The Proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy: A Study of Key Phrases and Contexts

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Abstract

Name Theologians[1] have long argued that Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist relocated Yahweh from earth to heaven and that only his "Name" remained on earth. In the last couple of decades, some (e.g., Wilson, Richter, and Vogt) have challenged this position, arguing that there is more to Yahweh's presence in Deuteronomy than what Name Theologians have acknowledged. While these and other studies have argued well that Yahweh is present on earth in Deuteronomy, this article aims to take the discussion further by looking at the portrayal of the proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy. This aim is reached by inspecting key phrases (e.g., לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, שָׁכַן) by which, and contexts (e.g., Horeb, war camps) in which Yahweh is portrayed as proximate to Israel. Through the article, we show that Deuteronomy does indeed portray Yahweh as not only present on earth but proximate to Israel as well.

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1 "Name Theologians" refers to those who believe that Deuteronomy portrays הוהי as being present in heaven while only his Name was present on earth (Wilson 1995, 3).

1. Introduction

In considering where Yahweh is situated in the book of Deuteronomy and responding to Name Theology's idea that Deuteronomy moves Yahweh from earth to heaven, one could focus on divine presence. However, the focus of "the proximity of Yahweh" was preferred for this study for two reasons. First, much has been written in response to Name Theology that has proved that Yahweh is situated on earth in Deuteronomy. So, while we survey this in the literature review, the making of this point is not the primary aim of this article. The other reason is that in reading the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy we found some phrases that portray Yahweh as proximate to Israel. The focus of this article is to study the use of these fifteen phrases and the seven contexts in which they occur.[2] We have considered only occurrences of the phrases in contexts where there are certain levels of physicality and literality to the context.

We begin with a literature review, furnishing readers with a basic understanding of Name Theology and summarizing the views of three of its significant recent critics. The seven contexts within which the fifteen phrases occur are inspected next to provide a framework for the discussion of the phrases. We identify the contexts, indicate why they are significant, and analyze some verses that fall within each context. The ten most significant of the fifteen phrases are discussed in detail after that. We discuss the semantic nature of these phrases as it relates to divine proximity, and also look at some verses in which these phrases occur. In the final major section, we do exegesis on one of the pertinent texts for each of the seven contexts. We do exegesis on these texts as a sample exercise, to indicate that in Deuteronomy Yahweh is indeed portrayed as proximate to Israel.

2. Literature Review[3]

Much of the discussion concerning divine proximity in Deuteronomy revolves around Name Theology since Name theologians have claimed that, while Yahweh's Name dwells on earth in Deuteronomy, he himself dwells in heaven (Wilson 1995, 3). Name Theology has a long history, many facets, and many adherents. A full survey of these would fall outside the scope of this article, but two key proponents are included in the literature review. After a look at these two scholars, the views of Wilson (1995), Richter (2002), and Vogt (2006), who are Name Theology's most able critics (Block 2015, 235), are presented in summary form.

In 1943 Martin Noth first proposed the idea that the books that span from Deuteronomy to Second Kings were finished off by a single hand (Richter 2002, 1). This theory was based on the fact that these books share certain theological themes (Wilson 1996, 2). This prepared the way for Gerhard von Rad to propose the idea of the deuteronomistic corrector. He proposed that Deuteronomy moves away from the "old crude idea" of Yahweh being physically present at the cult site (Richter 2002, 8, 26), which was an older and more popular idea (Wilson 1995, 3). Von Rad (1975, 184) proposed that Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic literature opposed this idea. Instead, Deuteronomy portrays a severance, Yahweh himself as being in heaven, while

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2 We have identified 15 phrases that appear a total of 140 times in 70 verses. Some statistical information is provided in footnotes as the article progresses.

3 While it may have made sense to include insights from some of the historical and contemporary giants of Old Testament Theology, limited space necessitated a narrowed focus. This led to our limiting our literature review to the views of two significant players in the formation of Name Theology and three of its most able critics.

his Name "lives" at the place of worship in a near material way, almost as a being in its own right. The positioning of the Name at the cult site indicates a paradigm shift in Israel's theology. Deuteronomy, so it is said, is less anthropomorphic and immanent than the Yahwistic and Elohistic sources, and more abstract, demythologized, and transcendent than the Priestly sources (Richter 2002, 7). Deuteronomy moves away from the Yahwistic and Elohistic sources of lawgiving that portray Yahweh as being present on earth, and from the Zion tradition that believed he lives in Jerusalem (Wilson 1995, 3). Various suggestions are made as to why this change took place, whether it was a desire not to limit Yahweh to the sanctuary, or some historic reason (Wilson 1995, 6). The nature of the presence is also debated, whether it was a forwarding station for prayers or some kind of representative presence that is something like a hypostasis (Hundley 2009, 534).

Name Theology has not, however, gone unchallenged. There have been other suggestions for the meaning of the Name formulae found in Deuteronomy. The three most significant are (1) that it signifies the actual presence of Yahweh (Mayes, Rennes, Myers), (2) that it signifies Yahweh taking possession of the sanctuary (McConville, Braulik, Wenham, de Vaux), and (3) that it signifies the proclamation of Yahweh's Name in the cult (Braulik, Weippert, van de Woude; Wilson 1995, 8, 9). The Name dwelling at the sanctuary and Yahweh being in heaven are two major data points that Name theologians have used, and they have also made use of other Ancient Near East (ANE) material. However, there is more to the biblical data on the presence of Yahweh in Deuteronomy than just these two data points. Some scholars have rejected Name Theology based on biblical evidence. The biggest point of data that has drawn Name Theology into question is the presence and pervasion of in לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה Deuteronomy. This is taken to mean "in the presence of Yahweh" and indicates proximity (Wilson 1995, 9, 10). Wilson (1995, 11) argues that Name theologians have not sufficiently answered the problems that לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה causes for them. According to Block (2015, 235) the idea that Deuteronomy's portrayal of Yahweh's presence is a later theological abstraction of an earlier understanding of Yahweh's presence has been ably challenged, particularly by Wilson (1995), Richter (2002), and Vogt (2006), whose views are now presented in summary form.

