *HALOT* (3:949) this can be “a divine image carved from wood or sculpted from stone, but later cast in metal.”

¹²⁰ As Holter (1995:35) points out, there is a clear terminological connection between this passage and the other idol-fabrication passages in term of the same occurrence of some words: פֶּסֶל, חָרַשׁ, נָסַךְ, צִרָה, בַּיָּד, מוֹט, עֵץ כְּסֵף, זָהָב.

considered as the casting of metal, probably bronze, into a mould. Images cast in solid bronze and coated with a plating of gold and/or silver were very common in Canaan. In Babylon, the inner shape of an image was often cut from wood.”¹²¹ However, since the verb **נָסַךְ**, cannot be connected with wood, bronze is more likely (Cf. Salonen 1970:122).¹²²

צוֹרֵף, the second artisan, who is the gold- or silversmith works with metal to overlay, **וַיִּרְקַעֵנּוּ**, the gold, **זָהָב** onto the statue (Baltzer 2001:74; cf Holter 1995:54-55). The artisan uses a small hammer because precision is required. The verb **רָקַע**, used here in the imperfect tense, refers to a general statement, to the beating of metal into thin sheets (Baltzer 2001:74). According to Korpel (1991:220), although the prophet could have used the normal verb *sph* II, he chooses and uses **רָקַע** to contrast it with the creative work of God as stated in Isaiah 42:5; 44:24.¹²³ The prophet intends “his audience to savour the irony, choosing and using this word” to indicate “the contrast between the divine and the human activity in this laborious process.” (Korpel 1991: 221)

In verse 19b, the manufacture of **רִתְּקוֹת**, chains is described as the work done in the third stage (Baltzer 2001:74). The line, **וַיִּצְרֵף צֹרֵף כֶּסֶף רִתְּקוֹת**, with a so-called double-duty preposition, can be translated as follows: “And a **צֹרֵף** (goldsmith) plates with silver

¹²¹ Cf. J. Renger, “Kultbild”, *RIA*, Bd. 6, 310f. For coating with silver, see also *CAD (L)* 21f.

¹²² For a bronze statue plated with gold in an Old Babylonian letter, see Salonen 1970:122.

¹²³ In Isaiah 42:5 and 44:24, it designates the creative work of God (Korpel 1991:220). According to Korpel, this external parallelism is at the same time antithetical. It sets off the making of an image by a human craftsman against God’s “making” of the firmament and the earth. For **רָקַע** as a technical term for God’s work of creation, his spreading out of heaven and earth, see also Psalm 136:6; Job 37:18.

chain” (Korpel 1991:221).¹²⁴ Korpel (1991:221) suggests that “in the ancient Near East a smith often used silver to join sheets of gold by soldering.” The reason for using silver or silver-alloys as solder was the lower melting point of silver which prevented the handsomely wrought sheets of gold to smelt again when a new sheet had to be soldered on to them (Cf. Lucas 1962:216-217, 252; Aldred 1971:88ff). Baltzer (2001:74) suggests the artisan can be another smith, who is manufacturing chains of silver wire. It may well be that the mention of “chains” is much more closely linked with the context than the notion of mere decoration (Baltzer 2001:74).¹²⁵ The goldsmith uses gold and silver together to weld the individual plates to link them together (Baltzer 2001:74).

The process described in verse 19 may be summarized as follows: “Firstly, an image of bronze is cast in a mould. Secondly, thin plates of gold are hammered out as plating for the bronze statue. Thirdly, where these plates of the gold needed to be joined they are soldered with silver-solder” (Koole 1985:65).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ The Hebrew verb *rtq* means “to connect, chain” (Korpel 1991:221). The Semitic cognates of *rtq* indicate that the basic meaning is “patch, to sew”. For Arabic *rataqa* we find meanings like “to close up”, “to sew”, “to repair” (Lane 1867:1027), but the verb can be also be used metaphorically of a “closed-up” woman, a woman *impervia coeunti* (Lane 1867:1027; cf. Fegnan 1923:61), a meaning also attested in Ugaritic (More 1980:309). In modern Arabic we find the meaning is apparently derived from the primary meaning “to mend, repair, patch up, sew up” (Wehr 1979:376). The Syriac *retaq* “to make a needle-hole, to puncture” is apparently derived from the primary meaning “to sew” (Brockelmann 1928:748). However, one of the meanings of the verb *rtq* in Arabic interests us in particular. According to Kazimirski (1860:817), it occurs in the meaning of “to solder”. For Mesopotamian, see Korpel 1991:221. In this connection, it may be significant that in the parallel passage Isaiah 41:7 the term *debeq* is used which everyone translates by “soldering” (Korpel 1991:221-222).

¹²⁵ Surely not for decoration with chainlets or the like (Schroer 1987:210ff), because he continues his description of the plating process. Also unlikely is the supposition that the smith would combine plates of gold with plates of silver. The targumists have translated רַתְּקוּהָ כְּסֵפֶה by *šyšln dksp* “chain of silver”, a translation which is taken over by many lexicographers. But since the translation of the targum is obviously derived from the meaning of the verb, it is not a convincing basis.

¹²⁶ Many of the bronze images from the ancient Near East show holes for wooden pegs under its feet, which must have been anchored to a pedestal.

Thus, verse 19: חָרַשׁ חָרַשׁ וְצָרַף וְצָרַף בְּזָהָב וְרָקַעַנּוּ וְרָתְקוּת כֶּסֶף צוּרָף can be translated as follows: “A craftsman casts the image and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and solders it with silver.”

4.1.1.3 Isaiah 40:20

The key to render verse 20 is whether it describes the offering of the poor in contrast with the rich, or fastening the idol made in the process described in verse 19. The first two words תְּרוּמָה מְסֻכָּן are the major crux of interpretation.

Mettinger (1974:81) points to three requirements to interpret this crux: “First, it must fit into the structural framework of the passage. מְסֻכָּן has its counterpart in הַפֶּסֶל in verse 19a. Secondly, it has to make sense of תְּרוּמָה. Thirdly, it has to account for the vocalization of מְסֻכָּן.”

Williamson (1986:2-13) groups the different proposed interpretations of this crux. According to Williamson (1986:4), the traditional interpretation¹²⁷ takes מְסֻכָּן as subject of the sentence, connected with the adjective תְּרוּמָה which is understood as “a contribution for sacred uses”, and thus...“offering” was rendered by “he who is impoverished”, that is, “a poor man”.¹²⁸ With this rendering, verse 20 stands in contrast

¹²⁷ It is represented by the Revised Version, the Authorized Version, the international Version and Good New Bible.

¹²⁸ Traditional interpretation of the phrase is supported as follows: “Since מְסֻכָּן occurs five times in Ecclesiastes with the meaning “poor” and מְסֻכָּנָה appears in Deuteronomy 8:9 with the meaning “poverty,”

with verse 19: the man of verse 19 is wealthy, and so can afford an idol made from precious metal. The poor man of verse 20, however, can afford only wood with which to make his image (Williamson 1986:4). Driver (1935:396-398) suggests that it can be rendered as “the poor man...was choosing a wood (that) would not rot.” A similar view was also raised by Trudinger (1967:220-225). He thinks that verse 19 and verse 20 describe the making of two different idols. The progression of the writer’s argument demands that idol of verse 20 be of superior quality to that of verse 19 (Williamson 1987:8). Oswalt (1998:64) states that most scholars nowadays agree that “poor man” is not correct. There is no support elsewhere in the text for this contrast between rich and poor (Williamson, 1986:4). Several factors are pointing in the opposite direction (Williamson 1986:4-5): The supposed contrast between the metal idol of the rich in verse 19 and the wooden one of the poor in verse 20 really doesn’t work, since, first of all, imperishable wood was very expensive and required a craftsman to work it. “The allegedly poor man of verse 20 is evidently able to afford the services of a חֲרָשׁ חָכָם, “a skilled craftsman.” If this contrast was intended by the writer, he did not make a reference to it in verse 19. It is expecting too much of the reader to retrace his steps mentally in order to comprehend what verse 19 was all about. The next question to be raised is whether such an interpretation has justice to the overall context, which is governed by verse 18. In verse 18 the reader was challenged to produce anything that could be compared with God. The response expected, is a description of the very best that man can produce; the polemic rather loses its point if a second-rate idol is put up as

AV accepts that the meaning of מִסְכֵּן in verse 20 is “a poor man...Depending on how the sentences are divided, however, LXX either has nothing here or “He set[s] up a likeness,” while Targ. has “he cut down a fir tree” (cf. also Vg). The form of the pu’al participle and its adjective *miskēn*, “poor” can be derived from the same root. It occurs four times in Ecclesiastes (only). The noun *miskēnut*, “poverty”, “scarcity” occurs once, in Deuteronomy 8, 9. There is no need to doubt the meanings of this noun and adjective, despite their restricted attestation; they fit their context and are common in Aramaic and post-biblical Hebrew “(Levy 1883:169).

a candidate. Smith (1944:172) has queried whether a wooden statue would really have been so much cheaper than a metal one. He writes, “[g]ood wooden statuettes were probably more expensive than bronze”... after all, the closing words of the verse show that something far more substantial than a mere statuette is in view. We may thus conclude that there is no justification for contrasting verse 19 and verse 20 in terms of rich and poor.

The second difficulty was confronted in its linguistic understanding of **הַמִּסְכֵּן**. If the Masoretes intended it to mean “the poor man”, it is surprising that they vocalized the word as a pu‘al participle of a root whose use as a verb is not attested anywhere else. It can be raised why they did not simply use the more common vocalization *hammiskēn* (Williamson 1986:5).

A third difficulty for this approach may lie in its translation of **תְּרוּמָה** because it cannot suit the traditional understanding of “heave-offering” (Williamson, 1986:5).

In contrast with the traditional rendering to assume two idols in verse 19 and verse 20, most now agree that two verses are speaking of the same idol, with verse 19 referring to the idol itself and verse 20 to the base on which it was fastened (Oswalt 1998:64). The view can be ramified into two.

Each has its own interpretation on the phrase, **הַמִּסְכֵּן תְּרוּמָה** as following: “One is, as Ugaritic # 1754 attests a verb *skn*, meaning “to set up.” Thus the Pu‘al participle could

mean “something that was set up” in accord with the latter part of the verse. The other suggestion is that the word is the name of a type of wood, sissou.” (Oswalt 1998:64).

The former is the second group of interpretations of Williamson (Cf. 1986:17-18).

Mettinger (1974:78) suggests that מִסְכָּן with the root *skn* means “to make a statue or image,” as the *Pual* participle can be rendered as “something that is given form, an image.” Connected with it, תְּרוּמָה could be rendered as the more or less voluntary contribution of the cult. According to this view, the translation will be: “Maybe an image which is a sacred contribution.” (Mettinger 1974:78)¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Duhm (1914:270-271) proposes to emend the first two words of verse 20 to *hamekōnēn terûmâ*, “he who would set up an image (chooses...).” Levy (1925:123-124) suggests the reading *hammassikēhu litemûnâ* “he that causeth the casting thereof for a likeness”, i.e. “he who has an image cast.” But, according to Williamson (1986:6) this interpretation is deficient: “They suffer, however, from the inevitable difficulty of being unable to explain how a straightforward and intelligible text was corrupted into something which on this view was quite unintelligible” (Cf. Reider 1952:113-130).

Trudinger (1967:220-225) suggests that *hamesukkân* should be vocalized *hamesakkēn*, the pi’el participle of a root *skn*, whose primary meaning is “to dwell with”, and from which is derived (in the hiph’il) the meaning “to be familiar with”, “well acquainted with”. Hence, he conjectures, the pi’el participle might have the meaning “he who really knows”, that is, “the connoisseur of idols”.

According to Williamson (1987:8), Trudinger’s solution of the verse’s problem is less than convincing in some points: “First...He[Trudinger] postulates an otherwise unattested pi’el of the root and gives it a meaning, which the root nowhere else conveys, as a hypothetical development of only one of several possible meanings of the hiph’il. Second, Trudinger gives no evidence that trees were ever used in this way, nor am I aware of any such practice as he presupposes. Finally, although he does not discuss the meaning of תְּרוּמָה or offer a translation of it, he presumably understands it in traditional sense of “offering””.

Appealing to the Amarna tablet, and to Qatabanian as well as to Ugaritic, Reider (1952:113-130) postulates a Hebrew root *skn* meaning “to keep, to guard, to care for”. He, therefore, vocalizes the first word as *Ham^ssakkēn* and renders the phrase “the keeper of sacred contributions.”

Gray (1957:192) also appeals to the Ugaritic noun of *skn* meaning something “set up”, “a stele”. He thus revocalizes the first word as a pi’el participle of this root (*ham^ssakkēn*) and reverts to the emendation of *l^rrûmâ* to *l^rmûnâ* to arrive at a translation “he who would set up an image.”

Mettinger (1974:77-83) retains the masoretic vocalization of *ham^ssukkân*, construing it as an interrogative ה with pu’al participle of this same verb *skn*, meaning “a thing formed”, hence “an image”. Mettinger (1974:77-83) also accepts that תְּרוּמָה has its normal sense of “contribution for sacred uses”, but he wishes to follow Elliger in defining this word more narrowly as something that one is required to give rather than as an offering dedicated of one’s own free will. He, therefore, translates “Maybe an image, which is a prescribed offering”.

Although Mettinger avoids the need for any emendation, and a strong part of his argument is the fact that he brings the openings of verses 19 and 20 into a parallel relationship. However, as Williamson (1987:11) observes, Mettinger’s redering has some difficulties: First, Mettinger re-introduce a contrast between the two verses in terms of the value of the idols in question, and that in a way which is fundamental to the passage’s rhetoric as he understands it. Although this is achieved without reference to “the poor man”, the

The third group of interpretations of Williamson (1986:17-18) suggests that the word מִסְכָּן, which is pronounced *m^esukkān*, is the name of kind of a tree (Cf. Stummer 1928:3-48; 1963:462; Zimmern 1894:111-112; Gershevitch 1957:317-320; Millard and Snook 1964:12-13)¹³⁰ and then תְּרוּמָה, is rendered as “offering,” as an objective genitive describing this wood.

Taking this view, as Williamson (1986:11f) points out, *t^rûmâ* “basically denotes something raised or made high.” They think that “it might be a suitable word for a plinth or podium”. Thus, the translation, “One choose *sissoo*, an unrotting wood, for the base ...”¹³¹ is proposed. The verb of *skn* [מִסְכָּן] probably means “to shape”.¹³² Thus it seems that *skn* “shaping” was one of the skills of such an artisan. At last, the translation can be drawn as “One who chooses the wood not to be rotten for the image not to be shaken.” What we are looking for is a fresh subject for the verb that follows: לֹא יִרְקַב לִבְחָר, “choose...that will not rot.”¹³³

underlying problems noted above to the traditional English versions are applicable also in this case. Secondly, Mettinger’s understanding of *terûmâ* and of its function in this verse is very subtle – over – subtle, some might think... The third difficulty on Mettinger’s view is one which also confronts Gray and Schoors, but for no one of them offers any explanation. They are obliged to postulate that a word attested only in Ugaritic, many centuries before Deutero-Isaiah, continued to exist in Biblical Hebrew, only to surface at the literary level in the exile...”

¹³⁰ The name of a type of wood, *sissoo* is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions.

¹³¹ Two criticism of this view can be indicated here: Williamson (1987:13) suggests that apart from the root meaning of “*t^rûmâ*”, a base, plinth or podium can hardly be said to be “raised or made high”, a noun of this formation can be expected to have a passive meaning (Cf. GKC § 84^a *m*); Attempts to interpret *mskn* as a name of a species of tree like Williamson’s view, is pointed out by Korpel (1999:222) as unjust and points to resorting to a forced exegesis of the following cola.

¹³² Earlier proposals to explain *mskn* with the help of Ugaritic are found with Gray 1965: 262-263; Fohrer 1964:26; Beuken 1974:46. Usually *skn* “stele” is referred to. It is striking that in the Ugaritic text the divine craftsman [חָרַשׁ] pours silver and gold, overlays various pieces of furniture with silver, gold and electrum, among them a socle [*kt*], and finally fashions a bowl that is shaped [*sknt*] like one from the Yam ‘anu’ country (Cf. Korpel 1991:222).

¹³³ The craftsman, *mskn* [מִסְכָּן], יִבְחָר, “chooses” wood that will not rot (Is 40:20), but Yahweh בְּחַרְתִּי, “chooses” Israel in Isaiah 41:8 (Dick 1992:21).

The last part of verse 20 reads **לֹא יִמוּט פֶּסֶל לְהַכִּין** “(he seeks out a skillful craftsman) to set up an image that will not move” (Spykerboer 1976:43). Watts (2005:623) indicates the irony in the expression, “that cannot be moved”: “Of course, anything that people can set up, they can also remove. Only God cannot be moved.” Who is it that chooses “a wood” or “a tree” that does not decay? “Although it is not as simple as it was in verse 19, where it is possible to identify the craftsmen, [a] “wise expert” is sought for the work, and he will no doubt see to it somewhat forcefully that the **פֶּסֶל**, the image of a god, is no longer shaky, unstable. But that it will really be firm.” (Baltzer 2001:74)

Holter (Cf. 1995:44-48) also opts for the second and third group suggested by Williamson (1987:1-21) and considered to be fitting the context (Cf. Mettinger 1974:77-83).

When we consider the structure of the text again, in all lines in which a new part of the process is mentioned a specialized artisan is named. In verse 19a α it is the craftsman [חָרָשׁ] who cast the image. In verse 19b β it is the goldsmith [צִירָה] who covers the image with gold and silver-solder. Then, in verse 20a α , it is the mskn [מִסְכֵּן] who makes the pedestal in which the חָרָשׁ anchors it (Korpel 1991:222).¹³⁴ Oswalt (1998:64; cf. Koole 1985:65) also summarizes the process of verse 20 as three fold, considering verses 19-20 as a description of a single process for one object by two or three craftsmen¹³⁵:

¹³⁴ In Ugaritic a verb skn occurs in a text about the technician among the gods who is fabricating various objects from metals like gold and silver.

¹³⁵ Thus we can say, according to this rendering, it is not unlikely that in Isaiah 40:20, the one who shaped the pedestal is the third artisan, and as Baltzer (2001:74) supposes, that verse 20 is talking about

“choosing the wood, finding a craftsman capable of working it, and fastening the idol to its base in a permanent way.”

Thus, the interpretation of verse 20 can be suggested as follows:

הַמְּסַכֵּן תְּרוּמָה עֵץ לֹא-יִרְקַב יִבְקֹשׁ-לוֹ לְהַכִּין פֶּסֶל לֹא יִמוּט יִבְחַר חֲרָשׁ חָכָם
“the one who choose the wood *sissoo* that will not rot for a plinth seeks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not be shaken.”

4.1.1.4 The relationship between Isaiah 40:18 and Isaiah 40:19-20

The structure of the unit in verses 18-20 needs further investigation. Many scholars consider verses 19-20 to be intrusive in the structure and unsuitable to the overall theme, disturbing the climax created by verse 18 and therefore leading to misunderstanding verse 18 (Motyer 1993:304).¹³⁶ Several scholars have suggested to regard these verses as a secondary expansion and have urged that verse 18 should be moved or even expunged altogether (Elliger 1978:65f; Merendino 1981:87ff; Westerman 1966:46f).

only one object too, depending on the interpretation of verse 19.

