

The New Exodus in Second-Isaiah: Its Uniqueness and Relevance in Understanding the Refugee Crisis in Cameroon

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**The New Exodus in Second-Isaiah:
Its Uniqueness and Relevance in Understanding
the Refugee Crisis in Cameroon**

**A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the S.T.L Degree
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INTRODUCTION

The theme of exile in the second part of the book of the prophet Isaiah has prompted me to reflect on the refugee crisis in Cameroon. Refugees in the north of Cameroon hail from Nigeria where Boko Haram, an Islamic militant movement, has destroyed their towns and villages. The new exodus is about the triumphant and glorious return of the exiles from Babylon to the promised land. At this triumphant return, the main actor is God. I perceive parallels between this experience and the refugee experience in the north of Cameroon.

This work is articulated in three main chapters. The first chapter is entitled “The justifications of the exodus in the second part of the prophet Isaiah”. This chapter has four main parts: A highway in the wilderness: (Isaiah 40: 3), Yahweh gave an order that the prophet should prepare the way for him. This road is for the Lord and the Babylonian exiles. This already reminds us of the road in the wilderness in which the Israelites were being pursued on their departure from Egypt to the Promised Land. But in the journey from Babylon to Zion, the Lord will not only make a road in the desert, he will equally transform the desert. As we are going to explain later in our first chapter, the desert is a place of agony, a place of suffering, and a place for temptation. Notwithstanding, it is also a place where God revealed himself to his people during the first exodus. In the new exodus, God will once again reveal Himself to his people, and above all will transform the desert between Babylon and Zion. He is going to provide them with water in abundance to quench their thirst so that it should be as an obstacle on their way back from exile. He will plant trees on this road in the wilderness so that the trees will serve as shades from the scorching sun on the road for the exiles. Moreover, God is going to provide them with food for the journey from the exile to their homeland. The provision of food and water reminds us of the manna in the desert

and water that flowed from the rock. The second aspect in this chapter will be Yahweh leading His people. After the preparation of the road in the desert, God will not leave His people to travel alone. God himself will guide his people through the desert. As in Egypt God was in a pillar of cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians and in a pillar of fire in front of the Israelites to guide His people. The people will not leave Babylon with empty hands. They will leave in procession, carrying sacred vessels from Zion. God will be the one to guide and liberate His people on the way back to Zion. Zion that was empty, abandoned, deserted, and ruined will now be in joy. The Lord will not only make the captives to return from Babylon to Zion, but He is going to rebuild the ruins of Zion. Zion will become a new place, his Temple will be rebuilt and her glory will be restored. We note as an aside the role played by the king in Cyprus in the repatriation of exiles to Zion. The last and the fourth part in this chapter is the justification of this chapter according to the prophetic role of the servant prophet. He will be the one to galvanize the people in their distress in Babylon. Primarily, he is the elected one of God, the one to whom God has given his Spirit to consecrate him in his prophetic mission on behalf of the refugees in Babylon. He will act as God's mouthpiece and at the same time a guide in the return journey to Zion. He plays the same role as Moses in the first exodus. The servant prophet will be the one to animate the faith and hope of the people in Babylon.

In the second chapter, I will show how the New Testament makes use of the exodus narratives. I will focus mainly on the gospel of Mark. This chapter will have five main points: "preparing a way in the wilderness"; the gospel of Mark opens with this citation from Isaiah 40:3. A voice that cries in the wilderness to prepare a way for the Lord. This road of the Lord is similar to that of the exodus and the prophet Isaiah. John the Baptist is the voice that cries in the desert, inviting people to prepare to welcome the Messiah. Jesus in the wilderness is the second point in

the second chapter. After the baptism of Jesus Christ, he finds Himself in the desert for forty days and nights where he is tempted by the devil. He lives in peace with wild animals, and the angels of the Lord guide him. From this phrase, we see that the evangelist Mark is alluding to the exodus in Egypt and the second part of the prophet Isaiah. He applies the exodus motives in his context. The third important element in this chapter is the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. The transfiguration of our Lord is another good example in the wilderness theophany. Jesus is transfigured on the mountain, he is covered by clouds and a divine voice speaks to him. All these signs reminisce the first and second exodus narratives. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is also an exodus. The final destination of the new exodus was Zion. In his entering into Jerusalem, the holy city, he does an exodus. He enters Jerusalem, the city of God where he purifies the temple. The exodus of Jesus ends in Jerusalem on the cross where he liberates his followers by his death and resurrection. The Christian understanding of the new exodus is the final point of this chapter. For the Christians, Jesus is the one who realizes the prophecies of the Second Isaiah.

The third chapter looks at some of the pastoral implications of the new exodus. To this effect, I started with my personal experience lived in Cameroon with Nigerian refugees. This chapter is guided by the following question: How can we understand and interpret the refugees' plight in the Minawao refugee camp in the light of the new exodus in the prophet Isaiah? First and foremost, I have tried to give the cause of this Nigerian exodus to Cameroon linked to the sect Boko Haram. I then describe the lives of these refugees in the Minawao camp. The most fundamental question in this chapter will be the repatriation of these Nigerian refugees. How can they be repatriated when they lost all, human dignity, possessions, and when their safety is not guaranteed? I make suggestions for the ways in which the church and the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon could help prepare the way for a return of the refugees to their homeland, by

ensuring peace and security and rebuilding the infrastructure destroyed by Boko Haram. Yahweh prepared the return of the refugees of Babylon by giving them the necessary provisions. This is an example for both the states of Nigeria and Cameroon. We will also remind the church in Cameroon and her leaders to play their role at the spiritual, moral and social level.

Chapter one

The Exodus Motifs in Second Isaiah

The biblical theme of the new exodus is central to the book of Isaiah¹. Its most detailed description is located in Second Isaiah where it is treated in reference to Jews returning from the exile in Babylon. Exile means death, deportation, destruction, and devastation. The exiles lost their land, their temple, and their monarchy. Now in a foreign land, they express their hopelessness born of defeat. The prophet uses the Exodus narrative to convey a message of hope proclaiming that God is going to make something new: a new Exodus. God has not forsaken his people. He journeys with them and will soon put an end to their grief by bringing them back to their land, which will be rebuilt and repopulated. The prophet uses the Exodus motif to describe the return of exiles from Babylon. As such, the return of the Jews from Babylon offers a parallel to the Exodus of Egypt in many ways. The exiles will know and acknowledge that Yahweh is still the same whose identity was manifested in the time of the first exodus. Second Isaiah uses many images and language of the exodus narrative. Why does Isaiah talk about a new exodus? Why does Isaiah use the exodus narrative to describe his new exodus? What are the relevance and the uniqueness of the new exodus?

To answer these questions, I will analyze four exodus motifs in Second Isaiah, namely (1) the highway in the desert (the leveling of mountains, the crossing of the desert and the transformation of the desert). (2) Yahweh leading his people (thirst and the provision of water and

¹ We can find the theme of the new exodus in First Isaiah 5, 11, 35; in Third Isaiah 62-66. The exodus theme is not developed only by Second Isaiah; we can find the exodus theme in Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah and Micah.

superhighway, of course, far outshines the trackless desert through which Israel's parents passed in Mosaic times."³ This idea of highway (מְסֻלָּה) in the desert (בְּמִדְבָּר) echoes the old exodus from Egypt when God led his people from Egypt to the promised land through the desert. In 40:3 the highway is prepared in the desert for God. That is why the noun לְאֵלֵהֶיּוּ indicates that the highway is for God. The verb יַשְׁרֵהוּ (make straight) explains that the road or the highway have to be straight. The straight highway in the desert is among the new things that Yahweh is doing. Second Isaiah uses this language of old and new things to implement his message of hope and newness. Larry Taylor highlights this relation between new and former:

Second Isaiah contrast of the new things with the former things and their relation to the image of a new exodus. Second Isaiah portrays the event of the exiles return to Jerusalem as a second exodus. Israel will be delivered and will cross the Syrian Desert on a great processional highway. The procession will be majestic and God himself will march at its head. The desert will be transformed and nature will cooperate with this stupendous salvation.⁴

It is clear in 43:16-21 that God announces new things and He is going to do something different from the former things. The highway is among these new things. But in 40:4 God announced the mountains shall be made low and the highway will be straight (לְמִישׁוֹר) for God first and later for his people, so that there will be no sufferings and wandering on the road. Rodel M. Cajot explains the meaning of this highway of the Lord: "It refers to the construction of a physical road (דֶּרֶךְ) through the desert, which will serve as a passageway for God and his people Israel."⁵ This highway (מְסֻלָּה) means God is the one making the new exodus possible for his people. Terry W. Eddinger links this idea of highway in Isaiah with the exodus conquest when he says: "whatever

³ Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile, A Theological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 113.

⁴ Larry Taylor, "The Holy One of Israel is Savior: Theological Themes in Isaiah", *Southwestern Journal of Theology*: 19.

⁵ Rodel M. Cajot, "The New Exodus in Second Isaiah", *Philippiniana Sacra* 37 (2002): 44.

the case, the highway in the wilderness is parallel with the Exodus from Egypt.”⁶ Isaiah is using the language of the old exodus, because in Exodus 14:21-31 God manifested his power by making a road through a sea for his people. Yahweh split a road into the sea for his people to save them from the pursuit of Pharaoh. Yahweh dried the sea by his power and made a road through it and his people passed there on dry land (Exodus 14:21-22).

In the new exodus the way through the sea is replaced by the way through the Wilderness (מדבר). Whereas the people go from Egypt to Canaan in the old exodus, they go from Babylon (מבבל) to Zion in the new exodus. Yahweh is going to manifest his saving power once more in this second exodus by constructing a highway in the desert: “the highway where Yahweh leads his people reveals his glory, *kabod*, in the saving act that he accomplishes in liberating his people from Babylonian exile and in leading them home to Jerusalem”.⁷ Second Isaiah has in his mind the passage of Israelites through the desert (מדבר) in the exodus from Egypt. As such, through the language of the highway in the desert, Second Isaiah is making allusion to the journey of the exiles from Egypt to Canaan through the Sinai. Later in 62:10: a voice says “Go through, go through the gates prepare the way for the people....” The new exodus will pass through the desert (מדבר), through a road and not a sea. The language of journey is highlighted: highway, go, way, road, etc. In this text (40:3), Isaiah reiterates the imagery of the first exodus: God is going to make a road פָּנֵי יְרֵדָה not in a sea like the first exodus in Egypt but in the בְּמִדְבָּר for the return of the exiles to their homeland. Cabot has this to say about the idea of the desert situated between the two lands: “Geographically speaking, there lies a vast wilderness (מדבר) between Babylon and Judah. The normal route between these two nations does not cut through the desert, but rather goes round

⁶ Terry W. Eddinger, “An Analysis of Isaiah 40: 1-11 (17),” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 9 (1999): 126.

⁷ Cajot, “The New Exodus in Second Isaiah,” 48.

about it.”⁸ The word מדבר occurs eight times in Second Isaiah: 40:3; 41:18; 41:19; 42:11; 43:19; 43:20; 50:2 and 51:3. The passage of the sea on dry foot by the exiles from Egypt is similar or comparable with the passage through a highway in the desert in Isaiah.

This idea of highway (מִסְלָה) in the desert (בְּמִדְבָּר) establishes a perfect connection between the old exodus and the new exodus because both old and new exodus were in the desert. Second Isaiah is assuring the exiles in Babylon (בבל) that for the second time Yahweh is going to bring about an exodus. The Israelites do not have to forget their history, the history of their salvation. Michael Fishbane thinks the exodus motif has become for Isaiah and many other prophets of the exile the source of their thoughts and how they express the redemptive actions of God toward Israel (ישראל). He states: “A concord between the first and succeeding redemptions is the issue, for each generation looked to the first exodus as the archetypal expression of its own future hope.”⁹ In chapter 40 the exiles were living in a sad condition. They were captives and miserable with no one to rescue them. But in 43: 16-21 the exiles are going to experience something new. Anderson indicates that “it is erroneous to assume that the new exodus is the same as the old, as though the end-time were a return to primeval time...In the new exodus, historical conditions will be marvelously transformed...Second Isaiah transposes the whole sacred story into a higher key as he announces the good tidings of salvation. The new exodus will be a radically new event”.¹⁰

There are similarly many close linguistic connections between the new exodus and the first exodus. Earlier in 40:3 the mountains (הרים) shall be made low, in 49:11 the mountains shall

⁸ Cajot, “The New Exodus in Second Isaiah,” 46.