Wilson (1995, 12) has found that there are references to Yahweh's presence on earth in both the historical (chs. 1–3, 4–5, 9–10) and legal (chs. 12–26) parts of Deuteronomy. The legal material is important because it comments on the place from which Yahweh is supposed to be absent. The historical material is important because it is thought to clearly show the hand of the Deuteronomist, who supposedly espouses Name Theology, so these parts ought to have a more transcendent portrayal of Yahweh's presence (Wilson 1995, 12, 13). Yet what one finds is that the presence of Yahweh is referred to in Deuteronomy in ways that are similar to the Exodus/Numbers accounts, and there are indications of divine presence in Deuteronomy that are not even found in the Tetrateuch. Many of these comments are also found in parts that source critics ascribe to the Deuteronomist, which shows that even the Deuteronomist could not have been committed to a purely transcendent picture of Yahweh (Wilson 1995, 217). After carefully inspecting the occurrences of לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה (before Yahweh)[4] in the legal section (chs. 12–26), Wilson (1995, 217) finds that the reasons put forth for why these references should not be understood literally are unconvincing. Careful consideration of Deuteronomy does, it seems, lead to the conclusion that Yahweh is portrayed as present on earth (e.g., at Horeb, the cult, the war camp) as well as in heaven (Wilson 1995, 215, 216).

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4 Unless otherwise indicated translations of the Hebrew text are our own translations.

In preparing for her PhD research, Richter noticed that all studies on the temple in the Deuteronomistic history assume some form of Name Theology. She was also aware that Name Theology was a vestige of Wellhausen's model for the development of Israel's theology. Since she considered Wellhausen's model to have been well critiqued before, she decided to challenge the centrality that Name Theology is afforded (Richter 2002, v). In her assessment of Name Theology, she drew from ANE philology and archaeology (2002, 1). The Priestly material uses the verb שָׁכַן (to dwell) as a technical theological term for Yahweh dwelling in the midst of Israel, housed in his מִשְׁכָּן (tabernacle). She argued that in light of this it is not difficult to see how Deuteronomy's juxtaposition of the Name and שָׁכַן (to dwell) could have been understood as Yahweh dwelling in the sanctuary (Richter 2002, 12). Targum Onkelos translates any reference to the person or dwelling of God as "Shekinah," so it seems as though they thought that "the Name" was another word for Yahweh . Proponents of Name Theology have assumed there is a universal concept for "name" throughout the ANE, but they have failed to see this idiomatic expression (the Name formulae) as an idiom. In response to this, Richter recalls how James Barr warned that lexicographic research should focus on the semantic meaning of a word in context, rather than seeing a word as a linguistic reflection of theological realities (Richter 2002, 37, 38).

Vogt (2006, 5) says that over time it was found that Deuteronomy's theology on the presence of God is much more complex than what was initially thought. The idea that Yahweh is only present in heaven and not on earth has been successfully challenged (2006, 121). While the Horeb theophany does not have much of an emphasis on visual phenomena, the fact that קוֹל (voice/sound) is qualified by דְּבָרִים (words) shows that the audible phenomenon was intelligible speech (2006, 119). There are multiple indications in Deuteronomy that the people were in close proximity to Yahweh when the Decalogue was declared. Yahweh is portrayed as actually present (2006, 121). It could be said that Deuteronomy conveys Yahweh's invisible presence since "noncorporeality [sic]" and invisibility does not necessarily equate to absence (2006, 122). Exposure to the fire and the voice from the midst of the fire is also portrayed as dangerous and frightening in a real way. If Yahweh was only present in heaven and not in the fire, then there would be no need for the fire to shield him from being seen. Deuteronomy portrays Yahweh as being present both on earth and in heaven (2006, 126). The accounts of the theophany are different in Exodus and Deuteronomy because Deuteronomy is a sermon proclaimed to the people. Hence, there is a greater emphasises on their experience (2006, 123, 127).

In writing on the discourse on the Chosen Place (Deut. 12), Vogt (2006, 192) says that since לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ (to cause his Name to dwell) is a fixed form, it should be taken as an idiom. Following Mayes, he holds that references to Yahweh causing his Name to dwell at the sanctuary are indications of Yahweh's actual presence (2006, 192). Support for this is found in that the discourse on the establishment of the Name is often found in the context of the phrase לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (before Yahweh; 2006, 193). Also, failure to consider the literary context of the instructions on the Chosen Place has led to misinterpretations of the phrase לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ (to cause his Name to dwell). The term שֵׁם (name) is first used in verse 3 with reference to the Canaanite gods (2006, 194). The juxtaposition of the occurrence of שֵׁם (name) in verse 3 with the occurrence in verse 5 is deliberate and contrasts the presence of the Canaanite gods with the presence of Yahweh, following the destruction of the places where the Canaanite gods are worshiped (2006, 195).

3. Contexts

In inspecting the portrayal of the proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy we have identified seven contexts[5] in which the fifteen phrases that indicate divine proximity occur 140 times. The contexts we have identified are (1) "Horeb," (2) "The Chosen Place," (3) "Israel gathered," (4) "in the midst of Israel," (5) "Israel on the move," (6) "in the war camp," and (7) "individuals."

3.1. "Horeb"

"Horeb"[6] is an important context because it was the place where Yahweh gave the law. At Horeb, Israel stood before Yahweh (4:10) and heard his voice (4:12)[7] as he spoke to them face to face (5:4).[8] They heard his voice so clearly that they were terrified (18:16).[9] Moses is also portrayed as standing by Yahweh (5:31)[10] and lying prostrate before him (9:18, 25).

3.2. "The Chosen Place"

"The Chosen Place"[11] was an important cultic site, which makes it worth investigating. It is the place where Moses said Yahweh would place his Name and make his dwelling (12:5).[12] Through the literature review, it was shown that the placing of the Name does indeed relate to divine presence. At the Chosen Place priests stand to minister (18:7) and worshipers make confessions when they make offerings (26:5) "before Yahweh."[13] The Chosen Place is also the site where, during festivals, the Israelites were to appear before Yahweh (16:16; 31:11).[14]

3.3. "Israel gathered"

The category "Israel gathered"[15] is one we constructed for verses where members of the Israelite community were gathered for various purposes. Examples of this are when they are gathered for

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5 "Contexts" here refers to physical contexts, i.e., places where or situations in which the potential indications of proximity occur.

6 Horeb is the name for Mount Sinai that is used in Deuteronomy (Barry et al., 2016, Mount Horeb). Of the seventy verses inspected, 31% of the verses occur in the context of "Horeb." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is דבר* 3%, בֵּין 3%, פָּנָה 4%, עִם 4%, עַם 4%, קרב* 4%, פְּנֵי יְהוָה 5%, רָאָה 7%, קהל* 7%, עָמַד 12%, קוֹל 15%, שָׁמַע 15%, מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ 21%.

7 The statement that Israel came near and stood at the foot of the mountain is formal court language, since, for the moment, Horeb was transformed into the throne room of Yahweh (Block 2012, 126).

8 "Face to face" means Yahweh spoke directly to the people of Israel (Christensen 2001, 113).

9 This is a reference to when the people requested that Moses mediate because they were afraid of dying (Christensen 2001, 409).