¹³⁶ Many modern scholars on Isaiah were shaped by the major commentary of Bernhard Duhm, on the one hand, and by the form-critical work of Joachim Begrich, on the other hand. They have been consistently suspicious of the integrity of the main idol passages (Is 40:18-20; 41:5-7; 44:9-20; 46:5-7). Scholars counting among the majority of modern commentators have continued this tradition of skepticism. Naidoff (1981:67-68) separates the polemic against idolatry in verses 19-20 from the rhetorical question in verse 18; McKenzie (1968:23) says that verses 19-20 do not harmonize with its context. He explains Second Isaiah's purpose as follows: “It is sufficient that the claims of Yahweh were unparalleled [and] hence no god can be presented as a rival to him. But this audience still has difficulties to prevent that they recognize their own belief which is the traditional faith on God as creator, and that they are willing to stand by them.” (McKenzie 1968:24).

For the most part they regard the main idol passages as displaced or a non-Isaian insertion. Consequently the idol passages play a small role in their assessment of the prophet's total message (Clifford 1980:450; cf. Westermann 1969; McKenzie 1968; Elliger 1978). For Duhm's view, see Duhm 1968. Duhm holds that 41:5 was added as a link between verses 1-4 and verses 6-7, after the latter verses had been moved from non-Isaian insertion that breaks up the unit 44:6-8 + v. 21 (Duhm 1968:333). Isaiah 46:6-8 also was judged an insertion (Duhm 1968:352). Begrich (1969:13) puts 41: 6-7 with 40:18-20, declared 44:6-20 unecht, and characterized 46:5-11 as an independent *Disputationswort*, though authentically Isaian. For the most parts they regard the main idol passages as displaced or non-Isaian insertions. Consequently the idol passages play a small role in their assessment of the prophet's total message (Clifford 1980:450).

They conclude that verses 19-20 contain a number of unusual expressions in comparison with verse 18 and as for the content, the literary form and the grammar, they do not seem to fit the context. Thus, several scholars have suggested to regard these verses as a secondary expansion (Elliger 1978:65f; Merendino 1981:87ff). The structural analysis of the text, however, shows a remarkable symmetry. Judging from the overall structure of Isaiah 40, the passage against the idols (vv.18-20) appears in no way to be a “Fremdkörper”. It is just as carefully thought out in its craftsmanship and theology as is its context (Preuss 1971:193ff.; Baltzer 2001:72; cf. Mettinger 1974:77f). It is also pointed out that the elimination of verses 19-20 destroys this beautiful symmetry in Isaiah 40 (Motyer 1993:304; cf. Korpel 1991:219; Elliger 1978:76; Melugin 1997:90-91; Spykerboer 1976:35-46; Clifford 1980: 450-464):

Structurally, adding verses 19-20 to verse 18 balances addition of verse 26 to the questions in verse 25. In each case the questions bring the preceding verses to a biting climax, and bridge over into a further and final application of the same theme. In verses 19-20 this is that the glory of the Lord is in no way challenged by so-called gods. In verse 26 it is that the detailed rule of the Creator in history is seen in his detailed rule of the stars. The question in verse 18 does not in fact invite comparison of the Lord with anything, but is an interrogative assertion of his incomparability. Finally, verses 19-20 are not concerned with the sin of making idols, but with the uselessness of the product.

Next, we have to enquire about the background of the prophet’s words in verses 18-20. If the structure proves that the verses belong to the original text of Isaiah 40, why has

the prophet used such unusual language? (Korpel 1991: 219). These verses make sense as “rhetoric” answers to the rhetorical questions in verse 18 (Mettinger 1974:77).

Motyer (1993:304) points out that the rhetorical question: “To whom will you compare God?”(v. 18a) is concerned not with the folly of making idols, but with the wrongness of comparing the true God with other gods.¹³⁷ It can be said that the theological point of departure in Isaiah 40:18-20 is the self-assertion of God (v. 18).

Baltzer (2001:72) says the solemn seriousness of the hymn is followed in vv. 18-20 by an entr’acte in which the same theme, namely Yahweh’s incomparability is presented on a different level.

The answer to the rhetorical question in verse 18 is self-evident and thus unexpressed. However, the process of idol-fabrication is indicated in verses 19-20.

As Holter (1993:77-78) indicates, we can draw two conclusions from these rhetorical questions and answers.

First, vv. 19-20 act as a theological reply to the rhetorical questions in v. 18. Vv. 19-20 are rather “neutral” descriptions of idol-fabrication, without any direct theological polemic against idolatry. This question and answer are echoed in v. 25 and v. 26 respectively.... Secondly, the role of the idol-fabricators in vv. 19-20 corresponds with the role of the nations in vv. 15-17, and with the role of the inhabitants of the earth

¹³⁷ Within Isaiah 40-66, this statement (Cf. Is 40:25; 46:5), presents us with a wonderful irony. This is one of the Hebrew Bible’s strongest statements concerning the incomparability of YHWH, yet it is within a literary corpus which is particularly rich with comparisons with YHWH.

with its princes and rulers in vv. 22-24....This indicates that idol-fabricators are thought of as examples or representatives of the nations and its rulers.

Holter (1993:77-78) indicates that the comparison between Yahweh and the idol-fabricator in Isaiah 40:18-20 is extended to the comparison between Yahweh and the nations (Is 40:15-17) and Yahweh and the princes and the rulers of inhabitants of the earth (Is 40:22-24). It implies that nothing, even the image of God can be compared with God. In relation with God's incomparability, the prohibition against making idols and images of other gods is always tightly bound up with the prohibition to worship God through images.

What Isaiah 40:18-20 states is that Yahweh is the incomparable; there is none like him. It is, therefore, prohibited to Israel, to represent Yahweh with images. Because by doing so, Israel is comparing Yahweh with other gods who are represented with images (Harner 1988:152). In Isaiah's critique on the comparison of Yahweh with an idol or idol-fabricator he declares Yahweh to be the sole God over the world, who can never be compared with anything made as an image. Therefore, in Isaiah's idol-fabrication passages, the proclamation of the incomparability of God demands the prohibition of his worship through images. Isaiah 40:18-20 that deals with the incomparability of God and idol-fabrication forbids not only making images of other gods, but also the use of images to serve God (Labuschagne 1966:139; Holter 1993:78).

Isaiah 40:19-20 use the verbs **נָסַף**, **רָקַע**, **רָקַב**, **בָּחַר**, and **בָּקַשׁ** to depict the process of making an image. They have the same meaning as the verb **עָשָׂה** used with **פְּסִל**, the

image of God in Exodus 20:4. Thus, Isaiah 40:19-20 is not only critique on idol or idol-fabrication, but also the prohibition of making any image of God, by which He is compared with other images and other gods.

The meaning of the passages on the incomparability of God and idol-fabrication by comparing Yahweh with the idol or idol-fabricator in Isaiah 40:18-20 is, thus, not only a critique on making and serving other gods and their images, but also implies the prohibition against serving God through images, as forbidden by the second commandment.

It can be pointed out that a close connection between the proclamation of the incomparability of God or of his sovereignty and the prohibition to worship God through images is found in Isaiah 40:18-20.

4.1.2 Isaiah 40:18-20 in the context of its macro unit.

The meaning of Isaiah 40:18-20 is to be found next in the context of Isaiah 40:12-31, then in passages dealing with the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God passages within Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 41:1-7, 44:6-20; 46:5-7, and lastly in context of the book of Isaiah as a whole (Cf. Holter 1995:59-60). The following section will study the three macro units, in which Isaiah 40:18-20 stands from the point of view that it forms a unity, probably written by a single author.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ In general, "the redactional investigation to explain the origin and process of Isaiah 40-55 is done to explain the unity of it, although it is considered that the origin of the process that eventuated in Isa 40-55 cannot be recovered and an author cannot be accessed." (Blenkinsopp 2002:73) But it seems justified to

4.1.2.1 The structural features of Isaiah 40:12-31

Elliger (1978:94) rejects the unity of the passage in Isaiah 40:12-31 and rather distinguishes three separate units: verses 12-17; verses 18-26; and verses 27-31.¹³⁹

It can be said that the argument in Isaiah 40:12-31 is logical. Isaiah 40:12-31 follows a logical argument:

Begrich points out that “[i]t starts with general prepositions and moves forward to the particular and details with which he is concerned, and with a series of questions from common knowledge moving to the specifics.” (Begrich 1963:48)

Isaiah 40:12-31 should not be divided into smaller units. Scholars, who view chapter 40 as a single poem (Wilson 1986:136; cf. Schoors 1973:257-8; Spykerboer 1976:49-51; Clifford 1980:457; Torrey 1928:301-302), indicate that it has integrity as a structurally complete whole, especially when analyzing the genre and the structure of this section (Spykerboer 1976:31-32). Although only Isaiah 40:12-26 is suggested as a unit by some scholars (Schoors 1973:257-259),¹⁴⁰ most scholars take verses 12-31 as a unit. In recent

assume a single author. See <Excursus 2> A brief history on the authorship and composition of Isaiah for detail.

¹³⁹ Elliger (1978:94) indicates each unit in verses 12-17 (exc. v. 16), 18-26 (exc. vv. 19-20), and 27-31 as a *selbstständiges Disputationswort*.

¹⁴⁰ Schoors (Cf. 1973:257) recognized a large scale parallel structure in four stanzas: verses 12-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-26. He distinguished type A and B stanzas that both begin with rhetorical questions. The questions about Yahweh as creator in the A stanzas serve as argument for a second set of assertions about nations and rulers. The verses in the B stanzas serve as evidence for the initial dispute. As a unity, depicting Yahweh’s superiority to every rival, Schoors (1973:257-259; cf. Gitay 1981:83) outlines the structure of Isaiah 40:12-26 as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| A. 12-17: | a. The great creating God |
| Hymnic | b. Thus, before him the nations are nothing (Yahweh not active) |
| B. 18ff.: | b’. To whom [do you] liken God |
| | a’. For the idols are nothing (Yahweh not active) |

years, as Naidoff (1981:62) observes, “scholarly discussion of Isaiah 40:12-31 shows some unanimity among modern interpreters that this section is a unit”,¹⁴¹ of which Isaiah 40:18-20 forms a part.¹⁴² In Isaiah 40:12-31 the contrast is specifically between the idols as created being and Yahweh as creator. This analysis also confirms the integrity of the polemic against idolatry in verses 18-20 being an integral part of the unit. It can by no means be assigned to a separate redactional stratum (Wilson 1981:150).

Isaiah 40:12-31 can be divided into either two or three poetic stanzas. Gitay (1981:82; cf. Wilson 1986:138) divides it into two main parts: verses 12-26 introduces the matter which is summarized in verses 27-31, while Melugin (1976:33) analyzes it as three passages: “(1) the question: “To whom will you compare God?”; (2) a sarcastic

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- A. 21-24: a. The great creating God
 Hymnic b. Thus, he makes princes as nothing (Yahweh active)
B. 25-26: b'. To whom [do you] liken God
 a'. For he has created the star-gods (Yahweh active)

¹⁴¹ It reflects the debate over the composition of the Isaiah 40-55 as a whole. The contention on the composition of Isaiah 40:12-31 is that “it is a collection of originally independent speeches or an organic unity?” Naidoff 1981:62. For the former, see Westermann 1964:127-132; idem, 1976:46-62; the latter, Melugin 1971:326-337; 1976:31-36.

¹⁴² Spykerboer (1976:30-31) also sums up the whole passage as follows:

Yahweh is the Creator

vv. 12-17: Who can measure up to Yahweh?

The nations? They are not but a drop from a bucket, nothing and emptiness.

vv. 18-20: To whom will you liken God (El)?

The idol? It is man-made and set up so that it will not fall.

Yahweh is the sustainer

vv. 21-24: Have you not known?

God the Creator! He brings rulers to naught.

vv. 25-26: “To whom then will you liken me?”, says the Holy One.

The Star-gods? It is the mighty God, who arrays the host of heaven.

Yahweh is the redeemer

vv. 27-31: Why do you say Jacob/Israel: “My way is hid from the Lord?” Do you not know?

The everlasting God, the Creator, gives strength to those who wait for him.

At this point Watts (2005:619) says:

Who can gauge YHWH’s spirit or teach him (including four questions) (vv. 12-14)?

Not the nations (vv. 15-17)

To whom will you compare God (v. 18)?

Not the idols (vv. 19-20).

From the heavens, he is superior to rulers (vv. 21-24).

To whom will you compare the Holy One of Israel (v. 25)?

Not even the stars (v. 26)

Why is Israel unhappy (v. 27-31)?

description of idols; (3) and an imperative or interrogative appeal to remember the cultic instruction, the content of which is then given in participles like those of hymns.” Isaiah 40:12-31 must at least be read in relation with its surrounding passage, even when scholars differ among themselves on its real scope (Cf. Gitay 1981; Watts 1987).

Holter (1995:75), who divides Isaiah 40:12-31 into three stanzas, indicates that the two next stanzas in both Isaiah 40:25-27 and 40:28-31¹⁴³ show a different prosody, but are likewise intimately related in theme and rhetorical structure. Each begins with a nearly identical opening question “to whom do you liken God/me?” “The rhetorical question in verse 25, which is echoed in v. 18, highlights the incomparability of Yahweh.” (Holter 1995:75) Verses 18-20 contain a request to Israel to prohibit the representation of Yahweh by image because of the incomparability of God. This should be read in the context of verses 12-31 that deal with the covenant (Harner, 1988:152; Wilson 1976:129).¹⁴⁴

Isaiah 40:12-31 that comprises of 12-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-26 and 27-31 is a tightly structured whole as shown by compositional analysis. In the first four units, the same pattern of question and answer is followed. Although 27-31 also follows the pattern of question and answer, the theme is different with other units. Gitay (1981:83) points out that “the structure of the discourse can assist in determining the rhetorical unit. A structure of questions and responses distinguishes all parts of the discourse.” As Wilson

¹⁴³ The next stanzas in verses 18-24 are also rhetorically linked to the following stanza, so much so that Melugin (1976:33) considers verses 18-24 to be a single unit, and Clifford (1984:47) analyzes verses 18-24 and 25-31 as comparable sections. Melugin (1976:92; cf. 1971:333-334) considers verses 18-24 to be parallel to verses 25-26.

¹⁴⁴ Wilson is interested in verses 18-20 which contains a polemic against the nation’s manufacture of idols in the context of Isaiah 40:12-31.

(1986:140) indicates “the repeated interrogative pronouns **מִי** answered by repeated emphatic particles **אֵין** is the major rhetorical device which structures this stanza, and this rhetorical demarcation between initial rhetorical questions and consequent assertions will continue through the other stanzas of the same type.” Naidoff (1981:68) points out that “the questions beginning with **מִי** in verses 12-14, like their counterpart in verse 26, are rhetorical in the strict sense of the word: they merely assert what is already known to the listeners, and is the basis for the conclusion in verses 15-17.” In the first stanza of verses 12-17, a series of questions begins and answer are given whether “their answer(s) are God (v. 12) or no one (vv. 13-14), the purpose of these questions is to illustrate God’s sovereign and independent creative power, to act without anyone’s help or advice” (Wilson 1986:140; cf. Spykerboer 1976:33; Schoors 1973:248). In verses 15-17 a conclusion, introduced by **אֵין** follows, depicting “the relatively paltry scale of the nations in comparison to Yahweh” (Wilson 1986:140). In spite of this self-evident reply, another answer is immediately given in verse 15-17. According to Gitay (1981:83), “the repetition of the refrain (v. 18, 25) holds the unit together; verse 15 and verse 17 relate to verse 23 and verse 24; and the whole passages from verses 21-24 relates to the concluding passage, verses 28-31. Thus verse 21 is parallel to verse 28, and verse 23 relates to verse 29. But while in verse 23 God appears as the mighty and powerful One, in verse 29 God encourages Israel.”

How, then, do verses 18-20 function within the context of verses 12-31? Isaiah 40:12-31 opens with a chain of rhetorical questions (vv. 12-14). These rhetorical questions are mostly introduced by the interrogative pronoun **מִי** “who” with a negative force, due to

the negative answer implied by the question (Labuschagne 1966:18).¹⁴⁵ A striking feature of Isaiah 40:12-31 is the accumulation of rhetorical questions throughout this pericope. According to O’Connell (1994:163), “a disposition of consolation in Isaiah 40:1-11 shifts suddenly to one of disputation, beginning with the cluster of insinuating rhetorical questions that introduces Isaiah 40:12-41:7.” The use of the rhetorical question **מִי** “who” is seen in the broader context of Isaiah 40:18-20 as well as in Isaiah 40:18 (O’Connell, 1994:163).¹⁴⁶ As Holter (1996:60; cf. Köhler 1923:62-63; Gordis 1932-33: 212-217; Held 1969:71-79; Melugin 1971:332-333; Terrien 1966:304f.) points out “the one way to get a grip on the structure of Isaiah 40:12-31 is to proceed from its questions.” **מִי** is found in verses 12, 13, 14, 18, 25, and 26.¹⁴⁷ Rhetorical questions

¹⁴⁵ The alliteration of the sound **מ**, which is repeated five times in verse 12: **מִי מִיּוֹם וְשָׁמַיִם הָרִים בְּמַאֲזָנֵיהֶם** ties the verse together. The prophet repeats not only the sound **מ** of the **מִי** but also the sound **ש**, which is one of the strongest consonants. He does so in order to focus the attention and to strengthen the impact of the question. They are **שֶׁעָלוּ שָׁמַיִם בְּשֵׁלֶשׁ וְשִׁקְלָה** (Gitay 1981:89). An interrogative style dominates the heart of the scene from verses 12-29, but underneath this are several units of a different genre that Melugin calls a disputation speech (Watts 2005:620). Verses 12-17 consists of a series of rhetorical questions (vv. 12-14) and concluding assertions (Schoors 1973:247) twice introduced by **וְהִנֵּה**, (Watts 2005: 620). Melugin (1997:32) has noted that this disputation form also occurs in Exodus 4:11 and 2 Kings 18:35. The latter is particularly interesting in light of the close connection between this passage, Isaiah 36:20 and the ideas and forms that have shaped the Vision (Watt 2005:620).

¹⁴⁶ In the wider context, this use of **מִי** “who” can be seen clearer. O’Connell (1994:163) makes a schema to represent the complex frameworking of this ‘disputational complex’ as follows:

- aa: Incomparability of YHWH’s power and council in creation [concentric] (40:12-14) 2x **מִי** / 1x **אֲתֵּי-מִי**
 - b : Insignificance of the nations before YHWH [concentric] (40:15-17)
- a: Incomparability of YHWH to crafted idols [concentric] (40:18-20) 1x **וְאֵל-מִי**
 - bb: YHWH’s power to subjugate world kingdoms [complex frame] (40:21-24)
- a’: Incomparability of YHWH the creator [to crafted idols] (40:25) 1x **וְאֵל-מִי**
- aa’: Incomparability of YHWH’s creative decree in the heavens (40:26) 1x **מִי / וְקִרְאָהוּ**
 - axis**: YHWH’s protest against accusations of covenant disregard (40:27)
 - bb’: YHWH’s power and knowledge available to his people [complex frame] (40:28-31)
 - b’: YHWH’s summons to trial of impotent nations (41:1)
- aa’: Incomparability of YHWH’s decree as lord of history (41:2) 1x **מִי / וְקִרְאָהוּ**
 - bb’’: YHWH’s power to subjugate world kingdoms (41:2b-3)
- aa’’: Incomparability of YHWH’s decree as lord of history (41:4) 1x **מִי / קִרְאָהוּ**
 - b’ Impotence of the nations against YHWH (41:5-6)
 - a’’: Impotence of crafted idols (41:7)

In this section, rhetorical questions are posed eight times with the interrogative **מִי** (O’Connell 1994:165).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. also **מִה** in verse 18.

often tend to occur in series, and they are therefore interesting from a compositional point of view.¹⁴⁸

Holter (1995:61-62) shows how the rhetorical questions are organized within verses 12-31,¹⁴⁹ and what the relationship between these questions and the passages in them is.