⁹ Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture, Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 121.

¹⁰ B.W Anderson, “Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah,” *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Mulenburg* (1962): 177.

be turned into a road (דרך). This is evidence that the highway or way is under the initiative and control of God. I fully agree with Bo H. Lim when he argues that “The announcement of the way originates in the divine council and therefore it refers primarily to the theophany revelation of the glory (כבוד) of God which by its very nature transforms the topography.”¹¹ The road between Babylon (בבל) and Jerusalem will pass through the desert by the initiative of God.

I.2. The Transformation of The Desert

Isaiah 41:18-19

אֶפְתַּח עַל־שָׁפְיִים נְהַרְךָ וּבִתְךָ בְּקָעוֹת מַעֲיָנוֹת אֲשֵׁים מְדַבֵּר לְאֶגְמֵי־מַיִם וְאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לְמוֹצָאֵי מַיִם:

אֲתֵן בְּמְדֻבָּר אֲרֹזֵי שִׁטָּה וְהִדַּס וְעֵץ שֶׁמֶן אֲשֵׁים בְּעֶרְבָה בְּרוֹשׁ תִּדְהָ וְתִאֲשׁוּר יִתְקֶדוּ:

The transformation of the desert is also an exodus image and language. Yahweh did not only make a highway through the desert, but He transformed it. Geographically, the *בְּמְדֻבָּר* designates the space between the two towns of Babylon (בבל) and Jerusalem. Between Babylon and Judah lies a vast desert (*בְּמְדֻבָּר*). God will transform this arid place into a road, into an easy road for his people. In the text quoted above, the language of the transformation of the desert is underscored. At the beginning the verb *אֶפְתַּח* (I will open) indicates the intention of God to transform the desert. John J. Ferrie, Jr indicates that the word “*בְּמְדֻבָּר*” refers to northern Arabian Desert. The road home crosses this *בְּמְדֻבָּר* (40:3; 43:19); abundant water will be provided for the road through the ‘*מְדֻבָּר*’¹². The word *מַיִם* occurs twice in the text. The desert is an arid place, but Yahweh is going to provide water (*מַיִם*). God will even go further; he will not simply put the *מַיִם* rather he will

¹¹ Bo H. Lim, *The Way of the Lord in the Book of Isaiah*, (New York, London: T & T Clark, 2010), 93.

¹² John J. Ferrie, Jr, “Singing in the Rain: A Meteorological Image in Isaiah 42:10-1,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series* 32, Washington DC, (2001): 101.

put a לְאֲגַם־מַיִם (a pool of water). Thanks to this pool of water the returnees from Babylon will never lack water on the road. That space will be transformed with a green vegetation, trees. The desert between Zion and Babylon will become a place of happiness for the exiles.

The language of transformation of the desert starts in 41:17-20 and 42:13-26 are echoes of 35:6-7. Yahweh waters the desert to satisfy his people so that the road shall be safe and smooth for his people. The figure of the desert (מדבר) designates the hardship of the climate, aridity, infertility, scarcity of water and food. Yahweh will cause water to flow in abundance. The reality of flowing water is expressed in our text through the following words: נְהָרוֹת (rivers), מְעִיָּנוֹת (fountains), and לְמוֹצְאֵי מַיִם (springs of water). The abundance of water in the desert is an echo of Exodus 17: 2-7 where God made water flow from the rock. The מדבר will not be dry but watered unceasingly. There is no vegetation in the desert. It is a place of huge challenges, hostile to human habitation. But God transforms the desert into a place of life, a place where the vegetation flourishes with trees and water. By לְאֲגַם־מַיִם Yahweh will even plant trees: For Bo H. Lim, the first explicit reference to the theme of the transformation of the wilderness occurs in 41:17-20.¹³ The desert, a place of anguish and desolation, will now become the place of happiness. For the future restoration of Zion and its people, God has to remove all the obstacles on the way. Yahweh will defeat the powers of nature in the wilderness to redeem the exiles and take them back to Zion. Richard Clifford argues, “In Second Isaiah, Yahweh creates by vanquishing Desert (embodying death-dealing aridity and inertness) as he once did by vanquishing Sea. Both Desert and Sea were

¹³ Lim, *The Way of the Lord in the Book of Isaiah*, 53.

seen as obstacles to human existence because they blocked the entrance to Yahweh's land, the only place where people could truly live".¹⁴

In the old exodus from Egypt the Jews were travelling in a hostile environment in the desert. Some were dying of thirst and hunger (Exodus 15 and Exodus 16), some were bitten by snakes. But now for the new exodus the desert, the environment will be transformed. In the first exodus Pharaoh and his army were opposed to the departure of the Hebrews. In Second Isaiah, Yahweh is repeating the wonders wrought in the first exodus, but with some differences. In the first exodus Yahweh choose Moses as the mediator but in this second exodus Yahweh himself will lead everything. This is highlighted by Ralph W. Klein for whom "Yahweh would repeat the miracles of the first wilderness period, though with two innovations: He himself, not Moses or some other human leader, would lead Israel through the desert and make water flow from the rock."¹⁵ Here in the second exodus the desert (מדבר) stands as obstacle and enemy on the road between Yahweh and the Exile. Yahweh will defeat the hostile force of the desert as He did with the sea in the first exodus. The exiles from Babylon will not march in hostile desert like their (great) parents, but they will march through a transformed desert like a paradise. The dry land will be overflowing with water (מַיִם). The travelling of the exiles will be easy. Walter Brueggemann explains the radical transformation of the desert as the newness that God is about to bring about for the restoration of his people. He explains this newness of God by these words: "It is a cosmic transformation whereby an arid landscape is transposed into a fountain of water that will make a

¹⁴ Richard J. Clifford, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and its Cosmogonic Language," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1, (January, 1993): 8.

¹⁵ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 113.

new life possible”.¹⁶ I found that the language of former things (רֵאשׁוֹן) and new things is a perfect example of exodus motif that Second Isaiah uses very well.

This idea of transforming the desert complements that of making a highway in the desert. In 41:19 God will protect the exiles against sun and heat. He will plant trees in the desert as mentioned in 41: 19: “I will plant (אָתֵּן) in the wilderness (בְּמִדְבָּר) the cedar (אַרְז), the acacia (שֵׁטָה), the myrtle (הָדָס), and the olive (עֵץ שֶׁמֶן); I will set in the desert the cypress (תַּאשׁוּר), the plane and the pine together ”. According to many commentaries, these species of trees never grow in the desert. John J. Ferrie, Jr notes: “trees that normally do not grow there suddenly sprout up”.¹⁷ The trees will bring shade in the desert for the exiles during their journey on the highway created by Yahweh.

The transformation of the desert is one of God’s redeeming works for his people. A scholar like Bo H. Lim described this transformation of the desert (מִדְבָּר) as dominating the forces of nature to free the way for God’s people. He states: “In order for Zion to be redeemed, Yahweh must arise and defeat the powers of chaos once again in order for the transformation of the wilderness to take place. Cyrus is incapable of completing such a task.”¹⁸ By this language of transformation of the desert, Isaiah explains to the exiles that God’s power is incomparable to that of any other gods. The exiles are still feeling the pain of the destruction of Jerusalem. For them, their God was rendered powerless by the Babylonian conquest. This language of the transformation of nature fits very well with the circumstances of the exiles. They were desperate and on the verge of giving up hope and trust in God. By using this image of water which flows in the desert, Second Isaiah is explaining to them how God can make life even where it seems impossible. By the transformation of the desert Second Isaiah provides an accurate description of the return of the exiles from

¹⁶ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 59.

¹⁷ Ferrie, “Singing in the Rain,” 96.

¹⁸ Lim, *The Way of the Lord in the Book of Isaiah*, 58.

Babylon (בבל) to Zion: “In Second Isaiah the transformation of the wilderness, couched in the mythic language of creation and exodus, describes much more than merely a return from Babylon.”¹⁹ In my opinion, Second Isaiah is faithful to his idea of consolation at the beginning of his book (40:1). This consolation started with the building of a highway in the desert and continues now with the transformation of the desert.

I.3. The Language of Creation

Second Isaiah mostly uses the exodus tradition but he equally highlights the creation tradition. Indeed Second Isaiah mixes the creation tradition and the exodus tradition to describe God’s work for the exiles’ return to Zion.

יִצְרֵר אֹרֶל וּבֹרְאָ חֹשֶׁךְ עֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבֹרְאָ רֶעַ אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה כָּל-אֵלֶּה: : 45:7

Second Isaiah describes the image and language of new exodus as new creation. In 45:7 the verb create appears twice: “וּבֹרְאָ” the verb “וּבֹרְאָ” is used many times. This verb is first found in Genesis to describe the creation. Richard Clifford mentions that Second Isaiah uses this creation vocabulary abundantly: “Verbs of creation abound in Second Isaiah: *bara'* (17 times), *yasar* (14 times), *pa'al* (5 times), *nata samayim* (6 times), *kum* and *yasad* (one each).”²⁰ Second Isaiah uses creation terms to express the first creation in Genesis and also to reveal the redeeming work of Yahweh for his people. Creation is the act of God. For Second Isaiah, the God who delivered Israel is creator of the cosmos. The new exodus is considered to be a victory over the malefic forces of creation, of chaos. Isaiah is transforming this language of creation into his own argument to show how God will create a new Israel, a new Zion after the exile.

¹⁹ Clifford, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” 93.

²⁰ Clifford, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” 5.

The creation language is part of the redeeming vocabulary of Second Isaiah. Creation and exodus-conquest are to the prophet a single act leading to the formation of Israel.²¹ In 43:20 the wild animals will be peaceful, they are no longer baleful. We have already seen this language in 11:6-8. In the new creation there will be harmony between naturally opposed creatures. From the first creation came the Cosmos, from the new exodus will be formed the new Israel. In 35:8; 40:3-4; 48:20-22 highway and a way in the desert (מדבר), in 41:17-20 and 42:13-26 (transformation of the desert) are part of this act of creation because only God can create a highway in the desert and water the desert.

This renewal of creation seems to be a clue that God is the savior of his people; God is the one controlling history. The language of the creative power of God by Second Isaiah is a strong argument to convince the exiles who seem to be losing their faith in God. They started doubting Yahweh and turned towards Babylonian gods. Isaiah will use this language of creation (40:12-31) to convince the doubting exiles that God is the only creator and savior. Babylonian gods are not stronger than Yahweh. John L. McKenzie points to this in his explanation for why Second Isaiah refers so much to the creation language when he says:

Israel had experienced the power of foreign nations in a way new to its experience. The power of an ancient Near Eastern nation was a testimonial to the power of its gods. Second Isaiah writes apologetics for doubting Israelites who wondered whether the power of Yahweh could be measured against the power that Marduk, the local god of Babylon, and head of the Babylonian pantheon, exhibited in the Neo-Babylonian Empire.²²

Generally, when somebody is in despair, she can feel helplessness, as was the case of the exiles in Babylon. Second Isaiah has to use all his oratory techniques, using many images and language to

²¹ Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: an Interpretation of Second Isaiah*, (Academic Renewal Press: (2002), 111.

²² John L. McKenzie, *Isaiah, The Anchor Bible*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc: Garden City, 1968), 23.

explain God's sovereignty and power over nature, so that Israel should not lose her faith in God. This renewal of creation is one of the arguments of Second Isaiah to create hope and assurance in the exiles. Second Isaiah is referring here to the mighty works and power of God in the first exodus (Exodus 14; Exodus 15). In the exodus from Egypt Yahweh manifested his power over creation by the plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud on the Sinai to show Israel that He is present and He is the God of all creation (Exodus 19: 16-20). The exiles from Babylon, like those from Egypt, were losing their faith, hope and confidence in God's power. Second Isaiah will use the same language of the old exodus to show to the exiles that Yahweh is the supreme ruler of the universe. It is good to notice that by this language of creation, God is showing his power over creation, but it is good to say in the first exodus God created a people and a nation. Likewise in the Second Exodus God will recreate a people and a nation. Exodus is itself a creation and second exodus a recreation. That is why Second Isaiah in 50:2-5 used the word "My arm", "my roar" to explain the power of God over nature in the first exodus and that will be the same in the second exodus. The prophet invites them to put their trust and hope in Yahweh the creator. Why? Because Yahweh is eternal and cannot be compared to any other god. He is the unique creator and redeemer.