10 The people were sent back to their tents, but Moses continued in God's presence (Craigie 1976, 145) for another forty days and nights (Christensen 2001, 135).

11 Of the seventy verses inspected, 30% of the verses occur in the context of "The Chosen Place." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is עָמַד 6%, שִׂים 9%, רָאָה 10%, שָׁכַן 22%, פְּנֵי יְהוָה 53%.

12 In light of the importance of divine presence in ANE and Israelite thought, it is safe to assume an expression like "place the name" does relate to divine presence (Hundley 2009, 543).

13 The phrase לִפְנֵי יְהוָה can mean "in the presence of Yahweh" and is an indication of Yahweh's proximity (Wilson 1995, 9, 10).

14 In the ANE, temples were not merely monuments but were thought to be the dwellings of deities. The frequency with which "the place that Yahweh will choose" occurs in the context of לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (before Yahweh) reinforces this interpretation (Block 2015, 235).

15 Of the seventy verses that were included in the study, 12% of the verses occur in the context of "Israel gathered." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is קהל* 55%, פְּנֵי יְהוָה 22%, עָמַד 9%.

judgement (19:17),[16] or just as a religious assembly (23:1–3, 8),[17] or to renew the covenant before crossing the Jordan (29:10[9], 15[14]), or to sacrifice a peace offering after crossing the Jordan (27:7).

3.4. *"In the midst of Israel"*

"In the midst of Israel"[18] is the context for verses that refer to Yahweh being in the midst of Israel as a community, whether at a particular time or as a principle truth. The chronologically finite verses involve them losing a battle (1:42)[19] and facing many troubles (31:17)[20] because Yahweh was not in their midst. We also encounter them weeping before Yahweh (1:45). Verses that speak of Yahweh being in their midst as a principle truth involve him being near when they call on him (4:7),[21] and him being zealous for them in their midst (6:15)— including him being ready to discipline them if they wander off.

3.5. *"Israel on the move"*

The context "Israel on the move"[22] refers to verses that portray Yahweh as proximate to Israel while they were travelling. Reference is made to Yahweh leading them (1:33;[23] 8:2)[24] personally (4:37)[25] and being with them (2:7; 31:6)[26] on the way as they went.

3.6. *"In the war camp"*

"In the war camp"[27] is the context for verses where Yahweh was present in the camp as they marched out to Holy War. Moses says it is Yahweh who goes before them (1:30),[28] is in their midst (7:21),[29] and is with them (20:1, 4).[30] But he also warns that his presence in the camp requires sanctity (23:14[15]).[31]

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16 Two parties engaged in litigation were to stand before Yahweh. This was, however, not at a sanctuary, but in front of one of the priests living in their towns that were charged with judicial duties (Tigay 1996, 184).

17 The noun קָהָל (assembly) was used for non-religious assemblies at times (Lewis 1980, 790). However, according to Craigie (1976, 262) the "assembly of the Lord" refers to the covenant community of Yahweh, especially when they are gathered in his presence.

18 Of the seventy verses that were included in the study, 7% of the verses occur in the context "in the midst of Israel." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is קרב* 67%, פָּנֶה 17%, פְּנֵי יְהוָֹה 16%.

19 Without Yahweh's presence, the Israelites could not win a Holy War (Christensen 2001, 33).

20 Having forsaken Yahweh and his covenant, Yahweh would also forsake them, and they would come to realize that it is due to his absence that they are suffering harm (Craigie 1976, 334).

21 The gods of the polytheistic religions were noted for being distant, but Israel's God, though transcendent, was at the same time near and ready to be called upon (Hall 2000, 95).

22 Of the seventy verses that were included in the study, 7% of the verses occur in the context "Israel on the move." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is הָלַךְ 43%, עִם 29%, רָאָה 14%, פָּנֶה 14%.

23 The cloud and the fire were constant, visible signs of Yahweh's presence with them ever since they had left Egypt (Tigay 1996, 18).

24 Moses instructs the people to remember that Yahweh was present with them in the desolation of the wilderness as well (Craigie 1976, 162).

25 The noun פָּנֶה is used here in the sense of Yahweh's own presence (HALOT 1999, 941).

26 This is an exhortation to the people before he addresses Joshua (31:1). With full confidence in the presence of Yahweh in their midst, the army could be confident that they would be successful (Craigie 1976, 332).

27 Of the seventy verses that were included in the study, 7% of the verses occur in the context "in the war camp." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is הָלַךְ 37%, קרב* 25%, עִם 25%, רָאָה 25%.

28 This text promised Israel that Yahweh would go before them to protect them (Tigay 1996, 17).

29 Moses here shifts the focus to Yahweh's awesome presence (Block 2012, 216). In 6:15 the awesomeness of Yahweh's presence in the midst of Israel is meant to be a deterrent to sin (Tigay 1996, 81). Here it is a reminder of the awesomeness of his presence among them that is meant to put them at ease (Block 2012, 216).

30 The priests were to remind the people that there was no need to be anxious about the outcome of the battle because Yahweh their God would be present with them (Craigie 1976, 240).

31 Yahweh is portrayed as the Divine Warrior that marches in the midst of Israel to save them (Yamoah 2015, 157).

3.7. *"Individuals"*

The context "individuals"[32] refers to verses in which Yahweh's proximity to individuals is in focus. There are some verses from Horeb where Moses alone is in focus, but these were left with the other Horeb verses. If the verses from Horeb that are focused on Moses are left out, most of the remaining verses focus on Joshua. Moses tells Joshua Yahweh will be with him (31:8).[33] Yahweh appears in the tent of meeting (31:15)[34] to address Joshua[35] and to say that he will be with Joshua (31:23).[36] One verse focuses on Yahweh's proximity to Moses, whom he knew face to face (34:11).[37]

4. Phrases

In inspecting the portrayal of the proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy we have identified fifteen phrases that occur 140 times in the 70 verses that we identified. In this section, we provide some notes on the semantic character of the ten most significant ones, stating why they are significant to the study of the proximity of Yahweh. We also indicate some of the verses in which these phrases are used.