The questions are grouped into three groups by Holter (1995:60):

- A) מִי -questions, emphasizing Yahweh as creator in vv. 12, 13, 14, 26.
- B) מִי - and מִהָּ -questions, emphasizing the incomparability of Yahweh in vv. 18, 18, 25
- C) אֵלֹהֵי -and אֱלֹהִים -questions, emphasizing Israel's knowledge of Yahweh in vv. 21, 21, 21, 21, 28, 28

The section of Isaiah 40:18-20 commences with a *waw* which connects it with the previous passage and which brings out the contrast to the narratives in the last verse (Spykerboer 1976:35).¹⁵⁰ As Spykerboer (1976:35, 36) points out, verse 17 and verse 18 are connected by a *waw*, which precedes the interrogative and thus commence a speech which is already in progress, increase the force of the rhetorical question that follows. In Isaiah 40:18, it commences a new section that is an integral part of the larger composition of Isaiah 40:12-31 (Spykerboer 1976:36). The preceding passage, verses

¹⁴⁸ Watson gives examples of three (e.g. Jr 2:14, 31) to as many as sixteen (Job 40:24-31) rhetorical questions in a row; this tendency to occur in series is mostly interpreted as originating from wisdom circles, and in the Old Testament this feature is represented in a striking number in Job. See especially Job 38, which is almost entirely made up of rhetorical questions. Several exegetes see wisdom influence behind the series of rhetorical questions in Isaiah 40:12-31. Cf. Melugin 1971:332-333; Terrien 1965(1966):304f.

¹⁴⁹ Holter (1995:61-62) interprets this pericope of Isaiah 40:12-31 according to the following pattern:

	A	/	B	/	C	/	ab	/	c
1) Rhetorical questions	12-14	/	18	/	21	/	25-26	/	28
[2] Self-evident answer, unexpressed]									
3) Replies	15-17	/	19-20	/	22-24	/	26-27	/	28-31

¹⁵⁰ According to Spykerboer, the *waw* is often used to create a contrast between what precedes and what follows, at the same time introducing a question.

12-17 opens with three rhetorical “who”-questions (vv. 12-14). Even though they have different structures and wordings, they seem to act as one single question, “who is like Yahweh.” The self-evident answer is “[n]o-one but Yahweh himself!” (Holter 1995:71; Labuschagne 1966:27; Naidoff 1981:30).¹⁵¹ Some interpreters have discussed the issue whether the questions in 40:12-14 actually request similar answers to those in following section. Some scholars argue that the answer to the question in verse 12 is “Yahweh”, while the questions in verses 13-14 require the answer “no-one” (North 1964:83-84). Others believe that the answer is “no-one” in all of these cases (Westermann 1976:44). However, since verse 12 concerns typical creation figures, it is difficult to see how the answer could be anything else but “Yahweh” (Holter 1995:71). Verse 12 forms the introduction to a longer discussion on the incomparability of Yahweh (vv. 12-31), and the opening questions, “who measured...?”, demand a presentation of the incomparable Yahweh. The questions in verses 13-14 reflect the same pattern (Holter 1995:71; cf. Labuschagne 1966:27; Naidoff 1981:69).

After Israel and the nations are shown to be incomparable to God in verse 15-17, a vignette of idol-making follows the challenging question of verse 18 (Clifford 1980 :459). The relation between verses 12-17 and verse 18 is thus very close (Spykerboer 1976:38). Isaiah 40:18-20 can be seen as the final conclusion of Isaiah 40:12-17, that is, the nations and their gods are nothing (Spykerboer 1976:37).¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ According to Labuschagne, rhetorical questions expressing Yahweh’s incomparable acts, have as their obvious answer, “none but Yahweh alone”. In his critique on Labuschagne, Naidoff argues that “it is difficult to imagine Yahweh teaching himself.” But, as Holter points out, “the questions are rhetorical, and their point is not that Yahweh teaches or consults himself, but to emphasize that the only being comparable with Yahweh is Yahweh himself.”

¹⁵² On the authenticity of Isaiah 40:19-20, see the argument in Spykerboer (1976:38-42).

Naidoff (1981:67-68) points out that verse 18 deals with the incomparability of God. The same happens in verses 21-24 and verses 25-26. Each time, a set of questions is followed by new questions which begin in verses 21, 26aa, and 28aa. These questions are rhetorical, since they serve to make emphatic assertions which should be obvious to the listeners. This second set of questions is then followed by hymnic passages which can be seen as implicitly answering the questions, “Can anything be compared with God?” Verses 19-20 serves as theological reply to the rhetorical questions put in verse 18 in the same way as verses 15-17 and 22-24 are theological replies to the questions in verses 12-14 and 21 respectively, although basically the rhetorical questions are answered already (Holter 1995:77-78). The ending of each verse is also in parallel, like the first two words of verse 19 and verse 20 are paralleled to each other (Williamson 1987:14f; Korpel 1991:220-221). This external parallel suggests that the prophet deliberately chose ambiguous verbs for his description of the “creative” process of making an image to let his audience savour the irony (Korpel 1991:221). What is not said explicitly in Isaiah 40:19-20, but is implied, is that idols, like the nations in the previous passage Isaiah 40:12-17 and the rulers in Isaiah 40:21-24 are nothing or less than nothing (Spykerboer 1976:45). The answer, of course, is “No”. Thus these sections, verse 18-20, verses 21-24 and verse 25-26, do stand out as complete, self-contained disputations, whose purpose is to demonstrate the incomparability of God. Moreover, in terms of the hidden question with which all of verses 12-26 is concerned, “[i]s Yahweh able to help?”, an implied answer is also found in the references to the “rulers” in verses 23-24 and to the astral deities in verse 26 (Naidoff 1981:25).¹⁵³

¹⁵³ This analysis of verse 21-24 differs from that given above. The difference depends on what one views as the issue in dispute. If the issue is “Can anything be compared to God?”, then all of verses 22-24 serve as the conclusion. If the issue is, “Can Yahweh save, specifically from the power of foreign rulers?” the conclusion is not reached until verse 23 (or 24). It is suggested here that this ambiguity is an intentional result of the present arrangement of the sections. Verse 18 and verses 21-24 refer primarily to God’s

As Naidoff (1981:68) observes, when the three sections are placed side by side, a parallel structure emerges:

	18 + 21-24	25-26	27-31
statement of issue	18	25	27
Basis	21	26aαb	28-29
Conclusion	22-24	26aβb	30-31

The verses of Isaiah 40: 18 + 21-24 form a self-contained disputation, which seeks to prove (as the statement of issue in verse 18 makes clear) the incomparability of God (Naidoff 1981:72).

It would seem that verses 12-17, 18-20, 21-24 and 25-26 each forms a self-contained disputation intended to prove something about the transcendent nature of God - his immeasurability or incomparability.

Holter (1995:77) suggests the following structure for verses 12-31:

Rhetorical question	/	Reply
vv. 12-14: Who is like Yahweh	/	vv. 15-17: The nations are as nothing before Yahweh.
v. 18: To whom will you compare God?	/	vv. 19-20: As for an idol -a craftsman casts it
v. 21: Do you not know?	/	vv. 22-24: The inhabitants of the earth and the rulers of the nations-are nothing before Yahweh.
v. 25: To whom will you compare me?	/	vv. 26: Lift your eyes and look to the heavens?

incomparability; in the larger context they serve as an assurance of Yahweh's power to save.

vv. 27-28: Why do you say, O Jacob and / vv. 29-31: He gives strength to the weary
complain, O Israel

4.1.2.2 The structural features of the passages dealing with rhetorical question followed
by idol-fabrication within Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 40:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7

The structure of Chapters 40-66 is studied by form criticism, with its tendencies toward atomization (Oswalt 1998:12; cf. Merrill 1987:24-43). Since Duhm, scholars widely accept that chapters 40-66 contain two independent books: Chapters 40-55 and chapters 56-66. The unity of chapters 40-55 can, however, be indicated in terms of style, theme, organization, and so on (Oswalt 1998:12).¹⁵⁴ Although some scholars assume that Isaiah 40-55 is composed using different sources, it is concurred that the text in its present form shows fairly clear lines of an argument, at least through the first half of chapters 40-55. The texts exhibit a high level of coherence and continuity. There are also indications of large-scale artistic arrangements of some themes, as shown in that Isaiah 40:1-11 and 40:12-31 are dual introductions to what follows, namely Isaiah 41:1-49:4 (Watts 1987:621). Gitay (1981:128, 193, 287, 398) has made an exhaustive study of Isaiah 40-48 from a rhetorical-critical standpoint. O'Connell (1994:149) also indicates that Isaiah 40-55 forms a theological unity with the rhetoric of the covenant disputation that governs the book of Isaiah. Thus scholars points out the unity of Isaiah 40-55. O'Connell (1994:152) suggests that the overall repetition pattern that governs Isaiah 40-55 shows it to be the structural, as well as the rhetorical climax of the whole book of Isaiah. O'Connell (1994:149-154) shows that a schema represents the complex

¹⁵⁴ For the study of the unity of Isaiah 40-55, see Muilenburg 1956:381-773; Westermann 1964:92-170; Lack 1973; Bonnard 1972:23; Melugin 1976:63, 175; Merendino 1981:571-572.

framework of this ‘disputational complex’ in Isaiah 40-55 as well as that of Isaiah 40:18-20. In Isaiah 40-55, as O’Connell (1994:149-214) shows, Isaiah 40:18-20 is located in the context of the rhetoric of a prophetic covenant disputation of Isaiah 40-55 that is comprised of major sections and subsections.

As Holter (1993:63-64) points out, within Isaiah 40-55, the pattern of a rhetorical question emphasizing the incomparability of Yahweh, followed by an idol-fabrication passage, is no exception, but actually the way in which all four idol-fabrication passages, Isaiah 40:18-20, 41:1-7, 44:9-20 and 46:5-7 are introduced, with the structure of the *”*question.

- The relation of the proclamation of God’s incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 41:1-7

Although there is an old exegetical tradition of rejecting the authenticity and present position of Isaiah 41:6-7. Holter (1995:116) points out how these two verses actually function in their present literary context. There is two of the major problem in dealing with Isaiah 41:6-7. First, whether Isaiah 41:6-7 originates from Second Isaiah, and secondly, the actual placing of these two verses. Scholars are divided about the place and authenticity of verses 6-7. There are also questions about whether verse 5 belongs to verses 1-4 or opens a new unit followed by verses 6-7. Duhm (1902:253-265) was the first to suggest that verses 6-7 are out of place in the present context, and that their original context is Isaiah 40:19-20. Baltzer (2001:87) insists that the text of 41:1-5a can be viewed as separate unit. He points out that the beginning (v.1) and ending (v. 5a) of

the unit all talk about the “islands” and “nations”. But according to Melugin (1976:93), the transfer of verses 6-7 behind Isaiah 40:19 is arbitrary, as well as assumption that verse 5 is secondary because these three verses are integral to the structure and intention of the poem Gitay (1984:103; Spykerboer 1976:59-60; Muilenburg 1956:452) suggests that verses 5-7 have to be read together as an ironical response to God’s deeds and historical domination expressed in verses 1-4.

Gitay (1984:99; cf. Smart 1965:65) points out that the addressee of this address is the people of Israel.¹⁵⁵ Isaiah arouses his addressee’s curiosity by speaking about a trial between God and the nations. A question is then asked: “Who has aroused (him)...?” (v. 2a) (Baltzer 2001:87). These questions are reminiscent of the series of questions: “Who...? Whom...?” (וַיִּשְׁאֵל) in the previous chapter. Two questions are then asked: “Who has aroused (him)...?” (v. 2a) and “Who has done (this)?” (v. 4a). The answer is given in verse 4 in hymnic predictions: it is Yahweh himself who has acted. The text of verses 1-5 is therefore relatively self-contained, but is also linked with its context (Baltzer 2001:87).

What is, then, the relationship between the trial depicted in Isaiah 41:1-4 and the following idol-fabrication passage in verses 5-7? (Holter 1995:116). According to Holter (1995:117), there are two features in the trial. First, this particular passage is placed in contexts where they are preceded by rhetorical וַיִּשְׁאֵל-questions, which emphasize

¹⁵⁵ According to Gitay (1984:99), Isaiah’s use of the device of rhetorical question already at the beginning of the unit, that is, at verse 2, indicates that he assumes that his audience understands his arguments even though they are only hinted at. Such a device can be utilized only in front of addressees who do not need to be introduced to the details of the subject, that is, people who actually share the speaker’s opinions but for some reason ignore them. These people cannot, therefore, be the nations, but the people of Israel themselves.

the incomparability of Yahweh (Holter 1995:117). The contextual feature is hardly accidental, and it seems reasonable to take verse 2 and verse 4, in which the **מַה**-questions appear and are replied to in the Isaiah 41:5-7 (Holter 1995:117). God's incomparability is also stressed and contrasted with the vivid description of the idols (vv. 5-7) (Spykerboer 1976:59-60; Melugin 1956:452). Hence, Isaiah presents in the introduction the heart of his argument (Gitay 1981:103).¹⁵⁶

Holter (1995:117) charts its structure as follows:

- a) Rhetorical **מַה**-question (v. 2a and v. 4a): “Who stirred up Cyrus?...” and “who has done this?”
- [b) Self-evident answer: unexpressed]
- c) Reply (vv. 5-7): “The islands have seen it...” and “The idol-fabricators...”

This pattern from Isaiah 40:12-31 also makes sense here in Isaiah 41:1-7. The idol-fabrication passage then acts as an ironical reply to the preceding rhetorical questions (Holter 1995:117). Isaiah 41:1-7 is preceded by symmetrically framed rhetorical questions which emphasize the incomparability of Yahweh (Holter 1995:117). The introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct dealing with

¹⁵⁶ Cicero (*De Oratore*, 2. 318, 313-314 cited by Gitay 1981:103) stressed as follow: “The opening passage in a speech must not be drawn from some outside source but from the very heart of the case... for the situation demands that the anticipation of the audience should be gratified as quickly as possible, and it is not satisfied at the start, a great deal more work has to be put in during the remainder of the proceedings, for a case is in a bad way which does not seem to become stronger as soon as it begins to be stated. Consequently as in the choice of speaker the best man on each occasion should come first, so in argument of the speech the strongest point should come first.”

the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God clearly figures in the passages of Isaiah 41:1-7.

- The relation of the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 44:6-20

The compositional unit, Isaiah 44:6-23 frames a polemic against idolatry (vv. 9-20) with an inclusion formed by a trial speech (vv. 6-8) and a concluding word of assurance with its attendant hymn (vv. 21-22, 23) (Wilson 1986:162).¹⁵⁷ The idol-fabrication passage (Is 44:9-20) is preceded by a presentation of Yahweh as the lord of the history (Is. 44:6-8), and is followed by a presentation of Israel as the servant of Yahweh (Is 44:21-23) (Holter 1995:190). Nearly all recent commentators have denied these verses to the corpus of Isaiah 40-55. On the one hand, the authenticity of Isaiah 44:9-20 has often been disputed; even Muilenburg (1966:505) defers and considers these verses, if the work of the prophets, to be out of context (Westermann 1969:145-146; Elliger 1978, 414-416). On the other hand, Spykerboer (1976:116-118), Clifford (1984:450-464) and Preuss (1971:208-215) have recently defended the authenticity of Isaiah 44:9-20 in its present context. It has thematic similarities to the other idol polemics in Isaiah 40-55, just discussed, which are clearly of a piece with their longer compositional units (Wilson 1986:163).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ With this delimitation Holter (1995:190) says that there is major break between Isaiah 44:23 and 24. Even interpreters who generally acknowledge the larger structures of Isaiah 40-55 usually take Isaiah 44:24 as the opening of a new unit (Muilenburg 1956:516ff; Clifford 1984:114ff; Watts 2005:147ff.)

¹⁵⁸ While BH3 and the RSV render it in prose, most exegetes now recognize it as verse. Its vocabulary and prosody is consistent with that of Deutero-Isaiah. According to Holter (1995:190), from a formal critical point of view, Isaiah 44:6-23 is usually taken as consisting of four more or less independent units; verses 6-8 is a trial speech between Yahweh and the nations, verses 9-20 is a satire on idol-fabrication, verses 21-22 is an exhortation, and verse 23 is a brief hymn. Westermann (1969:112-116) claims that verses 6-8 and 21-22 should be joined together to form one unit, following a suggestion going back to Duhm (1968:305-306, 310-311). Schoors (1973:232-233) and Melugin (1976:118-122) places a greater

On the unity of Isaiah 44:6-23, even scholars who admit the unity of Isaiah 44:9-20 by Deutero-Isaiah's authorship treat verses 9-20 as separate, unconnected to verses 6-8 and 22-23 (Clifford 1984:110). Yet Clifford (1984:110) points out that there is a single idea expressed in the passages that is genuinely Deutero-Isaianic. According to Clifford (1984:110), the double relationship "Yahweh: Israel:: the gods (or their images): the nations", seen already in Isaiah 41:1-42:9, appears here also.

From a structural point of view there are some differences between these two passages which frame verses 9-20 (Holter 1995:191). The first passage, verses 6-8, is characterized by a series of three rhetorical questions, introduced by the interrogative pronoun *מִי*, or the interrogative particle *הֲ* as in *הֲלֹא* and *הֲיִשׁ*, and all with references to "I" i.e. Yahweh (Holter 1995:191). The latter passage, verses 21-23, is characterized by a series of five imperatives. The first two (vv. 21-22) are in the singular - addressing Israel, and the three later ones (v. 23) are in the plural - addressing the heavens, the depths of the earth, and the mountains (Holter 1995:191-192). Common to both groups is that the imperatives in four of five cases are followed by *כִּי*-sentences (Holter 1995:192). There is a structural parallelism between these two passages (vv. 6-9 and 22-23) and the one in between them (vv. 9-20) (Holter 1995:192).¹⁵⁹

emphasis on the ability of these two units to stand alone. Holter (1995:190) points out Rhetorical critics tend rather to emphasize the unity and larger structure of Isaiah 44:6-23. Muilenburg (1966: 505-510) chooses to take verses 6-8 and 21-23 as one poem, "Yahweh glorifies himself in Israel", but is rather uncertain about the present position of verses 9-20. Clifford (1984:107-113) takes this unit as dealing with the ancient idea that each nation reflects the virtue of its patron deity and maker. Gitay (1981:155-176) interprets Isaiah 40-48 according to the classical rhetorical scheme and takes vv. 6-23 as the "refutation" (vv. 6-20) and "epilogue" (vv. 21-23) of the larger rhetorical unit Isaiah 43:14-44:23. Wilson (1986:178-181) also takes verses 6-8 and 21-22 as Second Isaiah's frame around the "pre-existing" verses 9-20.