By means of the language of creation Second Isaiah lays emphasis on the might and power of Yahweh: "To whom will you compare me, or who is my equal; says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these" (40:25-26). This message of hope and assurance started earlier in 40: 1 with the word "consolation". Because the exiles were doubting God's power to save and redeem them; Second Isaiah is inviting the Judeans to believe and put their faith in Yahweh the redeemer. Ralph W. Klein expresses the doubts of the exiles in Yahweh's power: "how could they believe in a God who lost the latest war? Why not worship the gods of Babylon

whose armies, after all were the winners?”²³ The Judean exiles needed the reassurance that God is still the creator, He is still the one who creates and saves. The exiles lamenting and doubting Yahweh’s presence and power started in 40:6-7. Isaiah, the prophet, responding to their complaints, will recall for them that Yahweh is the creator of all things and the master of history. This is why in 40:12-17 we have many rhetorical questions, accompanied with verbs the verbs “measure,” “enclose,” and “weigh” to demonstrate the majesty, the sovereignty of Yahweh as God and creator of everything.

Arvid S. Kapelrud accurately explains the words of Isaiah to the exiles when he says: “Second Isaiah was called to convey the words of God. They had to be words that went straight to the heart of their situation, or they would not be heard at all, only disregarded.”²⁴ In Second Isaiah the language of creation is to prove to the exiles that God who is creator can also redeem. Second Isaiah has to give them hope by this language of creation. God’s work in creation and his work in redemption are here upon seen as very closely connected.²⁵ For Isaiah, going back to the creation from Genesis seems to be a strong argument that God is both alpha and omega of the history of the world. Creation and redemption are inextricably linked in Second Isaiah. Richard Clifford explains it better when he states: “Second Isaiah was the first to combine the two themes and give creation a redemptive significance.”²⁶ That God is the creator of everything means that He is also the controller of all events that happen in the world. The prophet used this imagery of creation to explain how Israel will emerge as a new people formed by God after the Babylonian exile.

²³ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 101.

²⁴ Arvid S. Kapelrud, “The Main Concern of Second Isaiah,” *Vetus Testamentum* 32, 1(1982): 51.

²⁵ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

The link between creation and redemption in Second Isaiah is well explained. Richard J. Clifford in his book *Fair Spoken and Persuading* states that: “the two are expressions of a single national story; and there is interpretation of the two ideal types.”²⁷ Redemption and creation are part of the exodus narrative, difference and separation between the two cannot be made. In the Isaianic context, God the creator is the same one who redeems. As God created a people in the past, his creative act can also be understood in this historical moment.²⁸ God did various mighty acts in the first exodus and can still do more. The redemption takes a cosmic dimension, because all of creation is involved in the redemptive work of God. For Ralph W. Klein, by using the language of the creation story, Second Isaiah wants to remain faithful to his idea of God as the creator and redeemer. God did it with their ancestors and is still capable of doing it. In effect, “by using creation terminology to describe all of God’s actions, from the creation of the universe to the new trip to Zion, Second Isaiah keeps a continuity in his theology. While the events he anticipates are new, they are from the long-known Yahweh.”²⁹ The redemption in Second Isaiah is characterized by this renewal and transformation of nature.

In this first section, I have analyzed the wilderness motif. I have argued that the image of “way in the desert” is an echo of the exodus of Egypt. The highway in the desert is entirely part of the exodus narrative. God made a road through the wilderness for himself and for the returnees of the exile from Babylon. The highway will be straight and Yahweh will transform the desert to ease the journey of the returnees. That is why I illustrated this language of transformation by words expressing the creation language.

²⁷ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 23.

²⁸ David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 58.

²⁹ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 116.

II. Yahweh Leading His People

The figure of God is very dominant in Second Isaiah. He is the principal actor in the text. He plays the key role for the liberation of his people. In chapter 40 with the words “Comfort (נחם), comfort O my people” we see that God has real concern for his people. In his analysis of Isaiah 40: 27-31, Walter Brueggemann identifies the exiles as those who are without resources, faint and powerless. For him, the exiles are not alone, Yahweh is with them, and Yahweh is not deaf to their plea. He is going to do something for their deliverance. He will redeem them and bring them back to Zion. Like in the old exodus, the people will not travel alone in the desert. God himself will lead and travel together with his people in the desert. After the words of consolation in chapter 40 and also the highway and way in the desert in chapter 40, God reveals in his intention and concern for his people 11 verses later: 40:11: יְרֵעָה בְּזֵרְעוֹ יִקְבֹּץ טְלָאִים וּבְחִיקוֹ יִשָּׂא עֲלוֹת וְנִהְלֵל: (יְרֵעָה) Like a shepherd (יְרֵעָה) will take care for his people. The verbs used in this verse 40: 11 explain well the care and protection of God for his people in Babylon. As a shepherd Yahweh will feed (כָּרְעָה) the exiles as his flock (עֲדָרֵי) and lastly Yahweh will gather (יִקְבֹּץ) them.

אל־תִּירָא 43:5 ; אֶל־תִּירְאֵי תוֹלְעֵת גְּעֻלָּב מְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי עֹזְרֵת, הֲ נֹאֵם־יְהוָה וְגֹאֲלֵךְ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: 41: 14
כִּי אֶתְדַּאֲנִי מִמְּזִרְחָ אֲבִיא זֶרְעִי וּמִמְעַרְבִי אֶקְבְּצֵךְ:

Walter Brueggemann indicates that this word “do not fear” is a characteristic sign of salvation oracle.³⁰ For Marvin A. Sweeney, the formula “do not fear” is solid assurance for the exiles in their condition as refugees in Babylon. Sweeney writes: “the reassurance formula ‘do not fear’, coupled with the assistance formula ‘I am with you’, in 43: 1-4 provides the basis for Israel’s restoration”.³¹ God is going to bring salvation to the exiles. Indeed like in many oracles of

³⁰ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 34.

³¹ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2016), 106.

salvation, when God says ‘do not fear’ (אַל־תִּירָאִי) He always brings assistance and deliverance. The formula אַל־תִּירָא repeated in 41:14 and 43:5 means that God is giving assurance and certitude to his people that he is going to free them. This assurance from God is expressed by the personal pronoun אֲנִי in the text. The association of אֲתִדְאַנִּי (I am with you) expresses Yahweh’s firm commitment to be with the refugees of Babylon. He will be with them like He was in the first exodus with their fathers. That is why in 43:3 God will remember his great deeds in the first exodus by these words: “for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior. I give Egypt as your ransom”.

II.1 God Urges His People to Leave

Isaiah 48:20

צֵאוּ מִבְּבֶל־בְּרַחֲוֹ מִכַּשְׂדִּים בְּקוֹל רִנָּה הִגְדוּ הַשְׁמִי יוֹזֵאת הוֹצִיאֲוֶהָ עַד־קִצְצָה הָאָרֶץ אִמְרוּ גֹאֵל יְהוָה עֲבְדוּ יַעֲקֹב:

Isaiah 52:11-12

סָרוּ סִרוּ צֵאוּ מִשָּׁם טָמֵא אֶל־תֵּגֵוּ צֵאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ הִבֵּוּ וְנִשְׁאַי כְּלֵי יְהוָה:

כִּי לֹא בַחֲפוּזוֹן תֵּצְאוּ וּבִמְנוּסָה לֹא תִלְכּוּן כִּי־הִלְוֹ לִפְנֵיכֶם יְהוָה וּמֵאַסְפְּכֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

The imperative from God: צֵאוּ “*Go out*” or *Go out of Babylon*” (מִבְּבֶל־) and “רַחֲוֹ” (flee) in 48:20; and later in 49:9. The verb צֵאוּ (you go out) occurs twice here in 52:11. In the same verse 52:11 we have another verb occurring twice in the imperative form: סָרוּ סִרוּ (depart, you depart). Through the use of the imperative, God urges his people to leave Babylon. For Brueggemann, צֵאוּ “Go out! Is an exodus verb.”³² The expressions “Go out” and “come out” equally refer to the Exodus from Egypt. The verb (צֵאוּ) is a key verb in the Exodus narratives. In the first exodus the same verb (צֵאוּ) is used to urge the Israelites to leave Egypt (Exodus 11:8; 12:41 and 13:3-4). The verb (צֵאוּ) is mentioned three times in 48: 20-22; 52:11-12 and 55:12-13.

³² Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 107.

The verb אָצַח is always mentioned with this connotation of leaving, going out. For Boh Lim, the verb (אָצַח) functions as a key word associated with the exodus narratives.³³ The departure from Babylon will not be like the departure from Egypt. The exiles left Egypt in haste (Exodus 12: 31-34), but here they will leave Babylon (בְּבֵל) in a procession convoy lead by Yahweh to Zion. They will leave but not in haste (לֹא בְּהֶפְזוֹן). The people are coming back from Babylon (בְּבֵל) in a manner more glorious than that in which they were hastening from Egypt. In effect, in the old exodus Jews left Egypt in haste (Exodus 12:11; 12:39) but the new exodus will be triumphal without haste (לֹא בְּהֶפְזוֹן) (52:12). That is why for Friedbert “While the first exodus was a flight (וּבְמִגְרָה לֹא) in hurry, this new deliverance will not be made in haste.”³⁴ The departure of the exiles in the first exodus was brutal and in hurry but the departure from Babylon in the new exodus will be calm and peaceful. The new teaching of Isaiah juxtaposes the calm departure of the new exodus with the disquietude of the first.³⁵ Rodel gives a good comparison between the conditions of the Israelites in the first exodus and in the second exodus. He explains these differences by saying that: “In the first exodus, the people fled in haste and in fear, like fugitives being pursued by their captors; and they took goods from Egypt (Exodus 12:31-36). It was a journey beset with dangers of all sorts – hunger, thirst, enemies, and internal unrest of the people. In the new exodus, however, the exiles will take nothing from Babylon, except the vessels of Yahweh.”³⁶ In 52:11-12 Second Isaiah speaks about not leaving Babylon in haste (לֹא בְּהֶפְזוֹן). Michael Fishbane thinks that Isaiah is making allusion to the paschal sacrifice of Egypt in Exodus 17:3-6. “You will not leave in haste (לֹא בְּהֶפְזוֹן), nor go in flight. This recalls the precise language of the paschal sacrifice and ritual in

³³ Lim, *The Way of the Lord*, 80.

³⁴ Friedbert Ninow, *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament, the Exodus Motif*, (Michigan: Andrew University, December 1999), 235.

³⁵ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 134.

³⁶ Cajot, “The New Exodus in Second Isaiah,” 56.

Exodus.”³⁷ They will no longer carry on them the Gold and Silver of Egypt, but rather the sacred vessels from Babylon to Zion. Yahweh will bring peace to his people in exile. He will also end the sufferings of the Judeans in Babylon. In 40:1-2 God is already giving this message of comfort for his people: “comfort, comfort”, “lift up”, “and fear not”(אל־תִּירָא). These verbs in imperative form explain the commandments of God to bring peace, consolation and liberation to his people. Behind this imperative “comfort, comfort” it is a clear idea that God is going to do something for the Judeans who are living in an uncomfortable place, the exile. God is going to intervene actively to free his people. After the message of comfort in 40, God immediately gives the order to build a highway in the desert as a passage for him and for the exiles going back to their homeland. Konrad Schmid accurately describes this newness that God is about to bring: “But Isa 43:16-21 seems to be clear about this: God is creating something new, and this thing is not analogically comparable with the former salvation event.”³⁸ For Isaiah, the old exodus is a model of what God is going to do for the present situation of the exiles. In Second Isaiah the new exodus is described in comparison with the first exodus, because it is the same history of salvation. It is worthy of notice that, the first exile was caused by famine (Genesis 41: 57), but the second exile was the consequence of the sin of Judeans (40:1-2).

II.2 God Marching in the Desert with his People

In 42:12-13 Yahweh is the one marching before his people. Isaiah uses the image of a warrior to explain that like a warrior Yahweh will lead his people back to Zion (42:13-16). In the past Yahweh led his people from Egypt to Canaan, now He is going to lead his people again from Babylon to Zion. Yahweh will remove any obstacles that can disrupt the journey of his people in

³⁷ Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 134.

³⁸ Konrad Schmid, “New Creation Instead of New Exodus. The Inner Biblical Exegesis and Theological Transformations of Isaiah 65: 17-25”, in *Continuity and Discontinuity, Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40-66*, (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 175.

the desert that is why in 43:20 the wild animals will be friendly. In the first exodus God gave manna and quail to his people to satisfy their hunger (Exodus 17). Here in the second exodus, Yahweh will provide food for his people (49:10). As such, God is the provider for his people both in the first exodus and the second exodus. Yahweh is going to reunite the people with their homeland, because during the exile they were separated from their land.