4.1. פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה *(Before Yahweh)*[38]

The most important phrase for this study is פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה (face of Yahweh). Multiple authors (HALOT 2000, 941; van Rooy 1998, 639; van de Woude 1997, 1012) indicate that when פָּנֶה is qualified by יְהֹוָה it is a reference to the personal presence of Yahweh and thus an indication of proximity. The phrase לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה did not reach the point of being an independent theological construct in the Hebrew Bible (van Rooy 1998, 638). There was no intermediary designated פָּנִים (face), but its use corresponds to the profane use in that פָּנִים is used for personal presence (van der Woude 1997, 1005). Thus, it signifies Yahweh himself. It is used in multiple places as a reference to Yahweh's presence. It does not focus on Yahweh's face, but rather on the locus of his presence (1997, 1012). Where פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה is the active subject of a verb it can be assumed the statement has theological significance (1997, 1004). For example, in Deuteronomy 4:37 the phrase [39] וַיּוֹצִאֲךָ בְּפָנָיו (and he brought you out by his own presence) is an indication that Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt by his own presence, or by himself (HALOT 2000, 941). In Deuteronomy 5:4 the expression "face to face" (פָּנִים בְּפָנִים) is also used to describe a personal encounter (van Rooy 1998, 639). Beyond that, the preposition לִפְנֵי can also be used with Yahweh for actions that are performed before Yahweh, like eating or crying (HALOT 2000, 942).

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32 Of the seventy verses that were included in the study, 6% of the verses occur in the context of "individuals." The percentage breakdown of the phrases that are used for this context is פָּנֶה 50%, רָאָה 25%, עִם 25%.

33 Here Moses repeats to Joshua what he said to the people, stating that Yahweh will go before him and be present with him, and tells him to be courageous (Block 2012, 723).

34 Yahweh's presence was experienced in the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent (Craigie 1976, 334).

35 Admittedly Moses was also present, but it was a private ceremony that followed the public address at which Yahweh first addressed Moses and then Joshua (Craigie 1976, 334).

36 Yahweh himself makes the same promise that Moses made in v. 8, that Yahweh would be with Joshua (Christensen 2001, 776).

37 Moses had direct, unmediated contact with Yahweh and was more intimately acquainted with Yahweh than any other prophet (Tigay 1996, 340).

38 The expression פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה means "face of Yahweh," but its idiomatic meaning is often "before Yahweh." The phrase occurs 25 times in 22 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 18% of the phrases.

39 Because of how closely related the applicable occurrences of פָּנֶה are to פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה some notes on it are included in the discussion on פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה However, the statistical information in the above footnote refers to פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה on its own.

Moving on to some specific verses, the expression פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה occurs in many of the contexts that we have identified. It is used for when Israel was assembled to appear before Yahweh at Horeb (4:10).[40] At certain times, like at the three major festivals (16:16),[41] Israel had to appear before Yahweh at the Chosen Place.[42] Israel assembled before Yahweh to renew the covenant before they crossed the Jordan (29:10[9]) and they were to sacrifice a peace offering before Yahweh after they crossed the Jordan (27:7).

4.2. דבר* (Speak/Word)[43]

The phrase [44]דבר* is another indicator of the proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy. The verb (דִּבֶּר) focuses on the action of speaking out with sound being heard (HALOT 2000, 66; Gerleman 1997, 327; Swanson 1997, #1819). It contrasts with verb אָמַר in that אָמַר often signifies the content of the communication, while דִּבֶּר signifies the act of speaking (HALOT 2000, 66). The noun דָּבָר does not simply mean "word" but also signifies the content of what is communicated (Gerleman 1997, 329).

The phrase דבר* is only used in the context of "Horeb." Examples of this kind of communication include Yahweh letting Israel hear his words (4:10)[45] and Yahweh speaking to Israel face to face when he gave them the Decalogue (5:4).[46] After the people indicated a desire for Moses to mediate, Yahweh instructed Moses to stand by him so that he could tell Moses the commandments (5:31).[47]

4.3. מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ (From the midst of the Fire)[48]

Another phrase that is significant for an inquiry into the proximity of Yahweh in Deuteronomy is מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ (from the midst of the fire). In the formation of the religious tradition of Israel, fire plays an important role in theophanies (Stolz 1997, 185). Multiple books in the Hebrew Bible portray Yahweh as manifesting himself through fire theophanies (Naude 1998, 535), but in Deuteronomy, the fire theophanies at Horeb have a unique nuance in the conceptual framework. Deuteronomy conveys the idea of the mountain burning with fire because of Yahweh's presence (4:11; 5:23; 9:15) and also the concept of Yahweh speaking from the midst of the fire (4:12, 15, 33, 36; 5:4f, 22, 24–26; 9:10; 10:4; 18:16; Stolz 1997, 186).

The phrase מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ (from the midst of the fire) is only used in the context of "Horeb." The words of Yahweh are heard from heaven and the midst of the fire (4:36).[49] Yahweh's voice was also heard from the midst of the fire (5:23)[50] and he spoke from the midst of the fire (9:10).[51]

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40 The communication that Israel received from Yahweh was meant to instil in them a lifelong reverence (Tigay 1996, 46).

41 The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.

42 Temples were thought to be the dwellings of deities and here a conviction is betrayed that Yahweh lived at the Chosen Place (Block 2015, 235).

43 The phrase דבר* occurs 16 times in 14 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 11% of the phrases.

44 The asterisk indicates phrases for which both the verbal and nominal forms were considered. For the phrase דבר both the Piel form of the verb (דִּבֶּר) and the noun (דָּבָר) were taken into consideration.

45 Cf. footnote 42.

46 "Face to face" here means Yahweh spoke to Israel directly (Christensen 2001, 113).

47 Cf. footnote 11.

48 The phrase מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ occurs 11 times in 11 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 8% of the phrases.

49 The emphasis here is on the spoken word of God. Some see two different traditions brought together here, with the one seeing Yahweh speaking from heaven and the other seeing him speaking from the earth. But this verse reflects the struggle in dealing with the transcendence and immanence of Yahweh (Hall 2000, 107).

50 Here (5:23–27) Israel's fearful response to the theophany that occurred when they heard the decalogue themselves is recorded (Hall 2000, 126).

51 The words that they heard Yahweh speak were the Ten Commandments, which they heard themselves (Christensen 2001, 187).

4.4. שָׁמַע (to Hear)[52]

The verb שָׁמַע (to hear) is also found in some verses where divine proximity is indicated. While it can have the meaning of, for example, hearing in the sense of obeying or understanding (HALOT 2000, 1570), it can also be used for physically hearing something (HALOT 2000, 1570; Aitken 1998, 175; Schult 1997, 1376; Swanson 1997, #9048; Austel 1980, 938). The verb שָׁמַע is used for hearing God's voice in natural phenomena (Aitken 1998, 175), but also for people (directly and indirectly) hearing divine statements (Schult 1997, 1378). In Deuteronomy 4 and 5, it refers to physically hearing Yahweh's voice (Aitken 1998, 176) and throughout Deuteronomy, it refers to hearing Yahweh's commandments (Shult 1997, 1979).

