

Ezekiel, there appears to be a reticence—whether original or constructed—to elaborate on the appearance of the divine. Exodus 24:17 refers to the appearance of YHWH's "glory" (*kəbôd*) as a "devouring fire" ('ēš 'ōkelet). Isaiah 10:17 refers to Israel's "Holy One" (*qādôš*), as a flame. YHWH appears to Moses in Exod 3 in the midst of a fire (Exod 3:2). Even more explicitly, YHWH appears as a "pillar of fire" ('*ammûd* 'ēš), in leading the Israelites through the wilderness during the night (Exod 13:21). Rhetoric about holiness is also concentrated in P's Holiness Code, which emphasizes YHWH's holiness, but more saliently, the cultic and ritual requirements for Israel to become holy. Leviticus 19:2 states: "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them, 'You will be holy [*qədôšim tihyû*], because I—YHWH, your deity—am holy [*qādôš 'ānî*]" (cf. Lev 11:44–45; 20:7). As noted in the previous chapter, the sense of "holy" here seems to relate to purity and cleanliness, which likely influenced the conceptualization of YHWH as holy, making their purity and cleanliness a more salient aspect of their divine profile.

IMMORTALITY. Immortality was generally assumed of deities and was really only explicitly addressed in the context of rhetoric about humanity's status as non-divine (as in Ezek 28:9) or the revocation and demotion of undesirable deities (as in Ps 82). YHWH's immortality, a prototypical feature of generic deity, was most frequently framed in terms of their eternal nature,⁴⁵ as in Gen 21:33, which appositionally refers to YHWH as "Eternal El/Deity [*'ēl 'ōlām*]." Similarly, Exod 15:18 asserts "YHWH will reign forever and ever [*lā 'ōlām wā'ed*]." In Deut 32:40, the Song of Moses has the deity swear an oath on their own life: "As I live forever [*hay 'ānōkî lā 'ōlām*]." These descriptions of the deity's eternal existence were most rhetorically useful in referring to the eternity of YHWH's covenants and promises (Gen 17:19; Exod 31:16–17; 32:13), and to YHWH's sovereignty over the heavens, the earth, and the inhabitants of both, evinced by their pre-existence before the universe and before their antagonists. YHWH's role as creator takes center stage in much of this rhetoric. For example, Jer 10:11 mocks as mortal those deities that were not involved in the creation of the earth: "Thus will you say to them: 'The deities who did not create the skies or the earth will perish from the earth [*yē'badû mē'r 'ā*]' and from under these skies.'" Similarly, Ps 136 represents a lengthy hymn of praise to YHWH for their various creative

⁴⁵ While I render "eternal" for '*ōlām*, the term's sense does not match the contemporary notion of philosophical eternity. Rather, it referred to perpetuity or a duration with no perceptible end. This is also not to say deities could not die or be killed, whether with or without permanent effect. On this, see Smith 2001, 104–31; Machinist 2011.