As a shepherd leads his flock, Yahweh is going to lead his people in the desert and He will provide them with all they need for their journey. The exiles in captivity experience hunger and thirst, God said He will give them water and food, He will restore their land. In the first exodus God makes water come out from the rock to quench the thirst of his people wandering in the desert when they complain to Moses (Exodus 15:27 Exodus 17:1-7). I explained above that, in 41:17-20 and 48: 21 Isaiah has the same language and image of the first exodus. Comparing the water that flows from the rock in the first exodus, Isaiah explains that God will water the road in the desert from Babylon to Zion. God assures the Judean exiles that when they will travel from Babylon to Zion He will provide them abundant water in the desert for their journey. Yahweh is going to do more than in the first exodus, water will flow everywhere on their road through the desert (מדבר). The absence of hunger and water is a clear sign of God's protection, care and assurance for his people travelling back to Zion. Rodel comments on the idea of the overflowing of water in second exodus compared to the first exodus: "in the new exodus, Yahweh will do more by opening rivers and fountains, by making springs and a pool of water. In addition, trees will spring up along the way to give shades of coolness to the exiles that pass along the way".³⁹ In both cases, old and new exodus, God is the one who provides water. God in the desert (מדבר) in both exodus old and new provides water and food for his people for their journey. John L. McKenzie equally expounds this

³⁹ Cajot, "The New Exodus in Second Isaiah," 49.

idea of God as a provider of water and food for his people in the exodus narratives. He says: “In the Exodus Israel was provided in its journey through the desert with water from the rock and manna from the heavens. In the journey of Israel from its Babylonian exile the desert itself will be regenerated.”⁴⁰

In the first exodus, the confusion of the Egyptian magicians (Exodus 10-13) is comparable in the second exodus to the fulfillment of God’s word through his prophet (Isaiah 44:25-26). In Exodus 12:33-36 Yahweh forced the Egyptians to assist Israel leaving Egypt; in Isaiah 49:22 Yahweh will prepare the nations to assist the Judeans going back to Zion. The prophet predicts this radical change, which will come from God, the Holy One of Israel. Richard Clifford explains that: “God will renew the founding event, bringing the people to Zion, not from Egypt this time, but from the nations where they have been scattered.”⁴¹ The new exodus is not really parallel to the old one. God is really going to do a new thing. In the first exodus God was manifested His power and presence to the Israelites and the Egyptians through his mighty works. But in the new exodus something is new. Second Isaiah is expressing the hope to come for the exiles. The new thing is hope in the redemptive deeds of God. Yahweh is going to deliver his people from Babylon and He will restore them in their land. Michael expresses that idea of hope and restoration of Israel when he says: “The exodus event is also used as a former thing to which the new salvation-restoration will correspond.”⁴² God will invite all the nations to be witnesses of what He is going to do for the Judeans. The word “כל־בשר” in 40:5 suggests that all mankind will witness that newness of the Lord in the Second exodus. For example, the victory of God on Pharaoh and Egyptian gods in the first exodus becomes the victory over the idols of Babylon (Isaiah 41: 21-25) in the new exodus.

⁴⁰ McKenzie, “Isaiah,” 11.

⁴¹Richard J. Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible: The Case for Figural Reading”, in *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 351.

⁴² Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 133.

In 43:18 God is asking the exiles to move forward, not just focus on their past, but be open to a newness that God is going to make for them. The prophet invites the exiles to live the exodus not only in memory but even now in their situation in Babylon.

In 52: 12: כִּי לֹא בַחֲפֹזוֹן תֵּצְאוּ וּבַמְנוּסָה לֹא תֵלְכוּן כִּי־הֲלֹךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם יְהוָה וַיִּמְאַסְפְּכֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Instead of the pillar of cloud guiding the march of the exiles in the first exodus (Exodus 14:18-31), now in the new exodus it is God himself marching ahead of his people and also their rear guard to Zion (Isaiah 52: 12). The verb הֲלֹךְ in the future (will go) has for subject יְהוָה . God will go (journey) with his people. He will go before them (לִפְנֵיכֶם). Like in the first exodus Yahweh will be their rearguard (וַיִּמְאַסְפְּכֶם). Here in 52:12 Isaiah with the word (וַיִּמְאַסְפְּכֶם) is making allusion to this text of Exodus 13:21 “The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night”. Yahweh travels with his people from Egypt to Canaan and He will travel here with his people from Babylon to Zion. Richard Clifford explains the image of God going or travelling with his people back to Zion as a new exodus- conquest. God gives all the necessary protection for his people through that journey in the desert. By the pillar of cloud in the first exodus Yahweh guaranteed the protection of his people, but now He will be the Guard of his people in this new exodus.

In 41:18, 48:21, and 43:16-21 God announces the new exodus by saying: “and do not remember former things (ראשון)...” which brings to mind the old exodus.

Isaiah 43:16-18

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנּוֹתֵן בַּיָּם דָּרָךְ וּבַיָּם עֲזִים נְתִיבָה:

הַמּוֹצִיא רֶכֶב־נְסוּס תִּיל וְעֲזִיז יַחְדָּו יִשְׂכֹּךְ לֹא בַל־יִלְוֶוּ דַעֲכוּ כַפְשֶׁתָה כָבוֹד:

אֶל־תִּזְכְּרוּ רֵאשִׁיטוֹת וְקַדְמִנִּיּוֹת אֶל־תִּתְבַּכְּוּ:

Former things (רֵאשִׁיטוֹת) can mean “do not remember the former disasters and sufferings”. The former things are also about the mighty deeds of God in the first exodus. This remembrance of old things is expressed in the text by the words: יְהוָה הַנּוֹתֵן בַּיָּם דָּרָךְ (that makes in the Sea a Way). A way (דָּרָךְ) in the water (בַּיָּם) echoes the exodus of Egypt. The language of רֶכֶב־וְסוּסִים (chariots of horse), תַּיִל (army) is typically recalling how the chariots and horses of the Egyptian army were destroyed in the red sea (Exodus 14:28). The verbs דָּעְכוּ (they are extinct) and כָּבְּוּ (they are quenched) are similarly echoes of the old exodus. For William J. Webb, “in 43:17 and 48:3; the former thing (רֵאשִׁיטוֹת) /things of the past (וְקִדְמִינִיּוֹת) refers to Yahweh’s making a path through mighty waters for Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and his destroying Pharaoh’s chariots, horses, and entire army in the sea. The language of horses and chariots is a clear allusion to the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 14:28). Similarly in 51:9-10 ‘the days of old/long ago’”.⁴³ In the same vein, Ralph W. Klein thinks that the language of former and new things (שִׁדְדִּים) is specially referring to the first exodus. He explains that: “the term ‘former things’ in second Isaiah seems at times to be a specific reference to the power of God’s word in effecting the Exodus from Egypt.”⁴⁴

Isaiah: 43:18

אֶל־תִּזְכְּרוּ רֵאשִׁיטוֹת וְקִדְמִינִיּוֹת אֶל־תִּתְבַּנְּוּ:

The רֵאשִׁיטוֹת (“Former things”) definitely refers to the exodus event of Egypt. Second Isaiah tactfully uses this language of former things. Among these former things (רֵאשִׁיטוֹת) he mentions Abraham (41:8; 51:2), Jacob (43:27), Noe (54:9) and David (55:3). By doing so, Second Isaiah reminds the exiles of their whole history from the patriarchs; he reminds them of their first covenant with God. Second Isaiah is citing all these memories of past things to persuade the exiles

⁴³ William J. Webb, *Returning Home, New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1*, (Guildford: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 122.

⁴⁴ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 101.

of all that God did in the past and He is now going to do something more. Marvin A. Sweeney, analyzing 43:16-21, states that: “YHWH’s challenge is to not remember the past or former things (רִאשׁוֹנוֹת), but to think instead on YHWH’s new action.”⁴⁵ In his dissertation “Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament, The Exodus Motif” Friedbert Ninow indicates that “the new exodus is not merely a repetition of the old; it is different in many ways from the old: The wasteland will rejoice and bloom, the eyes of the blind will be opened, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap like a deer, the speechless will sing for joy. There will be no enemies blocking the way; it will be an absolute safe passage.”⁴⁶ That is why we are told in 49:10 that God will guide his people by transforming darkness into light. The word הַבְּרָאוֹת (things to come) in 41:22 refers to the marvelous deeds that God is going to do for the exiles of Babylon: The highway in the desert, the transformation in the desert, the rise of Cyrus, etc. The salvation of Jews from the Babylonian exile comes from God. God has prepared a highway for his people by removing all the obstacles on the road: no hunger, no thirst, no heat, and no enemies blocking the journey.

II.3 Yahweh as the *Go'el* of the Exiles

It is equally worth noting that the image of God in first exodus differs a little from the one of second Exodus. In the first exodus God is presented as the God of ancestors (Exodus 3:15). In chapter 41 הַגֹּאֲלֵךְ (redeemer) (41:14) of his people. The הַגֹּאֲלֵךְ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל (the redeemer, the Holy one of Israel) is the one who delivers her from the servitude of Egypt and from Babylonian captivity. Yahweh did not forget his people, He is the holy one of Israel. God has concern for the liberation of his people. The link between the *go'el* and the exodus can be understood in the sense that the exodus is an act of God. In Exodus 6:6 and Exodus 15:3 God is depicted as the redeemer,

⁴⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, 107.

⁴⁶ Ninow, *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament*, 195.

the warrior who will redeem Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Arvid S. Kapelrud comments on this idea of God as *go 'el* in Second Isaiah

When YHWH is so often called *go 'el* by Second Isaiah it is obvious that this emphasizes his very close connection with the people deported from Judah. It was important for the prophet to underline this. The people needed a relative to release them from their captivity, and YHWH was such a relative for them. He would not let his people suffer any longer.⁴⁷

In Exodus 6: 6-7 God is revealed as the *go 'el* of his people from the servitude of Egypt. Isaiah is reusing the same language of the first exodus when he depicts God as a *go 'el*. This reference or title of God as *go 'el* will occur like a refrain in the Book of Second Isaiah: (41: 14; 44: 6). God is also depicted as the first and the last (44:6). He is the Holy One of Israel, the creator of the universe (44: 6).

In this second motif, the key point has been to demonstrate that God is the one leading and conducting his people on that road that He made through the wilderness. God is acting to lead the exiles from Babylon to their homeland. As God did in the first exodus to bring Israel out of Egypt, the same God is going to urge the exiles of Babylon to leave. God will be redeemer of the exiles. He will guide them as He did in the first exodus. Yahweh will cater for their needs during the journey like in the first exodus. He will be the rearguard and front guard on the road leading to Zion. They will leave not in haste like in Egypt but, rather triumphantly.

III. Zion as Final Destination of the New Exodus

Isaiah 51:11

וּפְּרִי־הַיְהוָה יִבְרַךְ וְיִבְרָךְ וְיִצְוֶה בְּרִנָּה וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל־רֵאשִׁים שְׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׂיִגּוּן גַּ' וְיִזְנוּן וְאַנְחָה:

⁴⁷ Kapelrud, "The Main Concern of Second Isaiah", 54.

The place of Zion (צִיּוֹן) is central in Second Isaiah.⁴⁸ The wilderness journey is to end with a procession to Zion.⁴⁹ In Isaiah 51:11, the vocabulary of the joyful return is highlighted. The word וְשִׂמְחַת is mentioned three times: בְּרֵנָה (with joy), שְׂשׂוֹן (with gladness), וְשִׂמְחָה (and joy). These words וְשִׂמְחַת, בְּרֵנָה and שְׂשׂוֹן are describing the conditions of those returning from Babylon to Zion. They are no longer journeying in unhappiness, but with joy and gladness. They rejoice because God has freed them from the bondage of Babylon, and Yahweh facilitates their journey back home. He waters the desert to quench their thirst, He plants trees on the road to give them shade and He provides for them. The refugees from Babylon are going back to their homeland with Joy because God will also rebuild Zion, their desolate city, as well as the temple. The verb יָשׁוּבוּ (shall return) and יָבִיאוּ (and come) express the journey of the exiles toward Zion. They will leave Babylon in Joy, they will come back to Zion with gladness. They move from a situation of desperation to one of joy. Sorrow and mourning (יָגוֹן וְאֵנְתָה) will no longer exist for the exiles. The absence of sorrow and mourning is expressed in the text by the verb יָפִיחוּ (shall flee). With the verb יָבִיאוּ it is clear enough that the exiles from Babylon are coming back joyfully.