¹⁵⁹ While Holter says these parallels between Isaiah 41:1-16 and 44:6-23 are interesting, since they place the second (41:6-7) and the third (44:9-20) idol-fabrication passage, they can be also interesting in point that this structure shows us the first and second commandment construct, that is, the relation between the

What is, then, the relationship between the incomparability of Yahweh in verses 6-8 and the following idol-fabrication passage in verses 9-20?¹⁶⁰ According to Holter (1995:195), “an important feature is emphasizing of Yahweh’s incomparability with the help of a rhetorical **מִי**-question. The interrogative questions beginning with **מִי** enter into larger series because the interrogative **מִי** tends to occur in groups within Isaiah 40-55. Here the function of **מִי**-questions is to relate the incomparability of Yahweh to idol (Holter 1995:195; Watt 2001:140-141).¹⁶¹ The **מִי**-question is appeared in verse 7 in the Isaiah 44:6-8.¹⁶² Holter (1995:196) represents its structure as follows:

- a) Rhetorical **מִי**-question (v. 7): “Who is like me?”
- [b) Self-evident answer: unexpressed]
- c) Reply (vv. 9-20): “Those who make idol...”

Yahweh begins with the claim that he alone is God, stated in self-praise hymn style (v. 6). The issue under disputes then becomes apparent in the question introduced by **מִי**: “who is like me?” (v. 7) A summons to trial follows, in which Yahweh challenges his

incomparability of God and the way of worship.

¹⁶⁰ Although whether these passages within the present literary context are authentic part of Isaiah 40-55 or not is discussed, this study will not enter the discussion, and give a brief survey of the major argument.

¹⁶¹ In the cases of the passages to deal with relation between God’s incomparability and Isaiah’s idol fabrication critique, this is common and similar.

¹⁶² According to Holter (1995:195), a possible to the rhetorical question in verse 7a could found in verse 7aβ. “MT here reads **מִי מֵעוֹלָם אֲדַעֲבֶנְךָ וְאֲדַעֲבֶנְךָ**, “from my placing an eternal people and things to come”, a saying which many interpreters find rather odd. The MT is therefore often emended to **מִי מֵעוֹלָם אֲדַעֲבֶנְךָ**, “who proclaimed from of old the things to come?; This suggestion obviously makes the text smoother and it would be fit well into my interpretation. But it is not absolutely necessary, since the MT also makes sense here” Watts (2001:141) says: “when all is said and done, a direct translation of MT remains the most satisfactory.”

opponents to present their case by declaring what is to come (v. 7). Thus Yahweh appeals to common Israelite belief concerning his ability to declare the future as they have experienced his power in the past. It is their experience of the effectiveness of his word that they are summoned to as witness (v. 8).

Isaiah 44:9-20 is situated in a context where it acts as an ironical reply to the question of whom can be compared with Yahweh. “who is like me?”, Yahweh says, and a highly ironical reply is suggested: “Could it be the idol-fabricator? (Holter 1995:196). Idol-fabricators seem to act as representatives of the nations (Holter 1995:196).¹⁶³

The emphasis of Yahweh’s incomparability by means of a rhetoric מִי-שֶׁמִּי-יִשְׁוֶה question in 44:6-8 is a common feature, which features also in the texts preceding the two other idol-fabrication passage, Isaiah 40:18 and 41:5. Like the two previous passages, Isaiah 40:19-20 and 41:6-7, Isaiah 44:9-20 acts as an ironical reply to the question: who can be compared with Yahweh (“Who is like me?” and “Could it be the idol-fabricators?”) (Cf. Holter 1995:196-199).¹⁶⁴

We can also infer the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct in Isaiah 44:6-20 showing God’s incomparability reinforced by capability to

¹⁶³ Holter (1995:196) suggests two arguments in favour of such an interpretation. First, actual wording of the rhetorical question in 44:7, מִי-שֶׁמִּי-יִשְׁוֶה is attested only three times elsewhere in the Old Testament, e.g. Nm 6:11; 49:19; 50:44. In two of these cases, that is, Jr 49:19 and 50:44 we can find out there seems to be an Old Testament tradition of comparing Yahweh and political powers linked to the expression, מִי-שֶׁמִּי-יִשְׁוֶה. Secondly, this interpretation of the מִי-שֶׁמִּי-יִשְׁוֶה in verse 7 is further strengthened by the use of the key word “witness” in verse 8 and verse 9; a key word binding verses 6-8 and 9-20 together. Two different kind of witnesses are depicted here, “my” and “their” witness. The witnesses depicted in verse 8 – are Israel. In verse 9 witnesses of an entirely different kind are depicted. Verse 10f. depicts the gods and idols as witness of the idol-fabricators (Holter 1995:197-199).

¹⁶⁴ In regard to this question in 44:6-20, we can point out arguments in favor of such an interpretation in the history of argument.

witness Himself, otherwise idol as a witness of nation cannot witness, and the following idol-fabrication passage.

- The relation of the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 46:5-7

The fourth and final idol-fabrication passage within Isaiah 40-55 has also been questioned with regard to its authorship. Form critics have usually separated verse 5 from verses 1-4. Many modern commentators consider some, or all of these to be later insertion. But there is no textual support for this position, and other scholars have asserts with equal assurance that some, or all of the passages are integral to the literary, or logical, structure of the passages (Oswalt 1998:231). A further reason why some doubt the authenticity of verses 5-7 is that verses 1-4 seem to distinguish between the deity and the idol, while verses 5-7 (and the other anti-idolatrous polemics) do not (Oswalt 1985:123). There is a strong exegetical tradition of rejecting this idol-fabrication passage also as the work of the prophet Isaiah. And also the arguments produced *pro et contra* authenticity are more or less the same (Merendino 1981:472; Duhm 1968 325-326). Critics also separate verse 5 from verses 6-7 as in other passages: Isaiah 40:18-20, 41:5-7 and 44:6-20. In the opening statement in verse 5 the writer reminds the reader of the language of Isaiah 40:18 (Oswalt 1998:231). To reinforce the foolishness of any attempt at comparison, the prophet launches into the fourth, and last, of his *exposés* of the inner contradictions of idolatrous worship (vv. 6-7) (Oswalt 1998:231). Most important here is the common concentration in verses 4 and 5 on the "I" of Yahweh (Holter 1995:223). In verse 4 Yahweh presents himself as יְיָ no fewer

than five times, thereby clearly emphasizing his own role *vis-à-vis* Israel. And this is then followed up in verse 5, where two of the verbs are suffixed with the corresponding ׀ (Holter 1995:223). Another argument for reading Isaiah 46:1-4 and 5 together, is that the obvious contrasting of Isaiah 46:1-2 vs. 3-4 logically leads to a question like the ones in verse 5 (Holter 1995:223). However, this questioning of the “authenticity” of verses 6-7 has been countered by several recent commentators (Mullenburg 1966:540; Preuss 1971:220; Spykerboer 1976:146-147; Beuken 1979:262-263; Wilson 1986:161; cf. Holter 1995:223).

The rhetorical questions of verse 5a and 5b serve several purposes. These questions introduce this section of the poem in much the same way as the imperatives of the section (Franke 1994:89). They also set the stage for the following scene by implying that there is no one to whom God can be compared (Franke 1994:89). The entire section is united by the fact that the answer to the questions is provided in verse 7: idols cannot be compared to the God of Israel, because they cannot move, answer or save (Franke 1994:89).

Another feature that unites this section is the development of the scene in chronological order. It begins, after the rhetorical questions, with the extravagant people digging in their purses for money, which is then weighed out on a scale. Next they hire a smith, who makes an idol that they proceed to worship. After they lift the idol on their shoulders, bear it away, and then set it down in the place where it is to stand. The people who are making and worshipping idols have been identified (Franke 1994:89).

What is, then, the relationship between Isaiah 46:5 and 6-7? According to Holter (1995:224), two points must be noticed: first, an important feature is the emphasizing of Yahweh's incomparability with the help of a rhetorical "לֹא-שִׁוּי" question in verse 5 as in Isaiah 46:5-7, closely echoing the one in 40:18. Holter (1995:224) represents its structure as follows:

- a) Rhetorical "לֹא-שִׁוּי" question (v. 5): "To Whom will you liken me?"
- [b) Self-evident answer: (unexpressed): "No-one"]
- c) Ironic Reply (vv. 6-7): "Those who pours out gold..."

In Isaiah 46:5-7 appearing in the context of Isaiah 46:3-13 we can also find the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct. Followed by idol-fabrication passage (Is 46:6-7), God's incomparability contained in the rhetorical question (Is 46:5) makes the fabrications to be a reply to its question.

4.1.2.3 The structural features of Isaiah as a whole

Discovering what current literary patterns govern Isaiah as a whole and thereby give it unity, coherence and rhetorical emphasis is to explain something of the rhetorical interrelationships among the various sections of the book as they relate to the whole.

(O'Connell 1994:17).¹⁶⁵ The rhetorical structure of Isaiah as a whole will supply the

¹⁶⁵ To explain patterns of repetition in the book some scholars propose that the unity of Isaiah's message derives from 'reciprocal relationships' between the amalgamated collections of chapters 1-39, 40-55 and 56-66. O'Connell (1994:19; cf. Childs 1979:317; 325-338; 1984: 66-70; Barr 1983:75-104; 158-162)) points out that the tendency to attribute such a unity to the hand producing "a diachronic synthesis of allegedly diverse 'Isaianic' literary traditions, whose leveling of alleged diachronic distinctions, out of concern for the final ('canonical') form of the text, highlights his departure from hermeneutical axiom of

hint to the question of rhetorical function, which is addressed in some passages as a section of the whole book. The question of formal patterning seeks to make an advance on the problem of determining what sets of genre conventions might account for the rhetoric implied by the form of the entire book of Isaiah as an integrated entity (O'Connell 1994:19), not limited to the one or at most two of the three major section of the book of Isaiah.

O'Connell (1994:19-20) says that the rhetoric of the book is closest to that of prophetic covenant disputation, suggesting that the book best manifests its structural unity, thematic coherence and rhetorical emphasis when read as an example of the prophetic covenant disputation genre, by which the major sections and subsections of Isaiah can be seen to cohere. The pattern of repetition of formal structure of Isaiah, which almost always frame a central axis, may involve two-, three-, fourfold repetitions that combine to make up complex framework configuration (O'Connell 1994:20). According to O'Connell (1994:20), the book of Isaiah is arranged, with transitional materials (i.e. 2:6αβ, 22; 12:1-6), into a continuous development of the themes and elements that make up the book's rhetoric of prophetic covenant disputation, comprising seven main sections: an exordium (1:1-2:5), two structurally analogous accusatory threats of judgment (2:6γ-21 and 3:1-4:1), denouncing cultic sins social crimes respectively, two structurally analogous schemes for the punishment and restoration of Zion and the nations (4:2-11:16; 13:1-39:8), an exoneration of Yahweh (40:1-54:17) and a final ultimatum, which again appeals for the covenant reconciliation (55:1-66:24). Isaiah's exordium (1:1-2:5) appears to be a truncated version of the biblical covenant disputation

historical criticism that 'a biblical book could only be properly understood when interpreted in the light of its original historical setting'."

form and an aggregate of rhetorical elements typical of ancient Near Eastern and biblical covenant disputation forms aligns with the rhetorical strategy of the book of Isaiah as a whole (O’Connell 1994:21).¹⁶⁶

This study follows O’Connell’s (1994:242) conclusion that “the book of Isaiah presents the structural unity, logical coherence and rhetorical emphasis that one should expect of a literary entity composed under the controlling conventions of single literary genre can be drawn.” Main sections of the book of Isaiah have been arranged according to a strategy whereby they present progressively rhetorical elements that are germane to and cohere under the rubric of a biblical covenant disputation (O’Connell 1994:242).¹⁶⁷

<Excursus 2> A brief history on the authorship and composition of Isaiah

The traditional view on the authorship and composition of the book of Isaiah is that a single author wrote it, namely, Isaiah, יְשַׁעְיָהּ, (Kitchen 2003:377),¹⁶⁸ and composed it, during his life time (Cf. Oswalt 1986:4).¹⁶⁹ “[A]s far as the book of Isaiah is taken to be one undivided

¹⁶⁶ These explicit examples of a strategy such as disputation against the people (3:13-14aa; cf. 27:8; 45:9; 57:16), vindication his servant before the people in 49:25 and 50:8, and vindication his people before the nations (51:22; cf. 2:4; 41:11) in Isaiah to portray YHWH in covenant disputation may lend further support that it is the genre of covenant disputation that best defines the controlling rhetoric strategy of the book, even though the book contains a variety of speech forms, which would not normally be associated with a covenant disputation form (O’Connell 1994:21).

¹⁶⁷ “It is difficult to imagine that all the various parts of these sections came to be compiled or even composed by a single author into their present arrangement apart from the control of a single rhetorical-structural design” (O’Connell 1994:243).

¹⁶⁸ Kitchen indicates that the third person singular in which each book of prophecy in the Old Testament is casted can be in accord with the common ancient Near Eastern usage of several classes of literature. Three basic elements can be seen in such titles: the prophet’s name (always), his status (sometimes), and a date line (mostly).

¹⁶⁹ The authorial unity of Isaiah, especially by a single author, comes from a theory of divine inspiration, which *named* an individual writer, rather than texts (Cf. Blenkinsopp 2002:69). It can be pointed out that as Blenkinsopp (2002:69) observes, “the concept did not therefore allow for the possibility, which to most scholars must seem theologically unexceptionable, that there could be inspired biblical authors who were

composition from one author, the issue of its formation, *a fortiori* the formation of anyone part of it, therefore, could not be and was not raised.” (Blenkinsopp 2002:69). The position of the traditional view is, however, challenged and replaced by multiple authorship, by two or three individuals or groups. Childs (1974:311ff; cf. Kitchen 2003:378, 379) observes that the interpretation of the book of Isaiah has experienced many important changes, from its unity by one author to multiple authorship, which is based on “the theory of three books in one (1-39; 40-55; 56-66), with, at least, three different dates (pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic and variations thereof) and periods of composition, and finally, down to heaps of fragments often consigned to late dates.”¹⁷⁰ In exploring the composition and extent of the macro unit, this study cannot, however, enter into the current debate concerning the composition of Isaiah, that is, whether the Book of Isaiah can be divided into two or three sections, the so-called Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah. It is enough to just mention the history of the debate briefly here. Scholars hold the view that the three sections address three quite different historical situations (Cf. Davies 2000:6). Many scholars attribute the unity of the book to an author called “Deutero-Isaiah” who lived in exilic or post-exilic times as Clements (1985:96) says: “The sixth c. Babylonian background of chapters 40-55 is so explicit that to deny its relevance for an understanding of the contents is to ask for a totally different understanding of prophecy from that which clearly pertains elsewhere in the Old Testament prophetic books.”

According to Watts (1985:xxvi), some scholars propose that chapters 40-66 belong to the time of the exile and thereafter, with the contents coming from an unknown prophet designated as Deutero-Isaiah. This anonymous prophet is distinguished from Isaiah, בְּנֵי־אֱמוּנָה, whose speeches are considered typically to be restricted to chapters 1-39. This idea was further refined by claiming that Deutero-Isaiah was limited to chapter 40-55, with chapters 56-66 continuing a third corpus ascribed to Trito-Isaiah.¹⁷¹

anonymous.” No scholar insists that the text of Isaiah was inspired by an anonymous author. It is argued that there are two or three authors, who were not inspired.

¹⁷⁰ In general, the history of Old Testament interpretation shows that the evident impossibility or absurdity scholars are confronted with, brings doubt to them and abandonment of the composition by a single author (Blenkinsopp 2001:69). For example, it is noted that Moses, author of the Pentateuch, wrote a circumstantial account of his own death and burial (Dt 34:1-12); or that Samuel, as author of the book that bears his name, wrote the phrase “and Samuel died” (1 Sm 25:1). For the book of Isaiah, thus, a writer other than Isaiah was assumed to have written about Cyrus and the Babylonian exile. The book of Isaiah is considered as one of those *Kollektivnamen* like Moses, Solomon and David and chapters 40-52 are considered to be composed during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E. As a result, the idea of one author is not maintained.

¹⁷¹ The considerable linguistic and thematic overlap of Isaiah 56-66 with 40-55 is considered to attest not to an authorial unity in terms of single authorship, but to continuity in the interpretative activity by

Such an approach leads to the atomization of the book and fragmentation.¹⁷² Thus, as Merrill (1987:24) observes, “scholars have long felt a disjunction between the material in chapters 40-55 and the following chapters, although noting that several themes and rhetorical usages connect the two units.”

There have arisen new interests and attempts to discuss the book of Isaiah as a whole (Melugin 1997:39).¹⁷³ The tendency in the approaches by critical scholars to deal with the composition

redactional hands, which differ markedly from the traditional view that defends unity in terms of single authorship (Holter 1995:11; Childs 2001:1-3; Blenkinsopp 2002: 69-71). Duhm is considered to be the first to assign chapters 56-66 to a separate author, called Trito-Isaiah. Duhm posed on different author and different time and circumstances for Trito-Isaiah. He assumed, for example, that the author of Isaiah 56-66 lived in Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah or even before Nehemiah’s administrative and religious reforms. For Isaiah 40-55’s authorship, he assumed another location somewhere in Phoenicia, approximately 540 B.C.E. by a different author, with the exception of the *Ebedlieder* (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), which were composed by another author, later than Deutero-Isaiah, but before the composition of 56-66. It was addressed to a different community that was well established, their temple had been rebuilt, the people were going about their business sacrificing, fasting, and engaging in other religious practices, and there are clear signs of internecine conflict and division.

Since Duhm, the division into Second and Third Isaiah has been generally accepted among critical scholars (Cf. Whybray 1975:196; Elliger 1928). Critical scholars (Adams 2006:8) have predominantly assumed that the book of Isaiah contains the speeches of three historical prophets from three different periods and geographical locations: Proto-/ First Isaiah (chapters 1-39), Deutero-/ Second Isaiah (chapters 40-55), and Trito-/ Third Isaiah (Chapters 56-66).

Duhm’s dating of this last section of the book has not been generally accepted nor has his insistence on its authorial unity (Cf. Blenkinsopp, 2001 Vol. III). About Duhm’s separation of 56-66 from 40-55 there are both occasional dissenters (Torrey 1928; James D. Smart, 1965), and doubters (Seitz 1992:501-507).

¹⁷² Since Ibn Ezra indirectly made the point that detaches Isaiah 40-66 from 1-39, Döderlein joined him and proposed this hypothesis for the composition of the Book of Isaiah. Gesenius also concentrated on the distinctive profile of Isaiah 40-66. For Gesenius, 40-66 was the longest of several pseudepigraphical compositions in the book, the product of one prophetic author, with his own distinctive agenda (Cf. Watts 2001:xxvi).

