

Israel ("YHWH's inheritance" [*naḥālat YHWH*]), in effect saying, "Go, worship other gods." Similarly, in 2 Kgs 5:17, the Syrian general, Naaman, after being healed of his disease, asks for two mule-loads of earth to facilitate the worship of YHWH in his home country. Finally, an exiled psalmist in Ps 137:4 laments, "How could we sing a song of YHWH on foreign soil [*'al 'admat nēhār*]?" The concept tacitly underlying all these passages is that deities are prototypically patrons over a nation and do not appropriately function, or are not accessible, outside that purview. While the relationship was fundamentally with the people, since a nation's identity was as saliently linked with territory, so too the conceptualization of that relationship. In this sense, YHWH did not operate any differently from the other deities of ancient Southwest Asia.

The paradigm shift in YHWH's territorialism came with their universalization in the exilic and/or postexilic periods, which was discussed earlier in relation to Ps 82. Expanding the purview of the patron deity beyond national boundaries may have served the immediate rhetorical need of facilitating the perception of access and oversight to the diaspora populations of a splintered nation, but there were other unintended implications related to their conceptualization as patron deity. If all nations were now the purview of the deity of Israel/Judah,⁸ all peoples were potentially YHWH's people. On what grounds were Judahites to assert a unique or exclusive relationship with YHWH? One response was to emphasize Israel's "chosen" or "elected" status, realized either through their covenant relationship with the deity (Deuteronomistic writings) and/or through their purity and holiness (Priestly writings).⁹ Exodus 19:5–6 seem to recognize the need for such status in light of YHWH's purview over the whole earth, and consolidates the two ideologies: "And now, if you carefully heed my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my treasure from among all peoples. For the whole earth is mine [*lī kol-hā'āreṣ*], but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation" (cf. Deut 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4). There was thus an expansion of the limits of YHWH's patronage alongside a dichotomization of its nature. Judah/Israel remained a privileged social group, even as YHWH appropriated responsibility over all the nations of the earth.

DIVINE WAR. Some of the earliest texts in the Hebrew Bible present the deity of Israel as a warrior. Exodus 15:1–12—the earliest portions of the Song of the Sea—may represent the most archaic of these, describing YHWH's defeat of

⁸ Of course, by this time, the population was primarily Judahite, and identified itself as such, even if Israelite identity had been appropriated.

⁹ The need to rationalize this exclusive relationship became the seedbed for the ideologies that are frequently identified by modern scholars as the necessary and sufficient features of monotheism. Cf. MacDonald 2003, 151–81.