The return of the exiles will be glorious (40:3-5 and 48:20-22). The desert was a transitory place for the exiles; the right place is Zion. The goal of this new exodus is a procession to Zion.⁵⁰ Preparing a highway in the desert and watering the desert have for goal the final destination: Zion. God is going to save his people from captivity. The journey from Babylon (בבל) to Jerusalem is portrayed like the journey from Egypt to Canaan. The exodus from Egypt ends with the conquest of Canaan, the exodus from Babylon ends with the rebuilding of Zion (צִיּוֹן). In the old exodus God created a people and a nation; in the second exodus God will create a new people and nation.

⁴⁸ Richtsje Abma, "Travelling from Babylon to Zion", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 74 (1997): 10.

⁴⁹ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 114.

⁵⁰ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 82.

The goal of the march in the desert is Zion (צִיּוֹן). In 52: 7-8, the prophet portraits a messenger who will go ahead of the captives' caravan of Babylon to announce Yahweh's victory to Zion. Zion will be rebuilt and repopulated.

III.1 Different Depictions of Zion in Second Isaiah

Second Isaiah highlights the great care of Yahweh for Zion. Yahweh will give his attention to all, love and care as a mother (אִמָּה) cares for her child. This same kind of language of childbirth and of a nursing mother (אִמָּה) is found in 49: 14-15 where we find the female imagery of God caring for his people as a mother for her child: "Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me". Yahweh will answer: "As a mother never abandons the fruit of her womb so the Lord will never forget Zion." In many other passages Zion (צִיּוֹן) is addressed as a woman. For instance, in 54: 1-17, God says to Zion that she is no longer an abandoned woman; in 50:1 Zion is depicted as a mother who divorced; in 52: 2 Yahweh addresses Zion (צִיּוֹן) as a woman and calls her to wear her beautiful clothes because her suffering is over. God himself is coming with his people in his holy dwelling, Zion.

The image of a mother (אִמָּה) comforting her child is explaining how Yahweh and his people became one, i.e. the interdependence of God and his people (49: 14-17). This divine comfort begins with the abundance of prosperity and wealth. Zion will arise from her ruins. The refugees from Babylon will have safety and health in their former devastated homeland. In 54:11 Zion is depicted as the one who needs comforting. Stromberg underscores that the metaphor of Zion as woman (אִמָּה) is found throughout the book: Zion as a prostitute (1: 21), Zion as a mother, Zion as a woman (37: 22) and Zion as daughter (בַּת צִיּוֹן). Stromberg argues that each image or metaphor of Zion as mother (אִמָּה) is unique in its context. The first image of Zion as prostitute speaks to a pre-exilic Jerusalem, a city full of sin and idolatry. The second image speaks to a pre-exilic Jerusalem invaded by foreign armies. The last image is about Jerusalem in exile seeking deliverance and comfort.

Brueggemann equally points out that the imagery of Zion as “mother” pervades the whole book. For him, in 40:1 Jerusalem is depicted as a newborn that needs comfort. Yahweh is described as a mother who comforts and satisfies her newly born. Yahweh will never abandon Zion, He will do everything as a mother who loves her baby to cherish Israel. Brueggemann indicates that “Yahweh has not forgotten Israel, not abandoned Zion (ציון). Even in the depth of exile, Yahweh has not forgotten and has not abandoned, contrary to what the circumstance may suggest”.⁵¹

III.2 The Restored Zion

Isaiah 54: 12-13

ישמתי בדכּל שמשתי · וּשְׁעָרֵי לְאַבְנֵי אֶקֶדָּח וְכָל־גֵּי וְלֵךְ לְאַבְנֵי־חַפְזִי:

In a journey we always have a destination. Zion is the goal of the new exodus. God will save his people from Babylon, God will rebuild and give them back their city. Zion will not just be a city but a restored and rebuilt city with security and wealth, that the exiles will neither suffer nor lack anything. The idea of returning to Zion began earlier in 40: 12. The Judean exiles have in mind going back to their Land. Second Isaiah makes Zion the destination of the exodus journey.⁵² In 46:13 Yahweh carries Israel to Zion. We see that in 49:15-26 the journey of the exiles ends in Zion. The exiles will come back with joy (בשמחה). The remnant of Yahweh returned and came back to Zion with joyful songs (51:9-11). Zion who was in captivity is now the light of the nations (גויים). In 54:11-12 God himself will build Zion with precious stones. This language of reconstruction is accurately highlighted in our text above. In verse 11: God says he will make the gates (וּשְׁעָרֵי) and windows (שְׁמֹטֵי) of Zion with precious stones, valuable material such as אֶקֶדָּח

⁵¹ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 116.

⁵² Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 3.

לְאַבְנֵי (stones of crystal). As such, Zion the destructed and desolate will be rebuilt with precious materials. Zion will no longer be a desperate place; the exiles will come to a rebuilt city. The language of לְאַבְנֵי (stones), שְׂמֹטוֹתֶיךָ (your windows) and שְׁעָרֶיךָ (your gates) explains the work of rebuilding and restoring Zion. In 55:1-2 the images of buying wine, milk and bread without money bear witness that God has fully restored Zion. The exiles in Zion can satisfy their own needs and Yahweh will provide water and wine. God invites them to come to him buy without money. God provides the basic necessities of life to his people back in Zion. They will never experience hunger, thirst like in exile in Babylon.

In the first exodus God gave a land to his people. In this new exodus, God brings back his people to Zion; and He also reconstructs, rebuilds Zion. Isaiah makes it clear that Judah cannot be restored without Zion. I also think that one of the primordial goals and motifs of the new exodus is the new creation of Zion with the rebuilding of the Temple and other structures. William J. Dumbrell supports this idea of God rebuilding Zion: “By a new Exodus engineered by Israel’s God the covenant will be re-established for the people of God who are to be gathered to divine center, Jerusalem.”⁵³ This newness is also about the material security and affluence of other nations in relation to Zion. Jerusalem which was humiliated will now be a trade center for all the nations after the exile. That is why the language of creation appears abundantly in second Isaiah as explained earlier about the theme of creation.

Graham S. Ogden says of this act of God in Zion “the reapplication of the Exodus motif, which had as its goal the gift of the land, is, in this particular expression, set in terms of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem.”⁵⁴ The ingathering of the Judeans is linked with their Land.

⁵³ William J. Dumbrell, “The Purpose of the Book of Isaiah,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 36 (1985):124.

⁵⁴ Graham S. Ogden, “Moses and Cyrus”, *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 28, Fasc.2, (Sydney, 2000): 200.

That is why the centrality of Zion in the new exodus is so important for Second Isaiah. Second Isaiah, referring to Zion as the last destination of the new exodus is recalling what Clifford called the tradition of exodus conquest. For Him, there is a great link between Zion and the exodus. He explains it by highlighting that: “The tradition of Exodus-conquest became associated with the Zion tradition.”⁵⁵ The transformation of the desert, the highway in the desert, the renewal of creation and the intervention of Cyrus, as we mentioned, have Zion as their goal. Yahweh removes all the obstacles on the highway in the desert for his people, so that they may enter Zion.

The highway in the desert is the road leading the Judeans from Babylon to Zion. This redeeming work of God is well explained by Clifford: “Both desert and sea were seen as obstacles to human existence because they blocked the entrance to Yahweh’s land, the only place where people could truly live. Yahweh vanquished the forces by building a path through them, so that the people could enter the land.”⁵⁶ That is why in chapters 49 and 51:9-11 the exiles enter Zion with joyful songs. For Rikki E. Watts the Isaianic new exodus is fulfilled when Zion is restored: “The hope of the Isaianic new exodus culminates in the glorious return of Yahweh to a restored Jerusalem. Just as worshipping Yahweh at Sinai was the guarantee and sign of the prototypical first exodus (Ex 3: 12), the goal of the Isaianic new exodus is the enthronement of Yahweh in a restored Zion-Jerusalem.”⁵⁷ In 51:3 God announces that he will recreate and rebuild Zion. Isaiah depicts Zion as the Genesis garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were living in harmony with God. God will really create and make new things in Zion. The new exodus will be a reality to the

⁵⁵ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 3.

⁵⁶ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 8.

⁵⁷ Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 296.

exiles when they return to Zion their homeland. In 55:12, God expresses the effectiveness of the exodus through these words: “For you shall go out in joy, and lead back in peace”.

Yahweh will bring newness to Jerusalem his child. This newness is also about material security and the flocking of other nations to Zion. That is why in 52:15 Yahweh says He is going to make Zion look like the Garden of Eden. After the exile are back in their homeland, the Judeans will experience the marvelous rebuilding of Zion by God. Yahweh will rebuild Zion entirely, even her waste places. The returnees from Babylon will live in the transformed and rebuilt Zion full of provisions and security. Abma explains this idea of God restoring Zion: “the messenger of good tidings announces the arrival of Yahweh to Zion. He is moving ahead of his people to establish his kingship in Zion and his arrival is exultant welcomed as the final realization of comfort.”⁵⁸ That is why in 42:10-17 the Judeans and the nations will sing a song of victory to God like in the first exodus Moses and the exiles sang a song of victory to Yahweh (Exodus 15), because Zion is no longer under oppression and mourning. That is why in 49: 22-24 the journey from Babylon to Zion is well described. The nations must hear what God has done for his lovely city Zion. In 51:11 the Judeans will come back and enter Zion with proclamation and joy.

Jerusalem who was humiliated will now be a trade center for all nations. Richard Clifford depicts Zion as the antagonist to Babylon. Zion is the Land of God and Babylon the land of idols. In the first exodus the Israelites were subjects to pharaoh like the exiles in Babylon. He says:

The Zion-Babylon polarity makes it clear that Zion is the only place where Yahweh can be worshipped. Babylon is the land of the tyrant and is full of false gods. The old tradition sometimes put the Exodus-Conquest in just those simple geographic antipodes. The Israelites served Pharaoh in Egypt and served Yahweh in Canaan. For second Isaiah Babylon was polluted and about to be destroyed. Zion is the restored, rebuilt sacred city, the goal of the procession from darkness. Babylon is the land of captivity and of

⁵⁸ Abma, “Travelling from Babylon to Zion,” 20.

subservience to false gods. Zion is the land of freedom and of true worship and divine manifestation.⁵⁹

III.3 The Role of Cyrus

Cyrus is an instrument of the new exodus: the figure of Cyrus is cited many times in Second Isaiah: In 41:2 he is from the East; in 44:26-29 Cyrus is called the Shepherd of God; in 45:1 he is called the Messiah (this title was reserved for the kings in Israel; 1 Samuel 2:10).

In 45:3-6 God gives three reasons why He has chosen Cyrus: First God wants to let Cyrus know He is the Holy One of Israel who is mandating him to liberate his people in Babylon; the second reason is in 45: 4 where God says to Cyrus that He called him for the sake of his servant, Jacob. God appointed Cyrus a stranger because of Israel His people. The third reason, in 45: 6, God says that He has chosen Cyrus to let the people know that there is no God apart him the God of Israel. Cyrus became an important figure in God's plan for the salvation and restoration of the exiles and Zion. In 46:11 he is called a bird of prey. In 48:14 Cyrus is called the loved one of God. Through all these names given to Cyrus by God, it is clear to me that Cyrus has a divine election like the prophets because he is chosen and elected by God himself. God chose Cyrus and gave him an identity and authority for the rescue of his people. Yahweh planned to call Cyrus and make him his messenger. For Second Isaiah, the real king is Cyrus the Persian. It is easy to understand Second Isaiah; for him Cyrus is the best agent of God, the legitimate king in this time of exile. Cyrus will bring back the people to their homeland and allow them to rebuild their temple. Richard Clifford highlights that Second Isaiah depicts Cyrus as the best king in that time of exile. Second Isaiah, according to Richard Clifford, is portraying Cyrus in the model of ancient eastern kingship. He says: "For Second Isaiah, Cyrus is the typical king; he rebuilds the temple and brings the people home in procession. The prophet has borrowed from the portrait of the assyrian king in First Isaiah

⁵⁹ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 47.

and of Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah”.⁶⁰ God called Cyrus to bring back His people, rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 46:27-28). Cyrus will allow the Judeans to go back to Zion.