Duhm, however, can be considered as the scholar who “brought to bear on the text a new level of penetrating literary analysis, and his division of the book into three major parts (chapter 1-39; chapter 40-55; chapter 56-66) has been a major influence on the study of the book ever since.” According to Duhm, each larger division of the book had developed mostly independently of each other, and that only at a very late date they were joined. Since Duhm, the form critical approach assumed the distinctions in general, and interpreted each section without reference to the other, or sought to demonstrate the separateness of the sections, primarily on account of style and language (Cf. Childs 2001:2).

¹⁷³ For different discussions on the unity of the Book of Isaiah, see Steck 2000:25-26; Carr 1996:164-65.

and extent of the Book of Isaiah can be summarized as follows: “Older scholarship has stressed the disjunctures; some of the newer studies emphasize the continuity, in some cases, attributing the similarities between Isaiah 40-55 and 56-66 to a school of second Isaiah who completed the book.” (Wilson 1986:17-18; cf. Seitz 1993:264; 1996:219-40; Williamson 1995:211-265; Clements 1996:65-104; Schramm 1995:11-52; Gruber 1983:353; Sommer 1994:6-16, 311-323; Smith 1995; North 1967:9). Few authors see these evidences on the unity of the book as pointing to single authorship, rather than to explain it by redactional hands (Clements 1985:96).

The phenomenon can, however, be interpreted as “the different background[s] or division[s] of the book of Isaiah based on a lifetime’s close work [on] the book of Isaiah” as Motyer (1993:13-16) says.¹⁷⁴ As Oswalt (1986:4) points out, the unique features of Isaiah’s book, which has three different historical settings,¹⁷⁵ can be an excuse to make changes and challenges against the unity of the book as of one author.

This phenomenon can be explained under the unity of composition by one author.

It is possible to speculate with some degree of confidence on the general time frame which these chapters seem to be addressing. Chapter 40-55 seem to be offering hope to a people yet in exile, while chs. 56-66 appear to speak to a returned people who face old and new problems (Oswalt 1986:13)....although that the three main sections of the Book differ significantly can not be gainsaid (:17).

For the traditional approach, see Oswalt 1998; Motyer 1993; 1999; Vangemeren 1989:471-514. For some of the argumentation in favor of its compositional unity, see Allis 1950; Margalioth 1964; Young 1958. For the redaction critical approach, see Clements 1980; 1996a; 1996b:57-69; 1997a:3-17; 1997b:441-454; Rendtorff 1997; Sweeney 1993:141-162; 1996:50-67; 1996; Muilenburg 1956:381-773; Preuss 1971; Roth 1975:21-47. For the canonical approach, see Childs 2001; 1987:41-49; Seitz 1988:105-126; 1991; 1993; House 1998; Childs 1979:325-334. For the literary and theological unity of Isaiah, see Liebreich 1955-1956:259-277; 1956-1957:114-138; Becker 1968; Ackroyd 1978:16-48; 1980; 1982:117-129; Sweeney 1983; Evans 1988:129; Sanders 1980:180-181; Childs 1979:331; Carr 1996:188-218. For the literary approach, see Conrad 1991; 1996:315-316; 1997:3-18; 2000:109-124; Miscall 1994; Webb 1990:65-84).

¹⁷⁴ Motyer (1993:13) suggests a structure with three parts:1-37, 38-55, and 56-66, with “three portraits of a messianic king, varying in detail but based on a consistent model.”

¹⁷⁵ The historical settings can be shown as follows: “The first of these is during Isaiah’s lifetime, from 739 to 701 B.C. This time span is covered in chs.1-39. The second and third periods are long after Isaiah’s death. They are the periods of exile (605-539 B.C.), chs. 40-55, and of the return (the total period is 539-400 B.C., but probably here restricted to 539-500 B.C.), chs. 56-66.” (Oswalt 1986:4).

While this division of the book has served its purpose, Oswalt (1985:5) points out that “although contemporary scholars are more and more compelled by the evidence to admit the ideological and theological unity of the book, they choose not to change their conception of the nature of prophecy, instead of taking the step that the book itself clearly asks its readers to take”, that is, “accepting these writings as the result of the encounter of a single human being with the self-revealing Lord of the cosmos.”¹⁷⁶

As Oswalt (1998:5-6) observes, this position is to reject the voice of the text that itself insists on.

Without doubt, the theme of chs. 40-55 is the superiority of Israel’s God over the idols of the nations as proved in three ways: his ability to explain the past (41:22), tell the future (41:23), and do things that are radically new (43:18-19). That is, he alone transcends the bounds of the cosmos. But, the conviction that these chapters had to be written about 540 B.C. rests squarely on the prior conviction that Isaiah of Jerusalem could not have known the future in any supernatural way. This conviction then involves the unknown Babylonian prophet in an irreconcilable contradiction. His God Yahweh cannot tell the future any more than the gods can, but he wishes his hearers to believe that Yahweh can. In order to prove this point, the prophet tries to get his readers to believe that it was Isaiah of Jerusalem who said these things, all the while knowing this was not true. He even goes so far as to alter some of the earlier writings (e.g., ch. 13 with its reference to Babylon), or to insert some of his own (chs. 34-35) in order to make those writings correspond more closely to his own work.

But perhaps it can be said that the putative prophet did not himself promulgate the fiction, but only later redactors did so. For this, Oswalt (1998:6) answers as follows: “recent scholarship has concluded that “II” and “III” Isaiah are organically related to “I” Isaiah. In their very conceptions they depend on the supposedly prior writings. From the outset they are written as logical

¹⁷⁶ “[I]f Isaiah of Jerusalem did write these chapters, then he had a knowledge of the future that was more detailed than that displayed by other Old Testament prophets. Furthermore, this view means that these chapters are speaking *to* people in the future, not merely *about* them. This is also unique. Assuming that such uniqueness is not possible, one has to conclude that chs. 40-55 were written in the 6th century B.C.” (Oswalt 1998:5) Consequently, most contemporary scholars prefer to explain this as a theological response of the community in later periods, rather than a prophecy about the future: “because unknown persons, 150 years after the original Isaiah, felt that what they were saying was not new, but only a development of what the old prophet was saying, they consciously submerged their identities in his.” (Oswalt 1998:5) This hypothesis comes from an inability to accept the assertion of the book. The great flaw in this assertion is that “so-called “II Isaiah” makes such strenuous efforts to deny it.” (Oswalt 1998:5)

extensions of the previous material. Thus “II Isaiah” can not be saved from himself. He had to manufacture evidence for the marvelous theology that he taught. Not only, did his glorious predictions not come true, the very theology out of which the predictions grew was hollow. God had not predicted Cyrus in advance, nor had he predicted the return from exile in specific detail before the fact. Thus “II Isaiah” ’s claims for the superiority of Yahweh are groundless. Yet we still hear of the great theologian of the Exilic [period].” Consequently, as Oswalt (1998:6) points out, “it is the scholarly understanding of the phenomenon of biblical prophecy that needs to be corrected, not the traditional view of the book’s authorship.”

We can accept that what the book suggests to us about its origins, is true. “Isaiah of Jerusalem did indeed predict the Babylonian exile, and in so doing showed how the towering theology that he had applied to events in his own lifetime would become even more towering in relation to those new situations that he could see in outline, but not in detail.” (Oswalt 1998:6).¹⁷⁷

Although the study of the Isaiah 40-55 in the context of the discussion of the unity of the Book of Isaiah by redactional history dominates the study of the unity of the text, we have to choose the way of inductive study, rather than one imposed from outside to understand the compositional unity of the Book of Isaiah. Thus, “the better way to understand the thought of the book can be said as not imposed from the outside like a complex redactional process extending over hundreds of years, since there is no external evidence that such a process ever existed, but emerged from an inductive study.” (Oswalt 1986:21)¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Oswalt (1986:6) contends that “it is no longer necessary to posit either deception or a kind of rewriting that is, in effect, a denial of what the original author may have said. It does require that we accept the possibility of revelation and prediction. But if it is true that it is not so much vocabulary and style that prove the author of chapters 1-39 could not have written chapters 40-66, but that the latter chapters seem to have been written to another historical context than the author’s own, it is the scholarly understanding of the phenomenon of biblical prophecy that need to be corrected, not the traditional view of the book’s authorship.”

¹⁷⁸ The inductive study of the book suggests, as Oswalt (1986:4) observes, that “no other author is mentioned in the book, and indeed, Isaiah is specially named again in 2:1; 7:3; 13:1; 20:2; 37:2, 6, 21; 38:1, 4, 21; 39:3, 5, 8 and that Isaiah is not mentioned as the author of chapters 40-66 and it causes scholars some question on the authorship of the book”. But it can be explained “no other author is mentioned in present book and that no form of the book other than the present one is known makes it clear that original transmitters of the book intended it to be understood as a unit whose meaning was to be found solely by reference to the life and teachings of the prophet Isaiah.” (Oswalt 1986:4).

The second argument for the unity of the composition in the present form of the book is suggested by some scholars (Oswalt 1986:19; Ackroyd 1978:29; Cf. Clement 1980:434-435; Watters 1976:67-68). If in fact the present composition is the work of at least three major authors and a large number of editors or

redactors, it becomes very hard to explain how the book came to exist in its present form at all. The degree of unity which is to be found in the book (e.g., the use of “the Holy One of Israel” 13 times in chs. 1-39 and 16 times in chs. 40-66 and only 7 times elsewhere in the Bible) becomes a problem. Thus it becomes necessary to posit a “school” of students of “I Isaiah” who steeped themselves in the style and thought of the “master.” It would be out of such a group “II Isaiah” sprang during the Exile and from which, later still, came the writings which now constitute chs. 56-66. Aside from the fact that there is no other evidence for the existence of this “school,” it is hard to imagine how it ever would have come into existence for Isaiah (and not the other prophets) in the first place.’ (Oswalt 1986:19)

The third argument is, as Oswalt (1986:21) points out, the unity of thought which runs through the book. Its thought structure has been largely ignored in recent years, because of the attempt to isolate the supposed component parts. Each part has been exegeted by itself without reference to its larger literary context. But unless one assumes that the process of the formation of Isaiah was completely random or was controlled by societal reasons unrelated to the actual statements of the book, this is an unreasonable way to proceed. Without automatically assuming that one writer sat down and started writing at 1:1 and worked straight through to 66:24, one may still logically expect that there were reasons for putting one set of ideas in conjunction with another that were more significant than mere word association (to which some scholars resort to explain why one statement followed another). In fact, whoever assembled the book and however it was assembled, there is an observable structure about its thought that explains the power of the book and without which the book becomes little more than a collection of sayings put together for no apparent reason.

Consequently, as Oswalt (1986:23) mentions, although the name of the author in Isaiah 40-55 is not explicitly mentioned, it can be attributed to Isaiah, who is mentioned and considered as the author of Isaiah 1-39. The historic position of the Church was derived from the apparent claims of the book beginning at 1:1. That verse seems to say that everything which follows is a report of the visionary experiences of Isaiah the son of Amoz. Furthermore, in 2:1; 7:3; 13:1; 20:2; 37:6, 21; and 38:1 words are attributed directly to Isaiah. While Isaiah is not named as the source of any of the materials in chs. 40-66, it is evident that the burden of proof is upon those who propose other sources, for no other sources are named.

Oswalt (1986:26) defended the authorship of a single author for the trustworthiness of the theological assertion of the book, because it is difficult to accept the message of the book as trustworthy, if the concept of single authorship is not grasped. “Should further studies point more conclusively to a different hand (or hands) at work in the latter part of the book, I would be driven to conclude that Isaiah used amanuenses to assist him in putting his final thoughts together. I cannot conceive of the present unity being arrived at without the guiding hand of a single master. Furthermore, as soon as the compilation of the book is moved beyond the lifetime of Isaiah, it becomes well nigh impossible to avoid the conclusion that the book’s great theological assertions are based upon falsehoods.”

Seitz (1993:109-110) argues the proof of the single authorship of the whole book of Isaiah as follows: “[F]irstly, the book contains only one superscription (Is 1:1). Secondly, only one narrative describes the prophet’s commission (Is 6:1-13). Hence, Isaiah 40:1-11 is not a prophetic commission for a Deutero-Isaiah, but must be interpreted in the light of chapters 1-39. Thirdly, no literary boundaries can be clearly drawn between the three historical-critical Isaiahs (Seitz 1993:109-110)...Consequently, nothing of a new Second Isaiah in chapters 40-55 nor a Third Isaiah in chapters 56-66 exists (:117)...In addition to this, it is not certain to assume that the prophecies in chapters 40-55 have a Babylonian setting (:117).”

In light of the external evidence on the authorship and composition of the Book of Isaiah, the skeptical voices on them can be rejected (Cf. Millard 1985; Gordon 1995; Heinz 1997).

Kitchen (2003:379-380) represents the internal and external evidences that evince that the theory of three books in one (1-39; 40-55; 56-66). That Isaiah 40-55 is based in Babylon is simply not true.

This study presupposes the unity of the book of Isaiah and that the unity of the Book of Isaiah comes from a single author, i.e. בֶּן-אֲמוֹץ, the son of Amoz (Is 1:1) (Cf. Oswalt 1986:25). This study accepts the view that Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God is given to Israel in the pre-exilic period under the threat of Assyria. Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with the incomparability of God, and the prohibition of making any image of God will be studied with this presupposition on its authorship and composition.

4.2. The theological-thematic consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20

Isaiah as a whole is a genre of prophetic covenant disputation. Isaiah 40-55 represents the exoneration of YHWH to his people before nations. Isaiah 40:18-20 is a passage dealing with the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God as in Isaiah 41:1-7, 44:6-20; 46:5-7 in other rhetorical questions followed by idol-question passages Isaiah 40-55. Isaiah 40:18-20 is located in Isaiah 40:12-31 as part of Isaiah 40-55 and Isaiah as a whole dealing with the prophetic covenant disputation.

According to Harner (1988:62), Isaiah declares Yahweh to be the sole God who controls the course of history. God's sovereignty over history demonstrates the uniqueness of his divine being. As Harner (1988:62) points out, Israel's affirmative and fair response to God's self-predications would have been to abandon the idols of other

gods and of the worship of God through images. Harner (1988:67) depicts one of the most distinctive features of Isaiah's thought as follows:

His frequent use of statements beginning with the words "I am", in which Yahweh makes an assertion about himself that serves to define his identity, describes his attributes, or depicts his relationship to Israel. When Isaiah represents Yahweh as saying "I am Yahweh", "I am your God" or "I am He", these divine self-predications constitute Yahweh's word to Israel, in which Yahweh takes the initiative and reminds Israel of his own existence and his relationship to her.¹⁷⁹

The formula, "I am Yahweh, your God", which derives from God's self-prediction at Mount Sinai reflects the responsibilities that his people accepted under the terms of the Sinai covenant." (Harner 1988:61). God expects his people to fulfill their fundamental obligation under the covenant, which is suggested in the first commandment, to worship him alone and is suggested in the second commandment not to use any image of God for his worship based on God's incomparability, which was experienced by Israel in the event of the exodus (Harner 1988:63).

Isaiah 40:19-20 in relation with verse 18 has been sufficiently demonstrated that Isaiah 40:18-20 fits perfectly into its context, and proceeds from the preceding verses with the theme of Yahweh's incomparability (Spykerboer 1976:45). To speak in terms of

¹⁷⁹ Harner (1988:70) points out that the formula of the divine self-predication is used a total of thirty times in Isaiah 40-55. The expression "I am He," is used a total of eight times, six times in the form of 'ani hu' (Is 41:4; 43:10, 13; 46:4; 48:12; 52:6), twice in the longer form 'anoki anoki hu' (Is 43:25; 51:12); "I am Yahweh" a total of eighteen times, fifteen times in the form of 'ani Yahweh,' (Is 41:4, 13; 42:6, 8; 43:3, 15; 45:3, 5, 6, 7, 18, 19; 48:17; 49:23, 26), twice as 'anoki Yahweh,' (Is 44:24; 51:15) and once as 'anoki anoki Yahweh' (Is 43:11); and "I am God," only four times, once as 'anoki eloheka' (with the suffix "your") (Is 41:10), twice as 'ani el' (Is 43:12; 45:22) and once as 'anoki el' (Is 46:9).

nothingness of the idol is a different way to speak about Yahweh's incomparability (Spykerboer 1976:46). Isaiah 40:18-20 should be understood in light of the context in which it stands (Spykerboer 1976:46). The center of this passage is expressed in the question, to whom or what will you liken God? It seems rather odd to reply to the question whom might be compared with God with a description of idol-fabrication (Holter 1995:63).

The main characteristic of Yahweh to be incomparable is his miraculous intervention in history as the redeeming God (Spykerboer 1976:37). This thought fits in very well with the line of argument in the whole passage of Isaiah 40:12-31, in which the climax comes when this incomparable God, who is the Creator, address himself as the redeemer (Spykerboer 1976:37).

According to Watts (2005:619), "Isaiah 40:12-31 starts with six questions (v. 12-13) addressed to the assembled people of Israel." Nevertheless, many studies are only interested in its relation to the nations (Vasholz 1979-1980:389).¹⁸⁰ While the address is polemic against the nations and their gods, it is the message specific for Israel. Thus, this study is interested in its relation to Israel which is the actual audience to be instructed by the message.

In Isaiah 41:1-7, the rhetorical question (vv. 2-3) stresses clearly God's incomparability, an issue, which is strengthened through the statement of verse 4. In verse 4, having put forward the evidence of the coming conquests of Cyrus, the Lord recaps the opening

¹⁸⁰ Vasholz points out that the message of the prophet in Isaiah 40-48 includes polemic. The chief object of the prophet's attack is the foreign gods.

question and demands of his hearer to know who has done this (Oswalt 1998:83). With a sweeping assertion of his creatorship, his eternity, his uniqueness, and his self-existence, the Lord answers his own rhetorical questions (Oswalt 1998:83-84). God will be the one who call out Cyrus as he has been “calling the generations from the beginning” (v. 4aβ) (Oswalt 1998:84).¹⁸¹ It is to be stressed this is not statement from nationalistic bombast as Persians say (Oswalt 1998:84).¹⁸² What gives particular weight to the Lord’s claim is that Cyrus’s victories are prophesized in advance (Is 41:25-29; 44:6-8; 45:20-21). They are in accord with an overarching plan that is as old as creation itself (Is 41:22-24; 42:1-4; 44:6-8; 45:9-13), and they will result in something radically new: return from exile (Is 42:9-10, 21-25; 43:18-21) (Oswalt 1998:84). As Oswalt (1998:84) says, only if the God responsible for them is a different order of being from the gods of the nations. These arguments are only implicit at this point, but they are implicit, as the statement of self-predication makes plain: *I am he* (Oswalt 1998:84; Walker 1962:205-206).¹⁸³ God is the one who called everything into being at the first, and the one whom the last will not be able to escape. He is the one like whom there is no other; he is the only non contingent being in the universe, the only one who can say “I Am”. If this statement is true, then Judah’s God deserves the worship of the whole world: if it is not true, where did they all of people come up with it? (Oswalt 1998:84). Yahweh himself is acknowledged as the real cause of political events. Although the one whom he “awakend” deposes kings, his power is merely relative compared with the power of Yahweh himself. Even the sovereignty of a Cyrus is limited (Baltzer 2001:89).

¹⁸¹ When הָרִוּת is used of all humanity it is normally used in a future sense (“unto all generations” e.g. Ps 45:18 [Eng. 17]). Here “from the first’ turn it around.

