

41) explains, "In the exilic context, without king or temple, the Law provided a new identity for the remnant of Judah. 'Israel' was still a people bound by blood ties, and closely identified with the land. Most fundamentally, however, Israel was the people bound exclusively to the God Yahweh by covenant."¹⁴ This covenant relationship provided an overarching framework of identity that could adapt the notion of kinship while also extending the boundaries beyond it,¹⁵ but without the temple or the king, and embedded within a foreign nation, that relationship required a new and more robust set of ritual observances in order to generate the opportunities for costly signaling and the senses of social monitoring and punishment that could facilitate YHWH's performance of their prosocial functions. Things like sabbath observance and circumcision became particularly salient in this period, but this would not be enough without the deity's presence in the people's midst and some manner of material locus for that presence.¹⁶

The previous two chapters have discussed some of the ways preexisting modes of divine presencing were renegotiated in order to reflectively account for the loss of the temple and to insulate the deity's presencing media against unauthorized access, duplication, and harm. The heavy restriction of that media, and particularly its confinement to literary channels, limited the ability of the people to experience that presence, which represents a significant prosocial liability. Different authors responded to this liability in different ways, and one such way was to further exalt and expand the deity's purview and power, which we see taking place progressively in the literature (cf. Achenbach 2016). Jeremiah 3:16–17 prophesy of a time when the ark will be forgotten, and Jerusalem will be called "the throne of YHWH" (*kissē' YHWH*). The idea here is to render the absent cultic medium obsolete by framing the entire city as the throne that facilitated the deity's presence. Chapters 1 and 10 of Ezekiel engage in similar rhetoric, but rather than discounting the ark, they present a portable cherubim throne that allowed the deity to travel beyond the confines of a material temple. In Isa 66:1,

which their differing theologies, including the older Yahwist and Elohist ones, stood in tension." This is precisely what we would expect from a document whose function was always intended to extend beyond the mere import of its words.

¹⁴ MacDonald 2003 is an excellent discussion of the nature of this exclusive relationship.

¹⁵ Sylvie Honigman and Ehud Ben-Zvi (2020, 375) note, "In the absence of alternative institutions having the required cultural, mnemonic, and social capital, the literati (and priests) took on the task of shaping a construction of an ethno-cultural group, which although from a certain perspective was a shadow of its glorious past instantiations, was nevertheless perceived in continuity with them, and, to a large extent, their necessary 'historical' continuation."

¹⁶ James Watts (2008) has formulated a three-dimensional understanding of the function of scripture (semantic, performative, and iconic), and through that lens, this section would be focusing on the "iconic" function of the Torah as one of the more salient functions prior to the Achaemenid period.