For the Second Isaiah, Cyrus has become the agent of Yahweh through his military victories. He will fulfill the mission of liberating the exiles from Babylon to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple. “Yahweh will soon redeem his captive people in Babylon (בבל) and bring them back to the promised land of Israel or Canaan through the work of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, who conquered Babylon in 538 BCE and commissioned the Jewish exiles to return to Judah and Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.”⁶¹ God has rendered effective the deliverance of his people through Cyrus. As such, Cyrus accomplished the will of God. John L. McKenzie explains the role of the Persian king accurately by saying: “Yahweh awards the kings and nations to Cyrus because Cyrus is the instrument of his will to save, as well as the instrument of his judgment on the arrogance of conquerors. Therefore, Yahweh makes Cyrus’ journey easy.”⁶² In a pedagogy meant to convince the exiles to be faithful and to hope in God, Second Isaiah uses the rise of the Persian king as a theological argument.

The main point of the third motif was to demonstrate that Zion was the destination of the new exodus. The highway in the desert, the transformation of the desert, the provisions on the road, have for final destination the homeland Zion. The exiles from Babylon will come back joyfully. Zion, which was a desolate land, will be rebuilt and restored. God gives infrastructures and wealth to Zion. The barren Zion will now become radiant. I equally highlighted the role of the Persian king Cyrus in this return of the exiles from Babylon. By his military conquests, Cyrus

⁶⁰ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 117.

⁶¹ John T. Willis, *Images of Water in Isaiah*, (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2017), 1.

⁶² McKenzie, *Isaiah*, 77.

helped fulfill the plan of God to free the refugees of Babylon and to allow them to go to their homeland and rebuild their city and their temple.

IV. The Leadership of the Prophet-Servant

The servant plays a great role in the return of the exiles from Babylon. In Second Isaiah, Cyrus disappeared after chapter 47 because from 48 to 55 there is no further mention of Cyrus. Cyrus initiated the new exodus by his military conquest but he is not the one who will bring forth and to the end the new exodus, but rather the prophet-servant will.

IV.1 The Question of The Identity of The Servant

Isaiah 42:1: הֲנִי עַבְדִּי אֶתְמַדְדָּבָר בְּחֵירִי רָצְתָה נַפְשִׁי נָתַתִּי רוּחִי עָלָיו מִשְׁפָּט לְגוֹיִם יוֹצִיא:

Isaiah 42: 1-4 belongs to what has been called the servant songs. In the book of Isaiah we have four servant songs: 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12. The term “servant” occurs in many passages of the Deutero Isaiah: 41:8 “Israel my servant”; 42:19 “my servant”; 44:2; 45:4; 48:20 “Jacob my servant”. In 42:1 God designates him as his servant: עַבְדִּי. He is God’s servant and is elected by him בְּחֵירִי (my elected). The Lord has put his spirit (רוּחִי) upon him. That spirit will enable and consecrate the servant to fulfill God’s mission. The servant started that mission earlier in 40:1-3 where he is seen crying in the desert to prepare a highway for the Lord. In *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, Richard J. Clifford explains that since Duhm’s commentary of 1892 four servant songs were grouped together in Second Isaiah. According to Duhm the four songs are not from the second Isaiah but a later edition. Did the Second Isaiah compose the four servant songs? What is exactly the identity of the servant? Many scholars will identify the servant as King, a prophet or a Priest. To answer this question about the identity of the servant, Ralph W. Klein states: “who is the servant? Two hypotheses dominate the discussion today: (a) the servant is Second Isaiah himself and the poems are autobiographical; (b) he is a personification of Israel. If the poems are

taken as autobiographical, many scholars suppose that the prophet was either executed or that he was imprisoned for a time by the Babylonians.”⁶³ Richard Clifford argues that, there is no distinction between the servant as individual in the songs and the people. For him, the servant is acting with the people and for the people. He gives the examples of David and Moses who are called servants of God because of the favor of God rests on them and their acts affect the community. The servant and the people are bound together. Peter Wilcox, in his article “The servant songs in Deutero-Isaiah”, reports that since Duhm the four servant songs constitute a unit. The tendency of scholars was to interpret them one next to the other. Peter Wilcox replies that the context of each servant song is important for its interpretation. For him, in this first servant song the servant is active, relying on what Von Rad called the democratization of the tradition, Peter Wilcox found that there is a democratization behind this first servant song. The servant can be identified as Israel in this first servant song. He asserts that this figure of servant active in 42: 1-4 did not contrast the figure of a passive servant in 40:9 41.1; 44:1; 46:2. The context of each servant is necessary. Israel is called to show the *mišpaṭ* of God to the world. I agree with Richard Clifford that, the servant cannot be separated from the people.

IV.2 The Task of The Servant

In the beginning of Second Isaiah, people are in exile, the temple is destroyed and their land taken. They started lamenting and doubting Yahweh’s presence and power. The laments begin in 40: 6-7. God will commission his prophet to bring them the message of consolation: “comfort, O comfort my people, says the Lord” (40: 1). The imperative “cry, call, shout” in 40: 2 suggests that God is giving an order to the prophet to go and deliver his message of hope to the exiles in Babylon. The cries are among the tasks of the servant. The servant, responding to their complaints,

⁶³ Klein, *Israel in Exile*, 119.

will recall for them that Yahweh is the creator of all things and the master of history. This is why in 40:12-17 we have many rhetorical questions, accompanied with verbs the “measure,” “enclose,” and “weigh” to demonstrate the majesty, the sovereignty of Yahweh as God and creator of everything. We find similar rhetorical questions in Job 38:4-7. In 40:27-31 we see clearly the laments of exiles, and also the answers of the prophet. First of all the prophet recalls the covenant and their election (Jacob/Israel). The image of Jacob/Israel as God’s vineyard is also found in chapter 5. In v. 29, the prophet gave them a clear answer that God is always close to his people in need. Isaiah criticizes Jacob/Israel for their lack of perceiving the greatness of Yahweh. For the prophet, Yahweh is the supreme ruler of the universe. He invites them to put their trust and hope in Yahweh the creator. Why? Because Yahweh is eternal and cannot be compared to any other god. He is a unique creator and redeemer. That is why in v.26 God is full of power and in v.29 He gives power to the powerless. In v.31 Yahweh is named as the one who gives a new strength.

In 42:1-4 the servant is elected by God like in 41:8-10. God elects a servant and assigns him a task. The servant is charged and mandated to bring forth the *mišpaṭ* of God to the entire world, to be light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, and to free the captives from prison. Here I see the social transformations brought about by the mission of the servant. God himself is the source of the servant’s strength: “I have put my spirit upon him”. This is the power and wisdom of God dwelling upon the servant. This servant will bring the justice of God to the world not in a violent way (he will not cry, lift up his voice, he will not quench and grow faint) but by gentleness, patience, compassion and righteousness. In 42: 2-7 the action of the servant is discreet without violence. God confirmed the mission of the servant. His mission is universal and oriented for the liberation of the exiles. The returning of the exiles to Zion has been achieved by the ministry of the servant. Like the leadership of Moses in the first exodus (Exodus 15: 22-23), the servant in

Second Isaiah has the same leadership role towards the exiles. Richard J. Clifford In *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, Richard Clifford argues that, for Second Isaiah, the act of returning from exile to their land becomes for him the predominant point. If Israel is obedient and trusts in the word of God, God will restore them to their land. The servant is the one who made a great change in the hearts and life of the exiles in Babylon.

In 49: 3-6 the servant is commissioned by God to bring back Israel. God will assign the servant many tasks: he will be the guide of the people, he will restore the tribes of Jacob and reunite Israel to God. The new exodus will be fully fulfilled through the leadership of the servant. Cyrus has ordered the returning of the exiles to Zion but the servant will play the role of gathering them in Zion. The servant in 49 will play the same role as Moses and Joshua did in the first exodus for the settlement in the land of Canaan. Richard Clifford compares the task and the call of the servant to the one of Moses in Exodus. For him, the servant in 49 is fulfilling the same role like Moses did in the exodus. He states: “Since the servant’s vocation in Second Isaiah is to lead Israel to a new Exodus-Conquest, it is not surprising that his call is modeled on the commission of Moses in Exodus 3:1-4:17”.⁶⁴ Abma clarifies the commission and the role of the prophet in this mission of bringing back the exiles to Zion: “wishing to bring the people back and preparing the journey, the servant has first to gather as many fellow-travelers as possible”.⁶⁵ The servant plays here a pivotal role. He is the pioneer in this hard work of bringing the exiles back to Zion. The servant stands as mediator between Yahweh and the exiles. William J. Webb finds that the servant played a pivotal role to call out the exiles from Babylon and once they arrived in Zion the servant will again play a great role. William explains the idea of the servant as mediator by saying: “As Israel’s covenant

⁶⁴ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 150.

⁶⁵Abma, “Travelling from Babylon to Zion”, 10.

mediator, the servant calls the people out, leads them along the way, and redistributes the land once in Palestine”.⁶⁶ This idea of the servant as mediator is well explained by Isaiah in 49:5-9. As Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, the servant will lead the exiles on a triumphal highway from Babylon to Zion. In 52: 7-10, the servant is the one proclaiming the message of peace and joy to Zion.

The servant-prophet suffered extremely (52:13-53:12) to bring liberation to the exiles. He has to bear the sins of the exiles so that they can be free. The new exodus will be accomplished by the blood of the servant of the Lord. The servant was humiliated with his people in exile and he will be exalted. In my opinion, the suffering servant songs delineate the mission of the servant who was there with the exiles and also suffered to bring them back to Zion. He was like the guide, the light that keeps faith and perseverance in the hearts of the oppressed and suffering Judeans in Babylon.

To sum up the last and fourth motif, I will say that the servant of God played a great role in the deliverance and the return of the exiles of Babylon. The figure of the servant differs from one text to the other. Yahweh will put his spirit in him to make him the mediator between the exiles and God. The servant gave courage and faith to the desperate refugees of Babylon. The servant will be the guide of the refugees. He suffered with them.

This chapter has demonstrated that Second Isaiah abundantly uses the exodus narrative through the four exodus motifs: The highway, Yahweh leading his people, the leadership of the servant and Zion the final destination of the journey. God will make a new thing, a new exodus for his people. He will lead his people to Zion and Zion will become a center for the other nations, a

⁶⁶ William J. Webb, *Returning Home New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1*, (Guildford: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 80.

center of God's dwelling, and a center of prosperity. Yahweh lead his people by a highway from Babylon through a desert to Zion .Yahweh is the one who saved his people in the unhappy situation of the first exodus, and the same Yahweh who saved and redeemed his people from the Babylonian exile. The servant in 49:8-9 leads the people in the desert as Moses did in the first exodus. The servant is the one playing the role of mediator. He also plays the role of the one who resettles the exiles in their land as Moses and Joshua did in the first exodus. Cyrus played a great role in the restoration of Zion. When he conquered Babylon in 539, he allowed all exiles to go back to their homeland, especially the Judeans. Through the edict of Cyrus they will go back to their land and rebuild their temple.

I equally argued that the exodus tradition is strongly highlighted in second Isaiah. By this language or metaphor of former/old things Second Isaiah recalled the exodus event. The new exodus is tied to a land like the first exodus. The destination of the first exodus was Canaan. Meanwhile the destination of the new exodus is Zion. In this typology, we have seen that there is continuity and discontinuity between the old and new exodus. Even though the new exodus is different from the old exodus, there is a repetition of exodus. The first exodus helps to illuminate the new one coming even though the first exodus is separated from the new exodus by several hundred years.

Chapter Two

The Use of Exodus Motif in the New Testament

This chapter is going to focus on the use of the new exodus in the New Testament. The point is to demonstrate that the New Testament offers an example of the application of the new exodus. I would like to mention at the beginning of this chapter that the New Testament is so vast in such a way that I cannot use all the text or to express the new exodus. In this chapter, I am going to concentrate on the gospel according to Mark.

My task in this chapter is to examine the language of the new exodus in the gospel of Mark. I am going to make a typology correspondence between the gospel of Mark and exodus narrative, highlighting the central language of the exodus narrative in Mark. The evangelist Mark made many allusions to the exodus tradition, so I will focus on some illustrative episodes of the gospel of Mark. God, in the first and second exodus, liberated his people from Egypt and Babylon. He formed Israel as a nation and as people. Jesus will also liberate his people by his death and resurrection through his entrance to the holy city. At the end of this chapter, I will explain the theological motif which supports the idea that Christ is the fulfillment of the exodus. In all the exodus, there is one theme that link them: liberation. Therefore, I will consider the new exodus or exodus narrative in Mark through christological perspective. Five points will be taken in consideration in this chapter:

- 1) Preparing a Way in the Wilderness: Mark opens with that voice crying in the wilderness to prepare a way to the Lord.
- 2) Jesus in the Wilderness: Mark will recall the wandering exodus tradition in the wilderness by depicting Jesus in the desert for forty days and nights. The wilderness motif is very important in the gospel of Mark.