¹⁸² How can we know this is not statement from nationalistic bombast as Persians say. Cf. *ANET*, 312-316.

¹⁸³ Walker suggests that הָיָא may have been construed as a form of *hawa*, “to be” thus explaining the LXX.

The present context suggests an interpretation of these declarations in terms of time. Yahweh's claim to recognition as Lord of the world rests on creation (Baltzer 2001:89). We shall see that the attempt to make statement about creation fruitful for the present is one of the author's main concerns (Baltzer 2001:89). How is the general concept of God's sovereignty related to concrete historical experience? It is this that is argumentatively developed in the form of a lawsuit (Baltzer 2001:89). The concept of the sovereignty of God makes possible an understanding of past experience in the light of faith (Baltzer 2001:89).

In Isaiah 44:6-20, the outer inclusion enclosing the polemic against idolatry (vv. 6-8, 21-23) begins with a trial speech against the gods of nations (Wilson 1986:172). As a similar trial speeches, Yahweh challenges the gods of the nations to appear in court: "Who is like me? Let him take the stand and declare his case..." Yahweh challenges the gods to demonstrate their efficacy in human events by predicting the future (Is 41:22, 26; 43:9; 45:21) (Wilson 1986:172). Yahweh declares that the Israelites are his witnesses, for Israel can testify that Yahweh had indeed forewarned them of what was to happen. But here is an additional, more direct point of comparison concerning Yahweh's person, the phrase מִי־קָמוּנִי, reminiscent of other polemics against idolatry (Cf. Is 40:18; 46:15) (Wilson 1986:172).

Isaiah 44:9-20 is situated in a context where it acts as an ironical reply to the question of whom can be compared with Yahweh. "who like me?", Yahweh says, and a highly ironical reply is suggested: "Could it be the idol-fabricator? Idol-fabricators seem to act as representatives of the nations. Verses 9-20 offers a developed mocking account of the

process whereby divine image are made, set in the framework of an explicit polemical assertion of the theological implications of the process. The satire functions implicitly to support the polemical statement in Verses 6-8.

In Isaiah 46:5-7 the line of thought is this: Yahweh cannot be compared to anyone, he is only God, who rules history and therefore can say: “My plan will be executed”. Now it is his concrete will that Cyrus will be the executer of his decrees. Verses 5-7 seems to be the counterpiece, harking back to the idols and verbs of carrying in Verses 1-4 and pointing forward to Cyrus in Verses 10-11 (Clifford 1980:456). The idol is acquired by the nations through expenditures of much gold and silver, is laboriously carried home and set up so that it cannot be moved, yet never answers the anguished pleas of its owners (vv. 6-7) (Clifford 1980:456). Yahweh in contrast simply summons by a word his bird of prey from the east according to his plan to save Israel (vv. 10-11). Verse 13 seems to reverse verses 1-2: Israel returns to Zion her home, while the nations go to exile (Clifford 1980:456).

The idol scenes thus unify the passage by alluding to and reinforcing the initial contrast in verses 1-4 between idols who are carried by beasts into captivity and Yahweh who carries his people safely (Clifford 1980:457). Secondly and most importantly, they show the idol is brought into the worshiper’s home having nothing to do with money and labor, whereas Yahweh by a word brings his man Cyrus to accomplish the salvation of Israel (Clifford 1980:457).

There is a comparison between Yahweh and idols as follow: “Yahweh// idols: Yahweh is in no way like idols (Franke 1994:198). Their existence depends upon a contrast

made with a smith and a process of manufacturing. The idol must be lifted up and carried through the streets to its resting place, where it stands, immobile. The idol is stolid, unhearing, unheeding, and does not answer cries for help. By contrast, Yahweh's existence does not depend on a process of manufacturing, nor does his ability to move depend on a parade of workers. He is not in any way immobile, and he can and does respond to the pleas of his people. Yahweh is contrasted to the idols or gods in that he is able to describe events that have not yet happened, to make and execute plans, to control the processes of history. In fact, Yahweh is incomparable" (Franke 1994:98).

In Isaiah's critique on idol-fabrication he declares Yahweh to be the sole God over the world, who can never be compared with anything made as an image. Therefore, in Isaiah 40:18-20, the proclamation of the incomparability of God demands the prohibition of his worship through images. Israel's affirmative and fair response to God's self-predications would have been to abandon the idols of other gods and of the worship of God through images.

In Isaiah 40:18-20 the allusion to God's incomparability expressed in God's self-predication "I am Yahweh, your God", the expression can be deduced from the rhetorical questions: "To whom will you liken God and to what image will you compare him?" (v. 18)

The purpose of verses 19-20 is not the description of how one can make an idol (Spykerboer 1976:43). According to Baltzer (2001:72; cf. Holter 1995:15-25; Westermann 1976:54), "the text has ethopoetic functions: the senselessness of idol worship is demonstrated by way of the 'idol production'". The specific reference is to

visible and tangible idols. It ridicules the worship of something made by human hands (Watts 2005:620).¹⁸⁴ Of all the likenesses one might choose to image God with, surely the silliest, to Isaiah, is an *idol* (Oswalt 1998:63).

The immovability of the idol is an important element in Isaiah's polemic and it brings out the absurdity of the reliance on idols, and stands in sharp contrast to the incomparability of God (Spykerboer 1976:43). The mocking songs on the fabrications of idols commence each time with a rhetorical question, describing the process of fabrication and end with a mocking of the immovability of the idols (Spykerboer 1976:45; cf. Kim 1962:55). The statue of the god is firmly established-but this means that it cannot be moved either; that is the irony of it, an irony that we can see is taken up again later in the further polemic against idols in Isaiah 40-55 (Baltzer 2001:74).

As Baltzer (2001:73) points out, any other image, such as those usually "set up in rows" in the sanctuaries of the ancient world, infringes on the prohibition of images formulated in the Decalogue. The prohibition of the image of other gods also demands the prohibition of the image of God.

To make an image of God by placing God in the same position along with other gods in a row is essentially the same as making images of other gods, and brings God down to the level of a creature (Young 1972: 50, 51). To make an image of God is to regard him as a finite being, which is essentially idolatry (Young, 1972:52). If one makes any

¹⁸⁴ The rest of the structure implies that there are other forms of idolatry of which Israel may be more guilty than the actual shaping of idols. In Isaiah 40, God is contrasted with nations (vv. 12-17), idols (18-20), princes and rulers (vv. 21-24), and with the stars (25-26).

likeness of God, it is not only wrong, but also makes God controllable by doing it (Oswalt, 1998 :62-63).

4.3 The comparison of aniconism in Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

This study affirmed that the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus is the explicit evidence of the provenance of this ban in the rest of the Old Testament. The prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue is commanded in the context of God's incomparability in the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue. This study, thus, proposes that the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 is based on the persuasion of God's incomparability. The Prophets share a common view on the prohibition of making any image of God with the Law. Considering the relation between God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God, this study will substantiate the relation between the Pentateuch and the Prophets. Historically speaking, the Law was available to the prophets and their prophecies were in line with the legal prescriptions.

4.3.1 Inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 in Isaiah 40:18-20

When we compare Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 in terms of inner-biblical interpretation and apply the principles mentioned above, a link can be indicated between Exodus 20:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. The structure of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God can be found in both. The following is a collation of the examples presented in previous chapters.

4.3.1.1 Inner-biblical interpretation between Exodus 20:2-3 and Isaiah 40:18-20

אַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי (Ex 20:3)

וְאֵל-מִי תִדְמֶינָה אֵל וּמַה-דְּמוּת תַּעֲרֹכוּ לוֹ (Is 40:18)

הַפֶּסֶל נֹסֵף תְּרַשׁ וְצִרְף בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעְנוּ וּרְחִקוֹת כֶּסֶף צוֹרֵף (Is 40:19)

הַמְּסַפֵּן תִּרְוַמָּה עֵץ לֹא-יִרְקַב יִבְחַר תְּרַשׁ חָכָם יִבְקֹשׁ-לוֹ (Is 40:20)

לְהַכִּין פֶּסֶל לֹא יִמוּט

A couple of points can be suggested on the name of God shared in two passages. In Exodus 20:2-3 the name of God can be seen in the form of אַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2) with a 2nd person plural pronominal suffix, “your God” and the form of its extension connected אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַנְכִי יְהוָה (Ex 20:2) with the subordinate clause following it by which God identifies himself in relation to a peculiar history. The addition of אֱלֹהֶיךָ, “your God” to אַנְכִי יְהוָה, “I am Yahweh” makes a “holiness or sublimity formular” into a “saving history or grace-formular.” This expression has the connotation that by announcing their names, the Eastern kings were accustomed to begin their solemn declarations that respecting their deeds..., the King of the universe commences His declaration to man - in man’s style: I, the Speaker, am called YHWH, and I am your God specifically.” The opening word of the Decalogue can be divided into numbered sentences as follows: “(1) who Yahweh is, by use of the self confessional phrase יְהוָה אַנְכִי; (2) who they are, by the addition of the self-giving phrase אֱלֹהֶיךָ since Yahweh can only have become *their* God by his act of giving himself; and (3) that these

assertions are validated by their completely discontinuous new situation, as a people brought forth from Egypt, and from the non-status of slaves to the status of a people to whom Yahweh has given himself. The introduction of the Decalogue shows explicitly that God is incomparable with other gods because he redeemed his people, Israel from the land of Egypt. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn here that Exodus 20:1-3 clearly shows the incomparability of God. Moreover, this phrase **אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ** represents God's self-prediction. By using the formula God's incomparability is asserted. According to Keiser (1996:490), "the combination of the phrase **יהוה אלהיך** with **אֲנֹכִי** gives the decisional use to the meaning of the name of God. The expression **אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ** is a formula of God's self-declaration used in the context of other gods." Thus, **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים** (Ex 20:3) with the singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, "gods" which differ from **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים**, ['other gods', plural], not, **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים**, ['another god', singular] makes it clear that not only is it forbidden to associate with one deity but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be" in verse 3a (Cassuto 1966:241).

Keiser says that "the context in which these self-declarations occur also argue for such a dependency.... In these texts the statement is made within a call to recognize that, in contrast to false gods, "I am He," [is] the one who controls history.... The occurrences in Isaiah declare Yahweh's incomparability with the emphasis on the comparison to false gods, and that He is the one who controls history.... His people recognize that "I am He." (Keiser 1996:490)

The name אל “El” is used for God in Isaiah 40:18. אל is used without an article, so that it designates ‘God.’ It differs from the name Yahweh that implies the claim that is the only God. The word used for God in Isaiah 40:18 is not אלהים , the most common term for God, but אל . It is intentional for Isaiah to choose the latter, which is identical to that of the high god in the Canaanite pantheon, to indicate the absolute superiority of the Lord and that there is nothing like him in all of the universe (Oswalt 1986:62). The request here is not to place God in a row in the pantheistic shrine with other gods, degraded as a mere god among other gods in the pantheon.

From the use of the name of God in Isaiah 40:18-20, “a very early form of divine self-predication that had its original setting in God’s revelation of himself to Moses” (Harner 1988:147-148) can be found. The self-predication which introduces Yahweh as the God who can not be comparable because he shows his incomparability in delivering Israel from bondage, also “presents him as the God who expected Israel to fulfill her religious and ethical responsibilities within the covenant relationship.” (Harner 1988:147) Isaiah’s use emphasizes the same features of its occurrence in the Pentateuch (Keiser 1996:490)

As shown in the exegetical considerations, these two passages have the same theological context to prohibit making any image of God account of God’s incomparability. The prophet Isaiah reuses the passage from the second commandment of the Decalogue, in which God prohibits any image of God in the context of his incomparability.

4.3.1.2 Inner-biblical interpretation between Exodus 20:4-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

(Ex 20:4) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לָךְ פֶּסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל בְּמִתְחַת

בְּאָרֶץ מִתְחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתְחַת לְאָרֶץ

(Ex 20:5) לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֹקֵד

עֵינֵי אֲבֹת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל־רַבְעִים לְשֹׁנָאִי

(Ex 20:6) וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים לְאַהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

(Is 40:18) וְאֵל־מִי תִדְמִיּוּן אֵל וּמַה־דְּמוּת תַּעֲרֹכוּ לוֹ

(Is 40:19) הַפֶּסֶל נֹסֵף חָרֶשׁ וְצֹרֵף בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעְנוּ וּרְתַקוּת כֶּסֶף צֹרֵף

(Is 40:20) הַמִּסְכָּן תְּרוֹמָה עֵץ לֹא־יִרְקַב יִבְחַר חָרֶשׁ חָכֵם יִבְקֹשׁ־לוֹ

לְהַכִּין פֶּסֶל לֹא יִמוּט

“The noun פֶּסֶל (Ex 20:4a) refers to an image, which is made for use in the worship of deity. This image indicates the image of God in the context of God’s incomparability, which can be seen in the form of אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2), as synonym for God’s incomparability. Thus, פֶּסֶל (Ex 20:4a) can also refer to an image of God not to be made by those who were brought out of the bondage of Egypt (Ex 20:2) with whom God made his covenant to become his people (Ex 19-24). God demands his people that even his image has not to be made because it can be compared with other god’s images in the pantheon. In Exodus 20:5 it can be seen clearly that אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:5b) is presented as the ground of the covenantal curse (Ex 20:5bβ-6). It shows that the

prohibition of פֶּסֶל (Ex 20:4) is preserved because God's incomparability is seen in his redemptive act (Ex 20:2).

Isaiah 40:18-20 really criticizes and prohibits making any image of God. Verse 18 emphasizes the incomparability of God, which is confirmed in the connection of the word with Isaiah 40:12-17. דְּמוּת תַּעֲרֹכוּ in the expression of דְּמוּת in verse 18 can might contain a hidden hint to the concept of man as image of Yahweh because it is placed in the context of God's incomparability (Holter 1995:70). The image of God can represent both of them whether it is a concrete image or abstract because the distinction between the concrete and abstract use of the noun was, at least, not made in the mind of a Semitic thinker. The syntax of verse 19 that emphasizes the word פֶּסֶל shows which interpretation has to be taken. For the former, "A image?" the question sentence stresses פֶּסֶל (Is 40:19). For latter, in the word order and the structure of the sentences: *object – verb – subject*, the object, פֶּסֶל (Is 40:19) is emphasized here.

Isaiah 40:19-20 use the verbs נָסַךְ, רָקַע, רָקַב, בָּחַר, and בִּקֵּשׁ to depict the process of making an image. They have the same meaning as the verb עָשָׂה used with פֶּסֶל, the image of God in Exodus 20:4. Isaiah 40:19-20 explicitly mocks the making an image of God. That פֶּסֶל (Is 40:19) can refer to an image of God evidently in the context of God's incomparability (v. 18).

The question on the prohibition of making any image of God, וַיִּמַּהֲדָמוֹת תַּעֲרֹכוּ לוֹ, וְאֵל-מִי תִדְמִיּוּן אֵל in verse 18, is not replied, because its answer is too explicit. Rather, the critique of idol-fabrication can be rendered as the prohibition of making any image of God because God can't be compared with anything whatsoever. Thus, verses 9-20 function as another answer on the rhetorical question in verse 18, developing the topic further.

Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 show similarity of theological themes. Each reveals its theological theme, and in some respects, they can be considered as identical. This study points out that God's incomparability requires the prohibition not only of other gods and their images, but also of making any image of God to worship him. This study, therefore, represents that Isaiah 40:18-20 dealing with idol-fabrication in the context of proclaiming God's incomparability is explicitly referring to the prohibition against the worship of an image of God. It can be guessed that in the context of Isaiah's covenantal disputation on the deviation of Israel as the covenant people making a covenant with God Isaiah reused the theme of God's incomparability and the prohibition of not only other gods and their image and making any image of God in the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct (Ex 20:2-6).

4.3.1.3 Determining one text's dependence on another: Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

This study argued that the prophet reused the Pentateuch as a written material, even the form of present text by inner-biblical interpretation. This study investigated how textual

allusions are to be confidently identified. Now this section will evaluate it in terms of their direction of dependence and determine it as follows.

Exegetical study of Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 demonstrated that both passages all have the structure of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God. The variety of affinities between Isaiah 40:18-20 and Exodus 20:2-6, demonstrates that the first and second commandment of the Decalogue and the Isaianic passages dealing with the incomparability of God and the idol-fabrication are linguistically linked.

Both Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 say that God is incomparable, and, that He therefore prohibits the making of his image. Considering the rules of the nature of analogies between texts, there is a correlation between the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct in Exodus 20:2-6 and the passage dealing with the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20.

The rhetorical pattern in Isaiah 40:18-20, which expresses the same theological theme as Exodus 20:2-6, can be suggested to be relevant to the questions mentioned above used as the standards to determine the direction of the allusion between two texts.

In both passages the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct can be found, linking God's incomparability and the prohibition of making an image of God. This study will try to show the pattern as a witness of one text's borrowing from and dependence on others in the context of a prophetic covenant

disputation. It is, for example, easier to understand how the prophetic lawsuit in the Bible could bear marks of dependence on the covenantal law of the Sinai covenant in Exodus, than to suppose that the covenantal law of the Sinai covenant in Exodus could have traces of influence of the prophetic lawsuit.¹⁸⁵ The Bible plot also strongly supposes this relation between two parts of the Bible. If this point can be granted, that the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 would be, in cases where influence or allusion between two texts can be determined, the source from which the passages to deal with the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making an image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 is drew (Cf. Bergey 2003:52-53). In Isaiah 40:18-20, we can see the construct of the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God. These may be the cases of aggadic exegesis that "[i]f a text repeatedly use the wording of ideas of earlier texts in certain ways...then examples of shared vocabulary which display those tendencies are likely to represent genuine cases of borrowing" (Sommer 1996:485). This construct also is seen in the other passages in Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 41:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7. This is the case of aggadic exegesis that "assertions that allusions occur in a certain passages become stronger as patterns emerge from those allusions. In any one passage that may rely on an older text, the critic must weigh evidence including the number of shared terms and their distinctiveness, *the presence style or thematic patterns that typify the author's allusions, and likelihood that the author would allude to the alleged source*[italic is mine]." (Sommer 1996:485). The repetition of this construct in these passages evince that the Isaiah re-uses older material (Sommer 1996:485).

¹⁸⁵ According to Eslinger (1992:2-53), at least, we can speak of the prophetic reliance on the tradition of the Pentateuch. This study, furthermore, dare to proceed in speaking of the prophetic reliance on the tradition of the Pentateuch, not oral but written, which contains the same passage in the final form of the Pentateuch, although we cannot be sure that the Pentateuch in final form of the canon has already appeared or not yet, when we consider the custom of the ancient Near Eastern world to write and deposit the word of gods as soon as they receive it.

From a linguistic perspective, the words, phrases, structure and composition of Isaiah 40:18-20, 40:12-31, God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God construct passage: Isaiah 41:1-6; 44:6-20; 46:5-7 in Isaiah 40-55, and Isaiah as a whole, shows a consistent pattern that points to inner-biblical allusion and influence between two texts. Exodus 20:3-6 is the alluded and source text, and Isaiah 40:18-20 is the alluding one (Cf. Bergey 2003:51).

The concluding linguistic correlation between Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20 satisfies the guidelines given above to indicate one text's dependence on another, as Leonard (2008:246) suggests, as well as determining the direction of these allusion, as Leonard (2008:257) suggests.