All the verses from Deuteronomy that contain שָׁמַע in the context of divine proximity occur at Horeb. The Israelites hear the words of Yahweh (4:10);[53] they hear the voice of Yahweh (4:33);[54] they sent Moses to go near to hear what Yahweh would say (5:27).[55]

4.5. קהל * (to Assemble/Assembly)[56]

The phrase קהל[57]* is also important in certain verses that indicate divine proximity. The verb קָהַל is used for summoning an assembly (HALOT 2000, 1079). The noun קָהָל is used for various assemblies, but especially ones that are held for religious purposes (Lewis 1980, 790). In these cases, it refers to the cultic community (Müller 1997, 1119) and could be used in the combination קְהַל יְהוָה (assembly of Yahweh; HALOT 2000, 1079). In these cases, the reference to the cultic community has a firmly demarcated membership. Day of assembly (יוֹם הַקָּהָל) is used for Israel's theophanic encounter with Yahweh at Horeb (Müller 1997, 1123) when they received the Law (Carpenter 1998, 889).

The phrase קהל is used in a variety of contexts. It is used when Moses is instructed to gather Israel to Yahweh (4:10).[58] The day that Israel gathered at Horeb to receive the Law is called the day of assembly (10:4).[59] There were also regulations which determined that certain individuals were not allowed in the religious gatherings (23:1–3 [2–4]).[60]

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52 The phrase שָׁמַע occurs 11 times in 10 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 8% of the phrases.

53 In verse 9 they are told to remember and in verse 10 Moses refers to the time Yahweh assembled them (Block 2012, 126) to give them the Law (Christensen 2001, 81).

54 The belief that seeing Yahweh could be fatal was often expressed (e.g., Gen 32:21; Exod 33:20–23; Isa 6:5), and this passage seems to imply that hearing Yahweh might be similarly dangerous (Tigay 1996, 55).

55 Yahweh's fiery presence made them realize that he is indeed a living God, but they were afraid of the danger it holds, so they sent Moses to act as a mediator by going near (Block 2012, 174).

56 The phrase קהל* occurs 11 times in 9 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 8% of the phrases.

57 Both the verbal form (קָהַל) and the nominal form (קָהָל) were taken into consideration for this study.

58 Cf. footnote 55.

59 The language used here is again the language of theophany (Christensen 2001, 192).

60 The noun קָהָל (assembly) was used for non-religious assemblies as well (Lewis 1980, 790). However, according to Craigie (1976, 262), the "assembly of the Lord" refers to the covenant community of Yahweh, especially when they are gathered in his presence.

4.6. רָאָה *(to See)*[61]

The phrase רָאָה occurs in some verses where Yahweh is portrayed as proximate to Israel. The verb refers to seeing something physically with one's eyes (Naude 1998, 1006; Culver 1980, 823). One of the theological uses of the verb is for Yahweh seeing people (Naude 1998, 1009), but another use is also for people seeing him (Vetter 1997, 1179). In the cultic realm, there were some references to people seeing the face of Yahweh, but this was changed from the Qal stem to the Niphal stem (appearing before the face of Yahweh) for doctrinal reasons, based on Exodus 33:20 (1997, 1179). For non-Israelites, seeing the face of a deity meant going to the temple to look at the idol. Israelite worship did not involve looking at an idol. However, when used for the Israelites this expression should not be understood in merely spiritual, as opposed to sensory, terms (1997, 1180). The face of Yahweh denotes the very person of Yahweh (Naude 1998, 1010), so this should be understood as an encounter between Israel and Yahweh in the real world (Vetter 1997, 1180).

The verb הרָאָ is used in a variety of the identified contexts. It is used for Yahweh showing his glory to Israel and speaking to them as mere humans (5:24).[62] Three times a year Israel was meant to appear before (or see) the face of Yahweh (16:16).[63] Yahweh was able to see indecent things in the war camp (23:14 [15]).[64] Yahweh also appeared at the tent of meeting to commission Joshua (31:15).[65]

4.7. קוֹל *(Voice)*[66]

The noun קוֹל (voice/sound) also occurs in some verses that portray Yahweh as proximate to Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy. The noun קוֹל basically refers to anything that can be perceived acoustically (Labuschagne 1997, 1133), like voices and noises (Domeris 1998, 898). It is used in such expressions as קוֹל יְהוָה (the voice of Yahweh; HALOT 2000, 1084) and קוֹל אֱלֹהִים (the voice of God; 2000, 1085), and sometimes with the sense of being audible (2000, 1084). Throughout the Hebrew Bible קוֹל most often refers to intelligible sound, of which the revelation of God's voice through visions and aural experiences takes precedence (Domeris 1998, 898, 901). While God's voice is sometimes identified in the Hebrew Bible with natural phenomena like thunder, Deuteronomy distinguishes between Yahweh's voice and natural phenomena (Labuschagne 1997, 1135, 1136). The Hebrew Bible also indicates that Yahweh can hear people's voices (Deut 1:34, 35; 5:28; 26:7; 33:7; 1136).

In the context of divine proximity, the noun קוֹל occurs only in the Horeb narratives. Examples of this include Israel hearing the sound of Yahweh's words (4:12)[67] and Israel also hearing Yahweh's voice (5:24).[68]

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61 The phrase רָאָה occurs 10 times in 9 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 7% of the phrases.
62 The people asked Moses to be their representative because they were apprehensive, due to their experience of Yahweh's presence (Craigie 1976, 145).
63 Cf. footnote 44.
64 Yahweh's presence in the camp is a prerequisite for military victory, and the verse portrays him as a divine commander that is inspecting the camp and who will abandon the camp if he finds anything indecent (Block 2012, 538).
65 A pillar of cloud was a common manifestation of Yahweh's presence during the wilderness period and was a continuation of his presence at Sinai (Hall 2000, 460).
66 The noun קוֹל occurs 9 times in 8 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 7% of the phrases.
67 Cf. footnote 8.
68 Cf. footnote 64.

4.8. קרב* *(to Draw Near/ Near /Midst)*[69]

The phrase קרב*[70] also occurs in some pertinent texts that portray Yahweh as proximate to Israel. The basic meaning of the Semitic root קרב is to be near or approach (HALOT 2000, 1132). The verb קָרַב means to come near and indicates approaching in a spatial sense (Kühlewein 1997, 1165) to the nearest and most intimate proximity (Coppes 1980, 811). The adjective קָרוֹב connotes spatial proximity (Arnold 1998, 976) and the preposition קֶרֶב means middle or midst (HALOT 2000, 1135). The preposition קֶרֶב is used for Yahweh being in the midst of Israel in the Hebrew Bible (2000, 1136). The phrase קרב is also used in the cultic setting (Kühlewein 1997, 1165). The adjective קָרוֹב is used for Yahweh being near to humans and the verb קָרַב is used for humans approaching Yahweh (Arnold 1998, 976). Sometimes there is an accompanying reason for moving closer, like when Moses approached Yahweh to hear his words as a representative of the people (1998, 977).