- 3) The Transfiguration of Jesus: the wilderness theophany is also part of the exodus narrative. Jesus is overshadowed by the clouds, a heavenly voice talks to him. The transfiguration took place on the mountain. The theme of the mountain as place of theophany is important in the wilderness narrative.
- 4) Jesus' Entrance in Jerusalem as an Exodus: the goal of the first and second exodus was the Promised Land and Zion. Jesus, too, leads us to Jerusalem, the city of God, the holy city. Jesus restored Jerusalem by purifying the temple and by redeeming the new people of the new covenant through his death and resurrection. His exodus ends in Jerusalem on the cross.
- 5) The Christian Understanding of the New Exodus: for the followers of Jesus, He is the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah.

I. Preparing a way to the Lord

Mark 1:2-4

Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ Ἴδου ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου·

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

In this text, there are many allusions to the exodus tradition as it is expressed in Second Isaiah. The Gospel of Mark opens with this quotation: “As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, see, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mark 1:2-3). Here, there is a clear reference to the language of the new exodus, as the evangelist Mark is quoting Isaiah 40:3 and 42:3. (Mark is making an allusion here to the voice of Isaiah 40:3, 43:3 and Exodus 23:23:

calling to prepare a way to the Yahweh. The verb γέγραπται (grapho) verb-perfect indicative passive 3rd person singular, can be translated as “it has been written”. This verb γέγραπται is a clear indication that Mark is really quoting. In the first chapter of the evangelist Mark, he introduces his Gospel by making allusion to the prophet Isaiah. The use of the verb γέγραπται indicates that Mark is remembering what was written in the prophet Isaiah.

Some scholars like Joel Marcus explain that this verb γέγραπται serves to convey that Isaiah is making an allusion not only to Isaiah but also to Malachi 1: 2 and Exodus 23:20. The verb γέγραπται associate with the comparative adverb Καθώς (just *as*) gives an introduction formula. Joel Marcus estates: “despite this introductory formula, what follows it is not simply a quotation from Isaiah but a conflation of three passages, Ex 23: 20; Mal 3:1; and Isa 40:3”.⁶⁷ The evangelist Mark in 1:2-3 is making an allusion to the exodus tradition. Καθώς γέγραπται is a formula that serves and indicates that there is a quotation from the Old Testament. The formula Καθώς γέγραπται can be also understood as for Mark the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled here in Jesus. Mark links his introductory message to the prophecy of Isaiah. This introductory formula Καθώς γέγραπται serves as the road map for all of Mark’s gospel. The formula Καθώς γέγραπται is linked with the verse 1. Mark links verse 2 to verse 1 to explain that the goods news he is announcing has started already in the prophecy of Isaiah. Ipso facto in the citation at the beginning of his gospel, Mark makes use of three different sources. The sources are as follows: the book of Exodus 23, 20, the prophet Isaiah 40:3, and the prophet Malachi 3:1. The evangelist indicates at the beginning of his citation as he says in the Greek language (Καθώς γέγραπται).

⁶⁷Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord, Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 12.

This formula Καθὼς γέγραπται is an attestation that Mark's audience was used or familiar to the texts of Old Testament. It is clear enough that, with this language Κατασκευάσει : (kataskeuazo) verb –future indicative active (will prepare), ὁδόν : (hod-os') noun accusative feminine singular (way), ἀποστέλλω : (apostello) Verb, present indicative active 1st person singular (I send). ἄγγελόν : (ang'-el-os) noun accusative masculine singular (messenger, angel) μου : personal/possessive pronoun genitive 1st pers singular (of me), Mark is recalling the exodus motif of Second Isaiah. In Isaiah 40:3 Yahweh says: I am sending my messenger ahead of you. Likewise, in Exodus 23:20 Yahweh will send his angel ahead of the children of Israel in the desert. In the Exodus God reveals to his people that He will send an angel (ang'-el-os) before them, to guide them through the desert to the promised land. As God send his messenger in Isaiah to prepare a Way in the desert, here Mark is identifying John the Baptist as the messenger who will prepare the way in the wilderness for the coming of the Messiah. The mission of John the Baptist as a messenger is to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. Mark is inviting the people to come to Jesus in the desert. He is reaffirming here the leadership of Moses as servant prophet. Jesus is now the new leader, the new Moses.

It is also worth highlighting here that, the language of preparing a way in the wilderness is also found in the Qumran community. This passage of Isaiah 40:3 is equally found in the Qumran War Scroll. The members of the Qumran community went to the wilderness and established themselves in a desert to prepare a way to the Lord for the restoration of Zion. For them this restoration will happen through a war. The Qumran community considered itself as fulfilling prophet Isaiah's call in chapter 40:3.

The term ὁδόν (hod-os') noun accusative feminine singular (way) occurs two times here in our text. This is also an exodus vocabulary. M. Eugene Boring highlights that the word *hodos*

is capital in Mark's vocabulary. He Says: "the word *hodos*, translated variously in the NRSV as "way", "road", "path", "journey" is a key theological term in Mark".⁶⁸ Etymologically the word Exodus comes from the Greek word "*exodos*" (ex + hodos). In Greek "*exodos*" can means a "path, a way, a road, a march and a journey". In the ancient Greek "*exodos*" can refer to a solemn procession, a military expedition and a march.

The verb ἑτοιμάσατε (*hetoimazo*) verb Aorist imperative active 2nd person plural (*prepare*) link together with the term *hodos* can be understood as imperative to prepare a way. Many Scholars like Rikki E. Watts think that Mark was influenced by the Second Isaiah. He says: "In view of our assessment of Mark's opening sentence, it is significant that a number of commentators have argued for a persuasive Deutero-Isaianic influence on Mark's prologue".⁶⁹ Mark structures his Gospel in the beginning with the word *hodos*. Let us remember that at the beginning of the second part of the prophet Isaiah, this word in Hebrew (הַדֶּרֶךְ) also marks the plan of the second part of the prophet Isaiah that prepares the road for the liberation of the people of God. John the Baptist was that voice crying in the desert, inviting people for the baptism of repentance, to prepare for the one who is coming to save his people. To bring back the exiles from Babylon Yahweh will make a road (*hod-os'*) for himself through the wilderness, and through this road He will lead his people back to Zion. The word *hodos* is *very important* in the vocabulary of Mark. It is utilized many times by Mark: (8:27; 9:33-34; 10:17,32, 46,52.).

The *hodos* is a term serving to give a journey account. In Second Isaiah the Road served as instrument of the journey back to Zion for the exiles. Here also in Mark the *hodos* is used also to explain a journey account. Preparing a way for the coming of Jesus. M. Eugene Boring explains

⁶⁸ M. Eugene Boring, *Mark a Commentary*, (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 37.

⁶⁹ Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 91.

accurately this role of John the Baptist as messenger when he states: “ In Mark’s view, John had no other role than to prepare the way for Jesus, and he certainly referred to Jesus as the coming one.”⁷⁰ “Someone is shouting in the desert, get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel.” (Mark 1:3), the term *hodos* is well noticed in the gospel of Mark. Later, when I talk about Jesus’ entry in Jerusalem the same term *hodos* will be used. The term εὐθείας : (euthus) adjective accusative feminine plural (straight) is very important here to understand the way that John the Baptist is preparing. The term εὐθείας : (euthus) is a clear indication that that road have to be straight, without obstacles. Mark is making allusion to Isaiah’s way from Babylon to Zion which have to be straight. God will remove all the obstacles on the Road of the Babylonian. Here also by this use of εὐθείας the *hodos* of the coming of Jesus have to be straight. For Mark the way is to be prepared for the Lord who is Jesus. In Second Isaiah God spoke to his people, how He is going to make a road for them. Here God is speaking about his son. John the Baptist have to prepare the road (hod-os’) to the coming of the son of God. The verb βοῶντος : (boao) verb present participle active genitive masculine singular (of one crying), and the noun φωνή : (phone) noun nominative feminine singular (the voice) here are making allusion to the exodus narrative. This theme of the φωνή in Mark is reminding us the exodus narrative of Moses on the Mount Sinai. Moses heard a voice of God calling (Exodus 20). In second Isaiah this divine voice will instruct the prophet to go and prepare a way for Him. The theme of the voice φωνή is important in the exodus narrative. The voice (φωνή) of the one (βοῶντος) crying in the desert in the context of Mark can be identified with John the Baptist. The exodus language appears in the gospel of Mark with the voice of John the Baptist crying in the desert. Richard Clifford highlights that voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness as exodus. He says: “In the gospels the exodus appears in the

⁷⁰ Boring, *Mark a Commentary*, 42.

voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness and the theme of the way of the Lord”.⁷¹ The Baptism of John the Baptist was an introduction to the new exodus that leads to salvation. John the Baptist was the one leading people to Jesus, to his coming and the salvation that Jesus is about to bring. In this for the Lord is located in the wilderness. The wilderness motif is also important in Mark narrative. I will talk on it later. I would like to just highlight that in Second Isaiah the way of the Lord will pass through the wilderness. The exiles from Babylon will also use that way passing through the desert to their homeland. In the opinion of the evangelist Mark, the word *hodos*, shows that Jesus is fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah in chapter 40:3. Through this road in the desert, Yahweh is going to conquer the hostilities in the desert and accompany his people through this road (*hodos*) to the promise land. Like Mark, the word *hodos*, Jesus will take the same way to save his people. Every detail of the evangelist Mark in his first verse is profoundly anchored in the wilderness justification in the Old Testament.

The language of “prepare a way”, “a voice”, and “the wilderness”, recalls the exilic hope of the second exodus. John the Baptist announced the coming of the liberator and invited the people to prepare for his way. John’s proclamation in the wilderness was a reminder of Exodus 23:23 where the angel was to accompany people and bring them to the land. For Mark, Jesus is depicted as the way to the Lord. The coming of Jesus is depicted as the one who will lead and liberate people.

II. Jesus in the wilderness

Mark 1:12-13

Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. καὶ ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ.

⁷¹Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible,” 355.

The theme of the wilderness motif is highly used by the evangelist Mark. In Mark 1:12-15, after his baptism, Jesus went to the desert for forty days in the wilderness. The wilderness motif is very important in Mark gospel. The term (*eremos*) appears in Mk. 1:13. Primus mark uses the word desert (*eremos*) to prepare the voice of the Lord in the desert. Secundus, he uses the word to talk about the temptation of Jesus in the desert (*eremos*) by the demon. The evangelist mark uses the word (*eremos*) many times in his text. In the text the term *eremos* appears two times: ἔρημον: (*eremos*), adjective-dative singular feminine (waste, desert, desolate, wilderness). The *eremos* as I explained earlier in my first chapter is a place of danger, a deserted place, and an inhospitable place. The *eremos* is also a place where there is no food, no water, and no vegetation. *eremos* is also a place of wild animals, demons and death. The wilderness motif is very important in mark gospel like in the exodus narratives. At the beginning of gospel Mark mentioned already the *eremos*. Mark begins his gospel in the wilderness. The word desert is what we find in the beginning of the second part of the prophet Isaiah when he says: “prepare in the desert a way.” Mark attracts the attention of his audience by the wilderness justification. John the Baptist preaches in the desert (*eremos*), he prepares the way for Jesus in the desert (*eremos*). In the prophet Isaiah we are aware that God had prepared the way for Himself in the desert and also a road in the desert (*eremos*) for his people. The desert here in Mark is an exodus justification. It is in the desert that God feed his people with manna, and led them through the desert by their mediator Moses to the promise land and his return to Jerusalem. Mark underlines then that in this continuity in the wilderness justification to prepare the way for Jesus. In the prophet Isaiah, Yahweh guided and led his people in the desert to Zion. Likewise, in Second Isaiah God provided provisions for his people in the desert.

Mark places the ministry of John the Baptist in the *eremos*. John the Baptist will call people to come to the *eremos* to hear the voice of the one calling for the preparation of the Lord's way. Mark is clearly recalling the exodus narrative where God made the covenant with his people in the desert. For him, the Jews of his time have to come out to the wilderness as place of the first covenant. People have to go the wilderness as place of retreat and passing through the waters of Jordan for the baptism (βάπτισμα μετανοίας), rejecting Satan, sins, and renewing the relationship with God. The wilderness is the place where Israel build his identity as God people (Deut 30:19), the people of the covenant (Deut 29:12). Let us also remember that the *eremos* was the place of the first and second exodus. The highway, the road for the new exodus were through the *eremos*. The wilderness echoes of the wilderness of second Isaiah where God transforms the desert. The desert was also the place of the birth of Israel as a nation. Mark is making a good use of that exodus tradition in his Gospel.