Having now made a linguistic inventory, it is necessary to inquire next whether inner-biblical interpretation (reusing or borrowing) has occurred (Cf. Leonard 2008:262-263; Sommer 2003:71). Isaiah 40:18 also makes the incomparability of God clear (Cf. Naidoff 1981:72). Isaiah 40:18, presenting no answer to the rhetorical question, because it is self-evident, represents the affirmation of God's incomparability. It shares this idea with Exodus 20:2 and gives the evidence of the dependence of one text upon the other.

The expression of God's self-predication "I am Yahweh, your God" is not directly found in the context of Isaiah 40:18-20. But the allusion to the expression can be deduced from the rhetorical questions: "With whom will you compare God and to what image you compare him?" (v. 18). In the prophetic covenant disputation Isaiah reuses the construct of Exodus 20:2-6 and recalls Israel to the covenant obligation in Exodus

20:2-6. Thus, a direction of the allusion between the two passages can be suggested. As Leonard (2008:246) mentions, the rhetoric pattern in Isaiah 40:18 maybe the evidence that this passage uses another text, i.e. Exodus 20:2-6.

4.3.2 Theological-thematic comparison of Exodus 20:2-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

As a result of the exegesis of each passage, it became clear that both passages express the same theme, which seems to be too consistent to be coincidental or simply attributable to a common tradition. Thematically seen, this continuity comes from the office of prophets as covenantal plenipotentiaries. The prophets condemn the human partner of the covenant in a covenantal lawsuit, using the law, which originated in the Sinai covenant. Thus, the Ten Commandments as the law of the Sinai covenant was used by the prophets in their role as covenantal plenipotentiaries. The prohibition of making any image of God, expressed explicitly in the structure and theme of the introduction and the first two commandments of Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 as the Sinai event, explicates the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Old Testament. The prohibition of making any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 follows the theological idea found in the Decalogue of Exodus 20:2-6

4.3.2.1 God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2-3 and Isaiah 40:18

Exodus 20:2-3 and Isaiah 40:18a all represent that Yahweh is incomparable with other gods. Whereas God's incomparability is represented in his intervention in history as the redeeming God, other gods didn't so. The first commandment of the Decalogue in

Exodus 20:3 requires exclusive loyalty to God against background of God's incomparability in the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2.

Isaiah 40:18a argues the idea of God's incomparability against the background of the whole passage of Isaiah 40:12-31 that this incomparable God address himself as the Creator and the redeemer and against the background of wider context in Isaiah 41:1-7 that God will be the one who called everything into being at the first, and the one whom the last will not be able to escape, having put forward the evidence of the coming conquests of Cyrus, in Isaiah 44:6-20 that Yahweh demonstrates his sovereignty in human events by predicting the future, and in Isaiah 46:5-7 that Yahweh is only God, who rules history.

4.3.2.2 The prohibition of making image of God in Exodus 20:4-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20

In Exodus 20:4-6 God prohibits making any image of God to Israel because he is the only one God who delivered them from the land of Egypt (v. 5). In the background of God's incomparability (Ex 20:2) and exclusive loyalty of God (Ex 20:3), sometimes by only the first commandment of the Decalogue and sometimes by both the introduction and the first commandment of the Decalogue, is making any image of God prohibited (Ex 20:4-6).

Isaiah 40:19-20 in relation to verse 18 demonstrating that God is incomparable with idols represents their existence depends upon a contrast made with a smith and a process of manufacturing: The idol must be lifted up and carried through the streets to its resting place, where it stands, immobile. The idol is stolid, unhearing, unheeding,

and does not answer cries for help. In Isaiah's critique on idol-fabrication he declares Yahweh to be the sole God over the world, who can never be compared with anything made as an image. To make an image of God by placing God in the same position along with other gods in a row is essentially the same as making images of other gods, and brings God down to the level of a creature and is essentially idolatry.

With regard to the use of the Pentateuchal laws (the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue dealing with the incomparability of God and the prohibition on idol-fabrication) by the prophet Isaiah in his agitation against idol-fabrication, it is obvious that the former is a covenantal law in the form of an apodictic law, given in the context of the making covenant, whereas the latter is a prophetic covenantal lawsuit. A thematic affinities with the first and second commandments of the Decalogue, framed in the Sinai covenant was shown in the passages dealing with the incomparability of God and the idol-fabrication in Isaiah in question, especially in the passages dealing with the incomparability of God and the idol-fabrication, as well as in the rest of the Old Testament. It is plausible and makes sense, that the reference to the date of the events the Bible itself describes, is chosen rather than a contemplative historical interpretation, or reconstruction of the Bible history (Eslinger 1992:53). A historical approach to the inner-biblical interpretation of thematically related passages dealing with the making of a covenant and the execution of the prophetic lawsuit can be formed by following the plot of the Bible itself. It is easier to understand how the prophetic lawsuit in the plot of the Bible itself could bear marks of the dependence on a covenantal law of the Sinai covenant in Exodus, than it is to suppose that the covenantal law of the Sinai covenant in Exodus could have traces of influence of the prophetic lawsuit when we follow the plot of the Bible itself is followed. For if it is denied, there

is little basis for consensus about Israel's history. The latter is borrowed from the former. If we consider that the Exodus and the making of the covenant at Sinai are cited almost throughout the Old Testament, at least, the tradition that has come down from the Sinai event, and if we, furthermore, consider what the witness within the Bible itself and other extra-biblical witness about the writing down of the divine word indicate (Kitchen 2003; Vasholz 1998), it can even be assumed that the report of the Bible on these events can be accepted to be the same as the present form in which it is found in the Bible. If this point is granted, the first and second commandments of the Decalogue would be, in cases where inner-biblical interpretation can be determined, the source from which the passages to deal with the incomparability of God and the idol-fabrication in Isaiah drew (Cf. Bergey 2003:52-53).

4.4 Summary

The prophet Isaiah's prohibition of making any image of God on account of God's incomparability is in line with the prohibition of divine images by the Sinai covenant in Exodus. In relation with God's incomparability, the prohibition against making idols and images of other gods is always tightly bound up with the prohibition to worship God through images. Isaiah 40:18-20 that deals with the incomparability of God with idols forbids making images of other gods, as well as the use of images to serve God (Labuschagne 1966:139; Holter 1993:78).

Firstly, this chapter looked at the exegetical confirmation of the conclusion that the incomparability of God requires the prohibition of the "worship of God through an

image” in Isaiah 40:18-20, in relation with its macro-unit as the context of the passage. Isaiah 40:18-20 was analyzed with its macro units, i.e. Isaiah 40-55 and 40:12-31.

The meaning of the passages on the incomparability of God and idol-fabrication by comparing Yahweh with the idol in Isaiah 40:18-20 is not only a critique on serving other gods, but also implies the prohibition against serving God through images, as forbidden by the second commandment.

The fact that God is not comparable with other gods who can be replaced by images is clearly said in verse 18 and thus clearly states the incomparability of God (Naidoff 1981:72). The center of this passage is expressed in the question, “To whom will you compare God?”(v. 18) (Moor 1996:92). As Baltzer (2001:72) says, in Isaiah 40:18 “the theological point of departure is the self-assertion of God” and it is an “entr’acte in which the same theme, namely Yahweh’s incomparability is presented on a different level.” Holter (1995:29) points out that the idol-fabrication passages belong to a context which emphasizes the incomparability of Yahweh as expressed by the two rhetorical *וְיִשְׁאַל*-questions in Isaiah 40:12-31. One of these passages is his rhetorical contrasting of Yahweh with the gods and idols (Cf. Holter, 1993:88-98).

The process described in verse 19 may be summarized as follows: Firstly, an image of bronze is cast in a mould. Secondly, thin plates of gold are hammered out as plating for the bronze statue. Thirdly, where these plates of the gold needed to be joined they are soldered with silver-solder. The process of verse 20, considering verses 19-20 as a description of a single process for one object by two or three craftsmen, can be

summarized: choosing the wood, finding a craftsman capable of working it, and fastening the idol to its base in a permanent way.

It could seem rather odd to reply to the question of whom might be compared with God with a description of idol-fabrication (Holter 1995:63). The purpose of verses 19-20 is not to describe the way to make an idol (Spykerboer 1976:43). According to Baltzer (2001:72; cf. Holter 1995:15-25), “the text has ethopoetic functions: the senselessness of idol worship is demonstrated by referring to ‘idol production’”. As Westermann (1976:54) points out, “the way in which he[Isaiah] stresses the idol’s solidity and stability (that does not move) hints at a delicate indirect mockery.” The statue of the god is firmly established-but this means that it cannot move either; that is the irony of it, an irony that is taken up again later in its further polemic against idols in Isaiah 40-55 (Baltzer 2001:74). The immovability of the idol emphasizes the absurdity of the reliance on idols when contrasted to the incomparability of God (Spykerboer 1976:43). The mocking songs on the fabrications of idols commence each time with a rhetorical question, describing the process of fabrication, and end with mocking of the immovability of the idols (Spykerboer 1976:45; cf. Kim 1962:55).

The meaning of Isaiah 40:19-20 must be seen in its relation with v. 18 that establishes the incomparability of God. It has been sufficiently demonstrated that Isaiah 40:18-20 fits into its context, and develops the theme of Yahweh’s incomparability from the preceding verses (Spykerboer 1976:45). It is “a different way to speak about Yahweh’s incomparability in terms of the nothingness of the idol.” (Spykerboer 1976:46) The resume of Isaiah 40:18-20 stated that Yahweh is the incomparable; there is none like him and Israel is, therefore, prohibited to represent Yahweh with images. Because by

doing so, Israel is comparing Yahweh with the gods who are represented with images (Harner 1988:152). It is the theme of the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. In Isaiah's critique on idol-fabrication he declares Yahweh to be the sole God over the world, who can never be compared with anything made as an image. Therefore, in Isaiah's idol-fabrication passages, the proclamation of God's incomparability demands the prohibition of his worship through images. The meaning of the passage on a rhetorical question followed by a idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40:18-20 is, thus, not only a critique on serving other gods, but also implies the prohibition against serving God through images, as forbidden by the second commandment.

Secondly, the theological-thematic consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20 was discussed. The prohibition of God's image was dealt with in the context of God's incomparability.

This section demonstrated that the idol-fabrication passage belongs to a context, which emphasizes God's incomparability. To Israel as the covenantal community, it substantiates the prohibition against representing Yahweh with an image.

The specific reference is to a visible and tangible idol. It ridicules the worship of something made by human hands (Watts, 2005:620). Of all the likenesses one might choose to image God with, surely the silliest, to Isaiah, is the *idol* (Oswalt 1998:63). As Baltzer (2001:73) points out, any other image, such as those usually "set up in rows" in the sanctuaries of the ancient world, infringes on the prohibition of images, formulated in the Decalogue. The prohibition of images of other gods implies the prohibition of the image of God. To make an image of God is essentially the same as making images of

other gods, because it places God in the same position with other gods, and brings God down to the level of the creature (Young 1972: 50, 51). To make an image of God is to regard him as a finite being, which is idolatry (Young 1972:52; cf. Oswalt 1998:62-63).

It was indicated above that the pattern used in the context of a prophetic covenant disputation can be used to determine the direction of the allusion between two texts. The prophetic lawsuit in the Bible could bear marks of dependence on the covenantal law of the Sinai covenant in Exodus. The introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 would be, in cases where influence or allusion between two texts can be determined, the source from which the passages to deal with God's incomparability and the prohibition of making an image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20 is drew. As seen in the other passages in Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 41:1-7; 44:6-20; 46:5-7, a certain passage can become stronger as patterns emerge from those allusions. In any one passage that may rely on an older text, the critic must weigh evidence including the number of shared terms and their distinctiveness, the presence style or thematac patterns that typify the authors allusions, and likelihood that the author would allude to the alleged source. The repetition of this construct pointed out in these passages evinces that the Isaiah re-uses older material.

From a linguistic perspective, therefore, from the words, phrases, structure and composition of Isaiah 40:18-20 in the context of 40:12-31, some passages dealing with God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God construct: Isaiah 41:1-6; 44:6-20; 46:5-7 in Isaiah 40-55, and Isaiah as a whole, a consistent pattern can be demonstrated that points to inner-biblical interpretation between two

texts. Exodus 20:2-6 is the alluded and source text, and Isaiah 40:18-20 is the alluding text.

From a thematic perspective, a consistent used pattern shown above, which points to a covenant disputation by prophets as a plenipotentiary, shows that a close connection between the proclamation of the incomparability of God and the prohibition of making any image of God can be shown in both Isaiah 40:18-20 and the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. There can be shown a close connection between the proclamation of the incomparability of God, or his sovereignty, and the prohibition against the worship of God through images in both Isaiah 40:18-20 and the introduction and first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6, either as a reiteration or a reversal of it (Labuschagne 1966:139).

Taking these thematic and linguistic agreements in consideration, it can be concluded that the first and second commandment of the Decalogue was the source of the passages dealing with the incomparability of God and the prohibition on idol-fabrication in Isaiah. In terms of provenance, Exodus 20:2-6 predates the passage dealing with the Isaiah's covenant disputation on making of the prohibition of not only other gods and their image, but also any image of God in Isaiah 40:18-20.

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Thesis

This study discussed the Decalogue construct in Exodus 20:2-6: its introduction and the first two commandments. The prohibition on making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is important as it not only refers to the phenomenon of prohibiting divine images in the Pentateuch, but also serves as the explicitly traceable provenance of aniconism in the rest of the Old Testament. The aniconism in Exodus 20:2-6 is also found in Exodus 32:1-6 and Isaiah 40:18-20. This study proposed that the construct found in Exodus 20:2-6 was not only the phenomenon of aniconism but was also the explicitly traceable provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the rest of the Old Testament.

Chapter 1 dealt with the statement of the problem, the hypothesis of this study, the methodology used, the theological rationale and the aim of this study.

In chapter 2, the problem was discussed whether Exodus 20:4-6 can be considered as the basis for the prohibition of making any image of God and was, moreover, the provenance of aniconism in the Old Testament. It was pointed out that God's incomparability demands not only the prohibition of the use of any images of other gods for cult worship, but also entails the prohibition of making any image of God himself whatsoever. The second commandment is interwoven with the first commandment of the Decalogue in the context of the exclusive loyalty to God and the introduction of the Decalogue in context of God's incomparability.

The prohibition expressed in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 must be seen in conjunction with the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 and against the background of Israel's experience in history that Yahweh is incomparable in Exodus 20:2. The introduction in the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2 is the foundation of the Ten Commandments that follow. The first commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:3 has absolute priority over other commandments as the first and fundamental requirement of those who desire to enter into the covenant relationship with Yahweh. As the first commandment forbids any association with other gods for those who are part of Yahweh's covenant, the second commandment, along with the other two commandments that follow, describes the special dimensions of that relationship with the Lord. The people of Israel are not to worship any other gods at all. Following this most fundamental of requirements are three specifications of how Yahweh *is* to be worshiped. The first of these specifications is the prohibition of the use of any image of Yahweh in worship.

In Exodus 20:4, the making of a פֶּסֶל, (“idol”) is prohibited. The exact meaning of verse 4, however, is not quite clear and therefore the following questions can be raised: Is this a separate commandment or only an elaboration of verse 3? If it stands in direct relationship verse 3, the next question would be: Does “idol” in verse 4 refer to an idol of one of other gods referred to in verse 3, or does it intend any sort of representation of Yahweh?”, namely, whose image is being forbidden to Israel in the second commandment, Yahweh's, or those of other gods in rivalry with Yahweh?

On the one hand, those who view verses 4-6 as an elaboration of verse 3 encounter problems when they include images of Yahweh here. This is an apparent move beyond verse 3. This can be overcome when worshiping images of Yahweh is understood to be idolatry as well. On the other hand, those who view verses 4-6 as a separate commandment tend to regard it as a prohibition of making any image of Yahweh. In the first commandment of the Decalogue it is clearly stated that not only the making of other gods and their images but also paying homage to them was strictly forbidden. The prohibition in the second commandment in verses 4-6 should be understood against the background of Yahweh's incomparability stated in the introduction in verse 2. The second commandment excludes any iconographic representation of Yahweh. Images of other deities are automatically excluded as a consequence of the first commandment. A separate prohibition, however, was required to ban images of Yahweh as well. Basically the meaning of the prohibition in the second commandment is that one shall not make for himself for the purpose of serving God, any image, any carved object, such as is commonly found among the heathen peoples. Neither is he to make anything in the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth – in a word, of any creature or any created thing in the world. This absolute prohibition of any likeness emanates from the absolute transcendental concept of the Godhead. This means that making any image of God would result in God finding Himself standing in the company of idols being in competition with other gods' images referred to in Exodus 20:3. The second commandment therefore commands as follows: no worship of God through image. Would this happen, the incomparable God of Israel, would have to compete on a level with the idols for his rights

The in-textuality of Exodus 20:2-6 can confirm the thesis of this study. First, it is God who speaks to his people, Israel (v. 1) and who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The formula in Exodus 20:2 “I am Yahweh your God (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ) is used to express God’s incomparability. Furthermore, the combination of the phrase אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ with אֲנֹכִי gives decisional use to the meaning of the name of God.

Secondly, the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 makes clear and emphasizes that in contrast to God who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2) and thereby became her king, these אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים in verse 3b are not those who brought Israel from the land of Egypt. God is the only one who brought them from the bondage of Egypt (v. 2). The phenomenon that the plural אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים (other foreign gods) (Ex 20:3) is used here, not the singular form, אֵל אֲחֵר, (‘another god’), makes it clear that it is not only forbidden to associate with any specific single deity, but with all the deities in general, whoever they may be.

Thirdly, the ground for the prohibition of an image, (לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל) in verse 4a is motivated by “I am Yahweh your God, (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ) in verse 5. This phrase functions as the motive for the prohibition of making any image of God. Thus, the prohibition of making any image of God has to be understood within the context of God’s incomparability indicated in verses 2-3. אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא in verse 5 confirms that making any image of God stand in stark contrast to God’s incomparability. Thus, making an image of God is prohibited for his covenant people.

In sum, there was prohibited forming images of Yahweh for purposes of the cult in the second commandment (vv. 4-6) against the prohibition of making any image of anything in the creation for the purpose of worship in the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 and the idea of Yahweh's incomparability as found in the introduction of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2.

The question was posed whether the Decalogue came from the early stage of Israel's history or later. This was discussed in terms of the provenance of the prohibition of making an image of God found in the Decalogue. It is supposed in this study that the dating of the prohibition of making an image of God of the Decalogue should be literally attributed to Moses' time as it is literally stated in the text. It appears that Israel's historiographers were fully aware of the fact that the contrast between the true God and the other gods became apparent only during the time of the exodus. The idea of Yahweh's incomparability clearly emerged through the event of the exodus. An investigation into the possibility that the prohibition on making images of God existed before the promulgation of the Decalogue at Sinai was, however, also done. Nevertheless, since the events at Sinai, idolatry explicitly became unacceptable, condemned, and judged by God, this study proposed that the explicitly traceable prohibition on making any image of God can be traced back to the promulgation of the second commandment of the Decalogue at Sinai as stated in Exodus 20:4-6. The hypothesis was posed and argued that the prohibition of making any image of God in the Decalogue of Exodus 20:1-6 served as the provenance for all later prohibitions found in the rest of the Old Testament. As a result of the research done, the thesis of this study, therefore, stated that the aniconism expressed in the second commandment of the

Decalogue in Exodus in the Hebrew Bible explicates the explicitly traceable provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God from the Sinai event onwards.