The phrase קרב occurs in a variety of the identified contexts. Yahweh can be absent from the midst of Israel at a specific time (1:42).[71] Yahweh is near at hand and ready to help Israel if they cry out for help (4:7);[72] Israel sent Moses to go near to Yahweh and hear his words for them (5:27)[73]; Israel is told that Yahweh's nearness has consequences (6:15)[74] and requirements (23:14[15]).[75]

4.9. עָמַד *(to Be Stationed)*[76]

The verb עָמַד occurs in some verses where divine proximity is described. The verb means "to stand," but when used with the preposition לִפְנֵי it can mean to stand respectfully before (HALOT 2000, 841). One theologically significant sense in which עָמַד is used is for standing before Yahweh (Allen 1980, 673). This use most often applies to the Levites, though in Deuteronomy it is also used for Israel (4:10) and Moses (5:5; Amsler 1997, 923). This sense of standing before Yahweh is a common motif, and it signifies standing in Yahweh's presence (Martens 1998, 432). In the context of litigation, עָמַד is also used for two parties that stand before Yahweh for judgement (19:17; Allen 1980, 674).

The verb עָמַד is used in a variety of the contexts that we have identified. Israel stood before Yahweh at Horeb (4:10);[77] the Levites stand before Yahweh (10:8) to minister;[78] Israel stands before Yahweh to renew the covenant (29:15[14]).[79]

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69 The phrase קרב* occurs 9 times in 9 of the 70 verses that were inspected. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 6% of the phrases.

70 For this phrase, the verb (קָרַב), adjectival (קָרוֹב), and noun (קֶרֶב) forms were inspected.

71 Cf. footnote 20.

72 The polytheistic gods were noted for being distant, but Israel's God, though transcendent, was at the same time near and ready to be called upon (Hall 2000, 95).

73 Cf. footnote 57.

74 Yahweh is in the midst of Israel and he was zealously seeking their good, so if they were to act like the Canaanites, he was ready to treat them like Canaanites by destroying them for their wickedness (Block 2012, 193).

75 Here Yahweh is portrayed as the Divine Warrior that marches in the midst of Israel to save them, so they had to maintain purity (Yamoah 2015, 157).

76 The phrase עָמַד occurs 9 times in 9 of the 70 verses that were inspected. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 6% of the phrases.

77 Cf. footnote 8.

78 To stand before Yahweh here means to minister before Yahweh (Hall 2000, 194).

79 Both those who were present and those of future generations were considered to be present and binding themselves to God by this covenant (Tigay 1996, 278).

4.10. שָׁכַן (to Dwell)[80]

A verb that often features in the discussion of divine presence in Deuteronomy is שָׁכֵן. It means "to dwell" and in one-third of all the occurrences of this word, it has Yahweh as subject (Wilson 1998, 109). At times, it is used in the sense of dwelling "in the midst of." This use occurs in the Piel stem and it applies to the times that Moses said that Yahweh would make his Name dwell somewhere (Görg 1997, 701). There are several interpretations of the meaning of the expression, "making the Name dwell." One of these interpretations is that it refers to Yahweh's personal presence that manifests itself with regards to the cultic procedures (HALOT 2000, 1499). The verb שָׁכֵן allows Yahweh to retain his freedom and transcendence, while also allowing him to be immanent and still present among his people (Wilson 1998, 110).

All the occurrences of שָׁכֵן are used in the context of the Chosen Place. Yahweh promises to make his habitation at the Chosen Place (12:5)[81] and to make his Name dwell there (12:11).[82]

5. Exegesis of Pertinent Texts

In this section, we provide exegesis of seven pertinent texts in canonical order—each from the seven contexts that have been identified for this study. The hope is that through exegeting these seven texts from these seven contexts, further evidence will be provided that Deuteronomy does indeed contain indications of Yahweh's proximity to Israel.

5.1. Deuteronomy 4:37 (Israel on the move)

וְתַחַת כִּי אָהַב אֶת־אֲבֹתֶיךָ וַיִּבְחַר בְּזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו וַיּוֹצִאֲךָ בְּפָנָיו בְּכֹחוֹ הַגָּדֹל מִמִּצְרָיִם:

"He loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them, therefore he brough you out of Egypt himself, by his great power."

Multiple authors (Block 2012, 143; Christensen 2001, 96; HALOT 2000, 941; van der Woude 1997, 1004; Tigay 1996, 57) agree that בְּפָנָיו (by his face) here indicates that Yahweh himself delivered Israel from Egypt. Van der Woude (1997, 1004) states that when פְּנֵי יְהוָה is the subject of a verb it usually occurs in theologically significant statements. According to Tigay (1996, 57), this metaphor indicates that Yahweh did not use an intermediary to bring Israel out of Egypt and that this is one of many verses that indicate Yahweh's direct involvement with the Exodus event. Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt so that they would know that there is no God besides him (4:35; Christensen 2001, 96).

5.2. Deuteronomy 5:4–5 (Horeb)

פָּנִים | בְּפָנִים דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בָּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ:
אָנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין־יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בָּעֵת הַהִוא לְהַגִּיד לָכֶם אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה כִּי יְרֵאתֶם מִפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ וְלֹא־עֲלִיתֶם בָּהָר לֵאמֹר: ס

"Yahweh spoke to you face to face on the mountain out of the midst of the fire. I stood between Yahweh and you at the time so that I could declare his words to you, because you were afraid of the fire and would not ascend the mountain."

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[80] The phrase שָׁכֵן occurs 7 times in 7 of the 70 inspected verses. Of the 140 times that these 15 phrases occur in the 70 verses, it accounts for 5% of the phrases.

[81] The Chosen Place was where Yahweh's habitation was to be and where God was to meet with humans (Craigie 1976, 191), where Yahweh was accessible for worship and where he focused his attention (Tigay 1996, 120).

[82] This was Yahweh's chosen sanctuary where they were to rejoice before him (Craigie 1976, 192).

The phrase פָּנִים בְּפָנִים could be translated "face to face" and multiple authors (Block 2015, 277; Cook 2015, 60; Block 2012, 155; Woods 2008, Deut 5:4–5; Vogt 2006, 140; Christensen 2001, 113; HALOT 2000, 941; Tigay 1996, 61; Kalland 1992, 52; Craigie 1976, 128) support seeing this as an indication of a personal, intimate encounter between Yahweh and Israel. This does not require that Israel actually saw Yahweh's face since it is an idiom (Craigie 1976, 128). But this is an explicit indication of proximity, such that even Weinfeld (as a proponent of the demythologization school)[83] argued that this idea is foreign to the thinking of Deuteronomy. While פָּנִים בְּפָנִים is admittedly found nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, Vogt says that many interpreters (e.g., BDB; van de Woude) see פָּנִים בְּפָנִים as synonymous with פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים (face to face). For three of the five times that פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים occurs (Gen 32:31[30]; Exod 33:11; Judg 6:22) in reference to Yahweh, it is a clear indication that divine presence is meant (Vogt 2006, 141).

A point of debate is how these two verses relate to each other, considering verse 4 has Yahweh speaking to the people while verse 5 has Moses declaring the word of Yahweh to them. Some commentators (e.g., Driver, Hoffman) think that while the Israelites heard Yahweh's voice, they were too distant to make out what was being said, and so had to be told what was said. But Tigay (1996, 62) sees no good reason why they would be unable to hear Yahweh themselves. On the enigma of how verses 4 and 5 relate, Tigay (1996, 62) says that if they are read together the problem might be solved. Moses may have wanted to stand between Yahweh and the people at the request of the people, but Yahweh insisted that they hear him themselves. Vogt (2006, 43) also says that עֹמֵד בֵּין (standing between) should not merely be taken as an indication of Moses's mediatory role. Since it is used in a locative sense elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, it should here also be understood as indicating Moses's physical location. Craigie (1976, 128) believes that these verses press the reality of the events by identifying the present hearers with those who were present at Horeb. Moses reminds the people that he had to mediate because they were so terrified by their experience of the presence of the living God (Craigie 1976, 128). Block (2012, 155) believes this parenthetical note (5:4–5) is a reminder to Israel that the revelation at Sinai consisted of both mediated and direct divine speech.

5.3. Deuteronomy 6:15 (in the midst of Israel)

כִּי אֵל קַנָּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּקִרְבֶּךָ פֶּן־יֶחֱרֶה אַף־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּךְ וְהִשְׁמִידְךָ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה:
"For Yahweh is a jealous God in your midst—lest his anger be ignited against you and he destroy you from the land."

The recognition that Yahweh was in the midst of Israel supervising their affairs was meant to be a deterrent to sin. When this verse is read with verse 16, one sees that they were to remember that Yahweh had been in their midst to provide for them and that they should not question his presence and power to provide (Tigay 1996, 81). In the wilderness, Israel challenged Yahweh to prove his presence among them by supplying their physical desires, and the Israelites were to remember that he is in their midst and not make this mistake again (Block 2012, 194). Yahweh was in their midst to bless them as well as judge them, and his commitment to them would not allow for apostasy to go unpunished (Hall 2000, 144).

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[83] This school of thought sees in Deuteronomy a deliberate move away from seeing Yahweh as anthropomorphic to seeing him in more demythologized and rationalized ways (Vogt 2006, 2).

5.4. Deuteronomy 16:16 (The Chosen Place)

שָׁלֹושׁ פְּעָמִ֣ים ׀ בַּשָּׁנָ֡ה יֵרָאֶה֩ כָל־זְכוּרְךָ֜ אֶת־פְּנֵ֣י ׀ יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ בַּמָּקֹום֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִבְחָ֔ר בְּחַ֧ג הַמַּצֹּ֛ות וּבְחַ֥ג הַשָּׁבֻעֹ֖ות וּבְחַ֣ג הַסֻּכֹּ֑ות וְלֹ֧א יֵרָאֶ֛ה אֶת־פְּנֵ֥י יְהוָ֖ה רֵיקָֽם׃

"Three times a year all your men shall see the face of Yahweh your God at the place which he will choose. At the Passover Feast, at Pentecost and at the Feast of Tabernacles. You shall not see the face of Yahweh emptyhanded."

The usual translation "appear before Yahweh" conveys the meaning of the traditional vocalization, which puts רָאָה in the Niphal stem (יֵרָאֶה) rather than the Qal stem (יִרְאֶה), which would be translated "he shall see the face of Yahweh." Without vowels, the verb form יראה could be read as either stem. However, because of grammatical reasons (the direct object marker אֶת־), it makes the most sense to take the phrase אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה as the direct object of the verb, which favors reading it as a Qal stem verb (Tigay 1996, 159). The Niphal was most likely an emendation that was made so that the reading is more theologically acceptable and less anthropomorphic (McCarthy 2007; Deut 16:16). Because Exodus 33:20 says that a human cannot look at Yahweh and live, the Masoretic scribes preferred reading יראה as a Niphal rather than Qal (van der Woude 1997, 1010). The expression is an idiom, after all, and the Masoretic scribes did not want the readers to think that the text meant that the early Israelites literally saw Yahweh's face at the sanctuary (Tigay 1996, 159).

While it is indeed a metaphor, it is nevertheless an explicit reference to contact between Yahweh and Israel (Block 2015, 241). In the ANE, temples were not merely monuments that people visited. They were thought to be the dwellings of the deities, and the frequency with which the phrase "the place that Yahweh will choose" appears with לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (before Yahweh) reinforces this interpretation (2015, 235). Whether the Niphal or Qal reading is followed, the language is clearly anthropomorphic, and it emphasises that being aware of and responding to the personal presence of Yahweh was the highpoint of worship (Cairns 1992, 159).

5.5. Deuteronomy 23:14[15] (the war camp)

כִּ֞י יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ מִתְהַלֵּ֣ךְ ׀ בְּקֶ֣רֶב מַחֲנֶ֗ךָ לְהַצִּֽילְךָ֙ וְלָתֵ֤ת אֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙ לְפָנֶ֔יךָ וְהָיָ֥ה מַחֲנֶ֖יךָ קָדֹ֑ושׁ וְלֹֽא־יִרְאֶ֤ה בְךָ֙ עֶרְוַ֣ת דָּבָ֔ר וְשָׁ֖ב מֵאַחֲרֶֽיךָ׃ ס

"For Yahweh your God walks about in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to hand over your enemies to you, so your camp should be holy, so that he does not see any indecent thing in your midst and turn back from you."

This text is quite an anthropomorphic portrayal of Yahweh, as indicated by words like הָלַךְ (to walk), שׁוּב (to turn back) and רָאָה (to see; Yamoah 2015, 148, 156, 157). Even von Rad (1991, 117), who believed that the author of Deuteronomy consistently situates Yahweh in heaven to avoid the notion that Yahweh is personally present at the sanctuary, finds this text odd. He believes these instructions on the war camp (23:9–14 [10–15]) contain texts that are older than the rest. However, multiple authors (Cook 2015, 171; Yamoah 2015, 148; Hall 2000, 249; Merrill 1994, 310; Cairns 1992, 205; Kalland 1992, 142; Craigie 1976, 265) believe this verse indicates a belief that Yahweh was personally present in the camp. Whether or not the Ark of the Covenant was present in the camp is not clearly indicated in chapter 20. However, whether the presence of the ark is implied or not, the idea that Yahweh was physically present in the camp is clearly indicated (Hall 2000, 349) and seems to portray the religious reality of the Israelites at the time (Craigie 1976, 265). The Hithpael stem of הִתְהַלֵּךְ (walkabout) also shows Yahweh's intimacy with Israel, with whom he spoke face to face (Merrill 1994, 310).