In chapter 3 Exodus 32:1-6 was discussed as a key text in the Pentateuch for the prohibition of making any image of God. It was used as an example that the second commandment was interpreted as a prohibition of making any image of God in the context of God's incomparability. Exodus 32:1-6 can be considered as an interpretation of the older prohibition in the second commandment in the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 prohibiting any image of God.

The issue raised in chapter 3 was whether Exodus 32:1-6 deals with other gods whom Israel was seeking to follow, or rather with an attempt to make any image of the one true God. It was formulated as follows: "Does the golden calf episode represent polytheism or idolatry?"

The events of the golden calf occurred because of Moses' absence. Moses played a role in the ratification of the covenant (Ex 19-24). In Exodus 32:1 the **אֱלֹהִים**, which is requested to serve as a substitute for Moses doesn't necessarily imply that Moses himself has been to the people as an **אֱלֹהִים**. The people's request is for a substitute to take Moses's place in leading them. The substitute, however, is not Aaron, but the golden calf, although Aaron was appointed as Moses' substitute in Exodus 24:14. The calf functions as a challenge to Moses. It also seems clear that the calf was actually intended to be a symbol of the divine presence in a more real and direct way than Moses himself was. The calf was seen as the real embodiment of the presence of the Lord. In

verses 4ff. the acclamation of the calf as the divine agent of the exodus may seem slightly discordant with the concern for having אֱלֹהִים to go before the people.

What Aaron and the people did was in many ways in agreement with what Yahweh has specified in his covenant. Yet the people's attempt to identify the calf with Yahweh by echoing Exodus 20:2 is to be seen as a parody of the true nature and purposes of Yahweh.

Although Moses brought Israel up from Egypt, it was actually Yahweh who brought them from Egypt. Therefore, when Aaron made the gold calf and said to Israel, the people, אֱלֹהֵי אֲלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֶוךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם (“these are your gods, O Israel, who brought up Israel from Egypt”) it is evidently indicating the change of loyalty from Yahweh to others. It is evident that this phrase was borrowed from the expression, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָתְךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם (“the God who brought you up Israel from Egypt”) in Exodus 20:2. It illustrates a parallel with the idea that it is only God who rules the history, referring to Yahweh as “I am He”. Aaron may have intended to present the people with a palpable symbol, a kind of empty throne. The Israelites, however, went astray after the concrete representation, and treated it as an actual deity. They regarded the calf as an emblem of the Lord, and they considered this emblem itself worthy of divine honour, thus making the calf a partner, as it were, of the Lord. Hence the plural. Other “gods” are not named, but Israel attributed characteristics to the golden calf using a Yahwistic pronominal clause, “the God who brought up Israel from Egypt” (Ex 20:2). Their “new religion” is virtually “a parody on Yahwism.” The calf does not represent any new god, but is identical with Yahweh, who has brought the people to

Sinai and entered into a relationship with them on the basis of which he will continue to go with them in future.

The people received the calf accompanied by Aaron's confession "these are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (Ex 32:4). Aaron, in response, declares a sacred day to Yahweh, not to the calf, or to any other god or gods. Aaron proclaimed, "tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord, not to the calf" (Ex 32:5). The word of Aaron in verse 5, *לַיהוָה*, characterized the altar and its sacrifices during the festival as something done for Yahweh confirming that this is a renewal of the covenant. This is made clear in the composition by identifying the calf with the rescue from Egypt, by Aaron's construction of an altar for sacrifices, by his declaration of a *אָנִי*, "feast" for Yahweh, and finally, by the people's worship the next morning with the very offerings Yahweh has specified for himself in verse 6. This scene reminds us that the elders of Israel sat down to eat and drink after making a covenant with God in Exodus 24:11.

It is evident that the emphasis in Exodus 32:1-6 is primarily on the second commandment. Israel has violated Yahweh's own unambiguous requirement about how he is to be worshipped. The Israelites saw the calf as a representation of the Lord, rather than one of another deity. The composite of Exodus 32:1-6 is not an account of the abandonment of Yahweh for other gods. It is an account of the transfer of the center of authority of faith in Yahweh from Moses and the law and the symbols he has announced, to the golden calf without a law, and without any symbols beyond itself. Moses is the representative of a God invisible in mystery. The calf is to be the representative of that same God, whose invisibility and mystery is compromised by a visible image God has

forbidden. It was, therefore, not only just against the first commandment, but also against the second commandment they transgressed. They deformed God in the image of his creation, fashioning an image of Yahweh and declaring that this creation is the god who brought them out of Egypt. The calf is, thus, not only the equation of an idol with God, but also the pagan representation of the true God.

The result of an investigation into the in-textuality of Exodus 32:1-6 confirms that the people replaces God's servant Moses by the golden calf, by which Israel have really given up on Yahweh.

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ).

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1bα).

The god is the one who walks and leads them (v. 1aβ). It stands in contrast to Moses who brought them from Egypt (Ex 32:1bα).

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

While Exodus 32:1bα depicts Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, Exodus 32:1aβ says that it is the golden calf who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, being in accordance with the statement in Exodus 32:4b that designate the golden calf as “Your God, O Israel, who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf” (v.4b).

אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1aβ)

זֶה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הָאֵשׁ הָעֵלֶנּוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1bα)

אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

From a stylistic point of view, firstly, references to the event of bringing Israel up out of the land of Egypt (Cassuto 1967:411; cf. Morberly 1983:46) can be seen in parallelism with verse 32:1aβ and with verse 1bβ. A similar implication can be seen in the parallelism of verse 1bβ with verse 4b. An antithesis in verses 7-8 also points to the supplanting of Moses by an אֱלֹהִים (Cf. Ex 32:1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 23, 33:1).

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם (Ex 32:2)

בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְהֵבִיאוּ אֵלַי

וַיִּתְּפְּרוּ כָל-הָעָם אֶת-נְזָמֵי הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל-אֶהְרֹן (Ex 32:3)

וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסָּכָה (Ex 32:4a)

Verses 2-3 and verse 4a refer to the procedure of making an image of God. Aaron took what the people handed over to him and made it into an idol casted in the shape of a calf (v.4) and fashioned a molten calf - a calf overlaid with molten gold. It was only one golden calf, which was intended to represent one god/God and not many gods.

וַיֵּרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר (Ex 32:5)

וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ מִמָּחָרֶת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל (Ex 32:6)

הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק

Verses 5-6 depict a ceremony for making a covenant between God and Israel as indicted in Exodus 19-24. Thus, it can be considered as a renewal of covenant with Yahweh, not making a covenant with some other god.

Secondly, from a stylistic point of view, as soon as an אֱלֹהִים is made as a substitute for Moses (Morberly 1983:46), who delivered God's word speaking to his people, it turns out to be only a image of God, who is not able to deliver God's word to his people. As Moberly (1983:46-47) contends, "the first is that Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh's guidance and leadership to the people. It is in and through Moses that Yahweh is known and his saving deeds experienced. The second is that the calf is a challenge to Moses' leadership. It is a rival means of mediating Yahweh's presence to the people."

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the golden calf is an image of God. As a result of making an image of God, Yahweh was compared with a god and degraded into a god.

Inner-biblical interpretation evinces that Exodus 32:1-6 can be linked to Exodus 20:2-6. The people forces Aaron to make a god. The god is the one who walks with them and leads them (v. 1: עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ). It is contrasted with God who just speaks to his people (Ex 20:1) and his word is delivered by his servant Moses to his people (Cf. Ex 32:1b α).

עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ (Ex 32:1a β)

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

It was Yahweh himself who brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 20:2). While it is in accordance with the statement in Exodus 20:2 that it is Yahweh himself who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by depicting Moses as the servant of Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 32:1b α), it stands in contrasted to the statement in Exodus 20:2 that it was the golden calf who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, by designating the golden calf as Yahweh who brought Israel from the land of Egypt and attributing the redemptive grace to the golden calf (Ex 32:4b).

זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:1b α)

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (Ex 32:4b)

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים (Ex 20:2)

On syntactical level, the same syntactic structure is shared by the two passages. In Exodus 20:2, the name of God is Yahweh, your God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2) who brought Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Yahweh, your God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2), however, is replaced by the servant of God, Moses whom God used as a his tool to bring his people from Egypt (Ex 32:1). Moreover, Yahweh, your God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Ex 20:2) is eventually substituted by the golden calf. Although the same name of Yahweh, your God, (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ) is used (Ex 20:2; Ex 32:4b), it now has an absolutely different reference: one is God, the other is the golden calf, the image of God. Each of them has the subordinate following clause by which God identifies himself in relation to a peculiar history. The phrase זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ (Ex 32:1b α) is not identical word with יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ in Exodus 20:2, while the phrase אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ex 32:4b) is the same

as יהוה אלהיך (Ex 20:2). However, the phrase זֶה מוֹשֶׁה הָאֵלֵּים (Ex 32:1) can be regarded as identical with יהוה אלהיך (Ex 20:2) in its designating reference, while the phrase אלהיך ישראל (Ex 32:4) is reverting to the fact that Yahweh, your God brought Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex 20:2), that is, in reality, the phrase in Exodus 32:4b attributes the work of salvation to the golden calf, not Yahweh.

Exodus 32:2-4 gives a description of the process of the making of the golden calf. When the people saw the golden calf, they identified it as God “who brought Israel from the land of Egypt, אלהיך ישראל אשר העלוך מארץ מצרים” (Ex 32:4b).

A possible direction of the allusion between the two passages can be suggested. Having made a linguistic inventory, it was necessary to inquire whether any inner-biblical allusion or influence (borrowing) can be indicated. The linguistic correlation between Exodus 20:2-3a and Exodus 32:1, 4 satisfies the conditions for inner-biblical allusion or influence. Text dependence as well as direction of this allusion can therefore be illustrated.

The phrases used in Exodus 32:1 and 4 are evidences that these passages used another text, i.e. Exodus 20:2. The expressions of God’s self-predication like “I am Yahweh, your God” in Exodus 20:2 is almost directly found in Exodus 32:1-6. However, the phrases, “who brought us up out of Egypt” (32:1aβ, 32:1bα and 4b) commonly agree with Exodus 20:1, but both are slightly different in details. While Exodus 32:1bα is the same as Exodus 20:1 in its designating reference that Moses represents Yahweh,

Exodus 32:1a β and 4b are not identical with Exodus 20:1, but replaced Yahweh by the golden calf.

Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 32:2-3, 5-6 also show similarity in theological themes. The phrase $\text{וַיִּשְׂתּוּ וַיִּשְׂכְּלוּ}$ in Exodus 24:11 agrees with $\text{וַיִּשְׂתּוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק}$ in Exodus 32:6. Both indicate an element of the Sinai Covenant. $\text{וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק}$ was probably added in Exodus 32:6b. Thus, this similarity gives a hint that Israel identified the feast with its eating and drinking as an integral element of making a covenant at Sinai. As a result, what they actually did was to perform a renewal of the Sinai Covenant with God Yahweh during the golden calf event.

Thus, the result of exegesis of Exodus 32:1-6 and the inner-biblical interpretation of Exodus 20:2-6 by 32:1-6 confirms that Exodus 32:1-6 explicated the meaning of the prohibition in Exodus 20:4-6. This indicates that Exodus 32:1-6 is a interpretation of Exodus 20:4-6 and alluding to Exodus 20:4-6.

In chapter 4, this study dealt with Isaiah 40:18-20 where forbidding the worship of an image of God stands in relation to the proclamation of God's incomparability, as well as the worship of other gods and their images.

This chapter, firstly, sought exegetically to confirm the conclusion that God's incomparability requires the prohibition of "worshipping God through an image" by studying Isaiah 40:18-20 within its macro-unit as the context of the passage. Isaiah 40:18-20 was therefore analyzed in the context of its macro units in Isaiah 40:12-31.

This in turn was investigated in terms of the rhetorical questions used forbidding idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40-55: Isaiah 41:1-7, 44:6-20 and 46:5-7, and Isaiah as a whole.

Isaiah 40:18 stated the fact that God is not comparable with other gods and their images and clearly indicated that He cannot be replaced by any image.

The process of making an idol is described in Isaiah 40:19-20. It gives a description of the process of manufacturing a single object by two or three craftsmen: Casting an image of bronze in a mould; hammering out thin plates of gold as plating for the bronze statue; soldering these plates of the gold to join with silver-solder; choosing the wood, finding a craftsman capable of working it, and fastening the idol to its base in a permanent way.

The real purpose of Isaiah 40:19-20, however, is not the description of how to make an idol. The immovability of the idol is an important element in Isaiah's polemic. It brings out the absurdity of the reliance on idols, putting them in sharp contrast to God's incomparability. The mocking songs on the fabrications of idols commence each time with a rhetorical question, describing the process of fabrication and end with a mocking of the immovability of the idols. The statue of the god is firmly established-but this means that it cannot be moved either; that is the irony of it, an irony that we can see is taken up again later in the further polemic against idols in the rest of Isaiah 40-55.

Isaiah 40:18 and Isaiah 40:19-20 is structured according to the scheme of God's incomparability and the prohibition of making any image of God. The structure of the unit in Isaiah 40:18-20 can be read as the answers to parallel the rhetoric questions in

verse 18. The rhetorical question in Isaiah 40:18 is “to whom will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?” It can be said that the theological point of departure in Isaiah 40:18-20 is the rhetoric self-assertion of God in verse 18. The answer to this rhetorical question is presented in verses 19-20. The meaning of Isaiah 40:19-20 in relation to God’s incomparability in verse 18 is the insistence on the prohibition of making any image of God.

It has been amply demonstrated in chapter 4 that Isaiah 40:18-20 fits perfectly into the larger context, and proceeds from the preceding verses with the theme of Yahweh’s immeasurability and incomparability. To speak here in verse 19-20 in terms of the nothingness of the idol is a different way of speaking about Yahweh’s incomparability. Isaiah 40:18-20 should be understood in the light of the context in which it stands.

In relation to God’s incomparability, the prohibition against making idols and images of other gods is always tightly bound up with the prohibition to worship God through images. Isaiah 40:18-20 putting some rhetorical questions regarding idol-fabrication in the context of God’s incomparability forbids not only making images of other gods, but also the use of any image of God himself to serve Him. The meaning of the passage with its rhetorical question regarding idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40:18-20 is, thus, not only a critique on serving other gods, but also implies the prohibition against serving God by using any image, as is pertinently forbidden by the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6.

Secondly, the theological-thematic consideration of Isaiah 40:18-20 was also discussed. In Isaiah 40:18-20 the prophet declares Yahweh to be the only God all over the world,

who can never be compared with anything represented in the form of an image. Therefore, in Isaiah 40:18-20, the proclamation of God's incomparability demands the prohibition of worshipping him through images. Israel's affirmative and fair response to God's self-predications would have been to abandon not only the idols of other gods and their images, but also worshipping God through images. Isaiah saw Israel as the covenant community that had the obligation to follow the religious and ethical tenets of the Sinai covenant. In a very careful, and tactful ways - such as the use of the formula "I am Yahweh, your God", he reminded his audience that they were called to live responsibly as the community of the covenant in his prophetic covenant disputation. When Isaiah asks the question, "to whom can God be compared", reminding Israel of their covenant responsibility, he is employing a kind of self-predications in the way that he reused the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue construct given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. Isaiah's references to the covenant responsibility, in connection with this God's self-predication in Exodus 20:2-6, is seen in Isaiah 40:18-20.

The point of this chapter is, therefore, that a rhetorical question with a idol-fabrication passage which belongs to a context which emphasizes God's incomparability, requires the prohibition against representing Yahweh with an image to Israel as the covenantal community.

In chapter 4, this study also dealt with the similarity in negative attitude found in the legal and prophetic parts of the Hebrew Bible towards worshipping God using images. Isaiah's message which is in line with the Pentateuch flows from the office of the prophet as a plenipotentiary of God that has to condemn the transgression of the covenantal law.

This similarity of thought can be seen in respect of several linguistic aspects. The rhetorical pattern in Isaiah 40:18-20, which expresses the same theological theme as Exodus 20:2-6 is relevant to the questions mentioned above to determine the direction of the allusion between the two texts.

Isaiah 40:18, presenting no answer to the rhetorical question, because it is self-evident, represents the affirmation of God's incomparability. Isaiah 40:18 also makes the incomparability of God clear. Isaiah 40:19-20 functions as a duplicated answer of the question asked on God's incomparability in verse 18. It shares this idea with Exodus 20:2-6 and gives evidence of the dependence of one text upon the other.

As Leonard (2008:246) mentions, the rhetoric pattern in Isaiah 40:18 is evidence that this passage uses another text, i.e. Exodus 20:2-3. The expression of God's self-predication "I am Yahweh, your God" is not directly found in the context of Isaiah 40:18-20. The rhetorical questions regarding idol-fabrication in Isaiah 40:18-20 read within its macro-unit, also having rhetorical questions in an idol-fabrication context, showing it is used as a compositional device in Isaiah 40-55 and as part of Isaiah as a whole being a *Genre* of prophetic covenant disputation may indicateds the direction of the allusion between the two passages.

From a thematic perspective, the discussion above, on relevant parallels, showed a consistent pattern. There is a close connection between the proclamation of God's incomparability and the prohibition against the worship of God through images. This can be seen in both Isaiah 40:18-20 and the introduction and first two commandments

of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6. The Isaiah texts were either a reiteration or a reversal of the Exodus text.

Taking these thematic and linguistic agreements in consideration, showing that Exodus 20:2-6 predates Isaiah 40:18-20, it can be concluded that the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2-6 is the source of Isaiah 40:18-20. It shows the same trend when dealing with the rhetorical question regarding idol-fabrication, to remind Israel of the covenant responsibility that they are not to serve other gods including making their image, even the image of God, because of God's incomparability indicated by the Sinai covenant.

Conclusion of Thesis

This thesis suggests three aspects of the phenomenon of aniconism in the Old Testament.

First, the prohibition of making any image of God in the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6 is directly related to the idea of God's incomparability in Exodus 20:2. This in turn is linked to the introduction in Exodus 20:2 stating God's redeeming of Israel from their bondage in Egypt and the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 commanding to worship only God. This can be seen in the construct of 'the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue' in Exodus 20:2-6. God's incomparability forbids serving other gods, including making images of them (Ex 20:3), even the image of God himself (Ex 20:4-6). The prohibition of Exodus 20:4-6 was also shared in the golden calf episode in Exodus 32:1-6.

Secondly, the rhetorical question regarding idol-fabrication in the passage in Isaiah 40:18-20 shares the view point of the construct of ‘the introduction and the first two commandments of the Decalogue’ by applying the prohibition of the second commandment of the Decalogue to make any image of God.

Thirdly, the provenance of the prohibition of making any image of God in the Old Testament can be traced back to the second commandment of the Decalogue in Exodus 20:4-6.

Summarizing these three statement reducing them to one single thesis: The prohibition of aniconism in the Old Testament is based on the idea that Yahweh is absolute unique and not representable by any image, or something in this vein.

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