5.6. Deuteronomy 29:10[9] (Israel gathered)

אַתֶּ֨ם נִצָּבִ֤ים הַיּוֹם֙ כֻּלְּכֶ֔ם לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם רָאשֵׁיכֶ֣ם שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֗ם זִקְנֵיכֶם֙ וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶ֔ם כֹּ֖ל אִ֥ישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃

"You are all stationed before Yahweh your God today, your heads, your tribes, your elders, your officials, all the men of Israel."

According to Christensen (2001, 717), the use of הַיּוֹם (today) indicates the "cultic present" and Block (2012, 677) adds that it indicates that this is a formal ceremonial event. It is the renewal of the covenant that is in view here, so it was a weighty event (Christensen 2001, 717). Multiple authors (Block 2012, 677; Woods 2008, Deut 29:10–11; Christensen 2001, 717; Tigay 1996, 277; Kalland 1992, 183; Craigie 1976, 452) refer to the fact that the use of נָצַב lends gravity to the event, as it is more formal than the general עָמַד (Craigie 1976, 452; Tigay 1996, 277). The renewal of the covenant was a significant event, and Block (2012, 677) notes that the reference to standing לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה (before Yahweh) links the event of the renewal of the covenant to the experience at Horeb when the covenant was established.

5.7. Deuteronomy 34:10 (Individuals)

וְלֹא־קָ֨ם נָבִ֥יא ע֛וֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל כְּמֹשֶׁ֑ה אֲשֶׁר֙ יְדָע֣וֹ יְהֹוָ֔ה פָּנִ֖ים אֶל־פָּנִֽים׃

"And never did another prophet like Moses arise, who Yahweh knew face to face."

Cairns (1992, 306) notes that Deuteronomy has a few references to people knowing Yahweh, but only this verse speaks of Yahweh knowing someone. The verb יָדַע (know) could mean "choose," which is likely the sense here (Tigay 1996, 340). Yahweh sought Moses out and appointed him to a special task, and over the years of Moses serving his commission, their relationship grew to be more intimate than any other (Craigie 1976, 365). While the phrase פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים (face to face) does not mean that Moses saw Yahweh literally, multiple authors (Block 2012, 811; Hall 2000, 501; HALOT 2000, 941; Tigay 1996, 340; Merrill 1994, 455; Cairns 1992, 306) indicate that it does refer to direct personal contact between Yahweh and Moses.

6. Conclusion

In the literature review, it was found that Name Theology is an inherited paradigm that for some time had been allowed to reign unchallenged. However, as has been shown, its basic tenet that Deuteronomy moves Yahweh from earth to heaven, has been ably challenged in recent decades. After a survey of literature that argues that Yahweh is present on earth in Deuteronomy, the article took the conversation further by proceeding to inquire into the proximity of Yahweh to Israel in Deuteronomy. This was done by inspecting phrases by which, and contexts in which, Yahweh is portrayed as proximate to Israel. To prepare the ground for the rest of the discussion, the seven contexts were first inspected. In Deuteronomy, the two most important contexts are Horeb and the Chosen Place. The first is significant because it is the site of the theophanic revelation of the Decalogue. The second is important because it is the place where Yahweh said he would make his Name dwell, and where the Israelite men had to go three times a year to "see the face of Yahweh" (16:16). There were also four other contexts in which Yahweh is portrayed as proximate to Israel as a nation, whether they were on the move or stationed, and some verses also indicate Yahweh as proximate to individuals.

In the section on the phrases that indicate proximity, the ten most pertinent of the fifteen phrases were inspected in descending order of occurrences. We inspected the semantic character

of the phrases to show that they can indicate divine proximity and briefly analyzed some verses in which they occur. The literature review already indicated that the phrases פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה (face of Yahweh) and שָׁכַן (to dwell) cause trouble for Name theologians, and in our inquiry we also found that these indicate the proximity of Yahweh to Israel. The other inspected phrases also have an element of physicality to them that indicates the proximity of Yahweh. There were the phrases that are sensory in nature, whether it was the speaking out of words (דבר*), the physical hearing (שָׁמַע) of a voice (קוֹל), or seeing (רָאָה) theophanic phenomena, like fire (מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ). Then there were also the phrases that were spatial in nature, whether it was the gathering of assembly (קהל*) in the sight of Yahweh, or Yahweh being near to or being approached by humans (קרב*), or someone stationed (עָמַד) in the presence of Yahweh. All these phrases were found to indicate that in Deuteronomy, Yahweh is portrayed as in close proximity to Israel.

In the last section, we exegeted seven pertinent texts that are representative of the seven contexts in which the phrases that indicate the proximity of Yahweh are found. The text for "Israel on the move" indicates that Yahweh, in an attempt to show Israel that he has loved and selected them and that there is no God besides him, personally (בְּפָנָיו) led Israel out of Egypt. In the text for "Horeb" (5:4–5), we found evidence of a personal encounter (פָּנִים בְּפָנִים) between Yahweh and Israel during which time he spoke audibly (דִּבֶּר) with them while Moses stood between (בֵּין) Yahweh and Israel, and that this experience filled them with terror. The text for "in the midst of Israel" (6:15) contains a reminder that Yahweh is in their midst (קֶרֶב) to deter the hearers from sinning or questioning Yahweh's provision. The text for "The Chosen Place" (16:16) contains instructions to go to the Chosen Place to experience and respond (יֵרָאֶה/יִרְאֶה) to Yahweh's personal presence (אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהֹוָה). The text on "the war camp" (23:14[15]) contains such explicit references to Yahweh's presence that he is said to walk about (מִתְהַלֵּךְ) in the war camp, that he can see (רָאָה) if there is anything unseemly and even turn away (שׁוּב) from them, should he find something there that is not pleasing to him. The text for "Israel gathered" portrays Israel in the cultic present, where they stand (נָצַב) in Yahweh's presence (לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה) to renew the covenant and bind themselves and future generations to him. The text that indicates Yahweh's proximity to "individuals" indicates that in addition to being known by some, Yahweh knew Moses and that he developed an intimate relationship with Moses during Moses's commission.

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