In our text of study, Jesus is also in the wilderness (*eremos*) where John is ministering, where John is baptizing. The Πνεῦμα: (Pneuma), noun-nominative singular neuter (Ghost, spirit) will drove Jesus apart from the others to the desert. To liberate his people from Babylon God will put his spirit in his chosen prophet, to strengthen him to carry out he mission of liberation. Jesus before his public ministry (Mark 1:14-15) filled by the power of the Holy Spirit went to the wilderness. The term Spirit (*Pneuma*) plays a very important role in the exodus justification. We recall this in the second part of the prophet Isaiah as the Spirit also plays an important role in the liberation of his people in Babylon. Mark remembers this exodus justification in using the term (pneuma) that received Jesus in the desert.

The terms τεσσαράκοντα (tessarakonta, numeral adjective: forty) and ἡμέρας (days) are also a good vocabulary of the wilderness motif. According to Mark Jesus stayed forty days

(τεσσεράκοντα ἡμέρας) in the wilderness. The link between the wilderness and the forty days evokes the experience of Israel in the first exodus. Israel stayed in the wilderness for forty years (Deut 8: 2), Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 34: 28). Elijah journeyed in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights before reaching the Mount Horeb (1Kgs19:1-8). Jesus was tempted in the desert for forty days (τεσσεράκοντα ἡμέρας). This also reminds the evangelist Mark of the temptation of the Israelites in the desert. This reminds us of the spirit of temptation of the people of God in the desert according to the book of the exodus. The evangelist thus takes this on his account the exodus justification. Just as the people of Israel were tempted in the desert. Here, Mark recalls another vocabulary of the exodus justification. The people of Israel wandered in the desert for forty years (Ex 34: 28). The link between the desert (*eremos*) and forty days (τεσσεράκοντα ἡμέρας) are intimately linked together. Mark recalls this exodus justification in the desert for forty years. We explained in the first chapter of our work that the desert was the first place of challenge to the Israelites. To link up with the temptation of Jesus in the desert (*eremos*), Mark recalls the wilderness justification of the exodus. Mark here is trying to remind his audience that Jesus in the desert reminds the experience of the Israelites in the desert.

The number τεσσεράκοντα (forty) echoes the forty years of Israel in the desert from Egypt to the promised land. Luke and Matthew mentioned also those forty days of Jesus in the wilderness. For them, the temptation of Jesus in the desert for forty days is an exodus tradition. In Matthew 4:1 and Luke 4: 1-4, Jesus after his baptism guided by the spirit, He went to the desert for forty days and forty nights fasting. Here, Matthew and Luke like Mark are recalling to mind the life of Israel in the wilderness. Considering Matthew 3:3 and Isaiah 40:3, the apostolic tradition wished to affirm that Jesus is the fulfillment of the mystery of salvation, prefigured by the exodus. Christ is a second Moses but also the New Israel, the first-born Son of God. In these forty days

Jesus was guided by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here also, I found the allusion to the column of fire guiding Israel in the first exodus; Yahweh leading his people in the desert from Babylon to Zion. Richard Clifford finds that, Luke and Matthew are making a good use of the exodus tradition by this language of forty days and the guidance of the spirit. He states: “ Matthew and Luke interpret the temptations of Jesus in the light of the exodus: 40 days in the desert recalls Israel’s 40 years; as Israel was guided by the column of fire so Jesus is guided by the spirit; Jesus unlike Israel does not succumb to temptation”.⁷² Andrew Schmutzer thinks that Jesus made an exodus experience when he says: “Broadly speaking, Jesus also passes through water, moves into wilderness, and experiences the core tests of hunger, self-denial, and idolatry that Israel did”.⁷³ In this forty days (τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας), Jesus was tempted (Πειραζόμενος: (peirazo), verb-present passive participle-nominative singular masculine: prove, tempt) by Satan Σατανᾶ: (Satana): the accuser, the devil, Satan. This is an allusion to the temptation of the Israel in the desert when they built the golden calf.

In the wilderness, Jesus was fed (Πεπλήρωται: (pleroo), verb-perfect passive indicative third person singular: to furnish, satisfy, execute), by the angels of the Lord (ἄγγελοι: (aggelos), noun nominative plural masculine: angels, messengers). Yahweh fed his people in the desert with the manna from heaven in the first exodus. In the second exodus as I explained in my previous chapter, God will not only liberate and make a road through the wilderness for his people come back from Babylon to Zion, God will provide them food and water for their Journey. In the wilderness motif God always provided provisions like in the first exodus, the second exodus, with Elijah and now with Jesus in the desert. Mark in this account of Jesus in the desert highlights also

⁷² Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible,” 355.

⁷³ Andrew Schmutzer, Jesus’ Temptation: A Reflection on Matthew’s use of Old Testament Theology and Imagery, *Ashland Theological Journal*, (2008): 18.

that Jesus was living peacefully with the wild animals (μετὰ τῶν θηρίων). The wild animals (θηρίων) are normally dangerous, they represent the danger of the life in the desert. What was the intention of Mark when he affirms that Jesus was living in the desert by the wild animals? Here in Mark, Jesus is living a peaceful relation with the θηρίων. This image of the peaceful μετὰ τῶν θηρίων evokes the restoration of Israel in the Second Isaiah where the opposite animals will live in harmony. Wilderness and peace with animals are Isaian motifs.⁷⁴ This image of harmless wild animals can be also interpreted as the victory of God over the evil forces. In Second Isaiah Yahweh will transform the fearful desert to a place of life, place of vegetation, place of peaceful relation between Israel and the nature.

As I said earlier, the wilderness justification plays an important role in the Gospel of Mark. In Mark chapter 1:13, the evangelist mentions the wilderness justification when he allows as he says ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων. To recall the wilderness justification we find already in the prophet Isaiah where the animals lived easily together, in the desert even the ferocious animals will be passive. When Mark uses the word (μετὰ), it means that the animals were truly passive with Jesus. The evangelist Mark here recalls of the episode of the prophet Isaiah chapter 11 and chapter 35 where the animals lives in perfect harmony. Furthermore, the evangelist Mark goes further to express this perfect harmony of life between Jesus and the wild animals in the desert uses the verb (διηκόνουν) which means serve. A perfect cohesion between Jesus and the wild animals. The angels (οἱ ἄγγελοι) served Jesus in the desert as they did to the prophet Elijah in the desert (1 Kgs 19: 5-8). Mark makes a reminder to this gesture to the exodus justification. Here in his Gospel chapter 1: 13, reminds this wilderness justification when he uses the word θηρίων (wild animals) who live in harmony with Jesus Christ in the desert. Mark returns always in the desert as his

⁷⁴ Boring, *Mark a Commentary*, 48.

peculiarities with the other Gospels. Here in Mark as I explained above, Jesus is tempted by Satan in the desert. In the wilderness, Jesus experienced hunger and thirst, but the angels of the Lord ministered to him. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him” (Mark 1:12-13). Jesus living with the wild animals here is echo of what I explained in the transformation of the desert in the first chapter, even the hostile animals can live together. Here, however, wild animals cannot be obstacles for the exiles like in the first exodus. Yahweh has dominated nature and even wild animals in the new exodus (40:20). Here in Mark, Jesus is also playing the same role of God who dominated the hostile environment. Where else but the desert could you have such a meaningful encounter of the Holy Spirit as well as Satan, of the wild beasts as well as the holy angels? The desert was the school where Jesus came to distinguish between the voice of God which he should follow and the voice of Satan which is temptation. I explained that the wilderness was the place of anguish, a hostile place, but the desert also was the place of revelation of God to Moses, to his people coming back to Zion. In Mark’s gospel we see how the evangelist uses this language of wilderness. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus goes many times in the desert for prayer (1:35; 6:45-46).

Mark makes abundantly allusions of the wilderness justification or better still the exodus justification when he uses the terms as: the Holy Spirit, the desert, the temptation, forty days, the wild animals and the angels. Mark recalls here the experience of the Israelites in the desert.

III. The transfiguration of Jesus

Mark 9: 2-8

Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ’ ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν,

καὶ τὰ ἰμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν, οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι. καὶ ὄφθη αὐτοῖς Ἡλείας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συνλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ Ῥαββεί, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἡλείᾳ μίαν. οὐ γὰρ ἤδει τί ἀποκριθῆ· ἐκφοβοὶ γὰρ ἐγένοντο.

καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

The transfiguration account is also full with the language of exodus narrative. The transfiguration of Jesus took place on the mountain. The mountaintop is an exodus language. The term ὄρος : (oros) Noun accusative neuter singular : a mountain. The ὄρος is always represented as a place of revelation, a place of the manifestation of God. In Exodus 24: 9-16 God manifested himself to Moses on the mountain (Sinai). Elijah also had the same experience of God revealing himself to him on the mountain (Sinai) . Here in our text of the transfiguration Jesus is on top of a ὄρος with three of his disciple and he is transfigured before them. Mark did not named the mountain. Because for Mark as Nineham pointed it out: “for Mark the significance of this trait in the story will have lain in the fact that a mountain top was traditionally the setting for theophany and super-natural revelations”.⁷⁵ Generally the ὄρος is the place of encounter between God and his people. Symbolically also the mountain (ὄρος) is the boundary between heaven and earth. The mountain (ὄρος) is conceived as a place of God’s revelation, the place of God’s glory. The place of reconciliation between God and his people like in the book of Exodus. Dorothy Lee explains the symbol of the mountain as: “the holy mountain (ὄρος) is the symbolic place of revelation, promising and anticipating a future world without suffering or violence, a place redolent with

⁷⁵ D. E Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), 237.

reconciliation, harmony, beauty and joy.”⁷⁶ In the text of Mark 9: 2-8 we have no precision according to the mountain (ὄρος). Marc did not name the mountain (ὄρος). That is why Donahue and Harrington think that we can make allusion to three mountains: “the usual identifications include Mounts Hermon, Carmel, and Tabor”.⁷⁷

Nogueira in his article “Visionary Elements” explains that the mountain should be the Sinai. He will say: “it is on Sinai that God gives these further revelations to Moses. It is possible that the same scenery is being recreated in our text by reference to Jesus meeting Moses on a high mountain”.⁷⁸ Wherever the transfiguration scene took place, for me the mountain here is a symbol of the theophany of God. Here in our text we have an example of theophany in the wilderness. In the book of Exodus 24, God reveals himself to Moses on the Sinai. We have even many similarities between our text of Mark 9:2-8 with the text of Exodus 24. In both texts, the scene took place on the Mountain.

Jesus went with three companions: Peter James and John; and Moses went also to the Sinai with three people: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Exodus 24:1). The theophany on the mountain (ὄρος) is almost the same. In Exodus 24, Moses and Joshua ascend the mountain at the beginning of six days; in Mark, Jesus and his companions ascend the mountain after six days”.⁷⁹ I can make a second similarity between Mark 9: 2-8 with Exodus 34 to demonstrate that how the mountain is the place of the theophany. As I said it already in both texts the place of the mountain (ὄρος) is unavoidable. Moses and Jesus ascend to the mount, God descends in a cloud, Moses’s Face shined,

⁷⁶ Dorothy Lee, “On the Holy Mountain: the Transfiguration in Scripture and Theology,” *Colloquium* 36/2 (2004): 157.

⁷⁷ John R. Donahue, Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 268.

⁷⁸ Paulo Augusto de Souza Nogueira, “Visionary Elements in the Transfiguration Narrative,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series* 43, (London, New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 145.

⁷⁹ David M. Miller, “Seeing the Glory, Hearing the Son: The Function of the Wilderness Theophany Narratives in Luke 9: 28-36,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72, (2010), 500.

Jesus face changed, the disciples feared and in Exodus 34 Aaron and the Elders of the people were afraid. In all the similarities I made the mountain is an essential place of the wilderness theophany. The mountain (ὄρος) is the place of God's revelation. Miller will evoke the mountain as place of wilderness theophany: "an allusion to Exodus 34 is supported further by the appearance of Moses and Elijah. Whatever the reason for their appearance at the transfiguration, it is surely significant that both Moses and Elijah had theophany experiences on a mountain, and the Elijah's experience in 1 Kings 19 resembles Moses' experience in Exodus 34".⁸⁰ Elijah and Moses both witnessed theophany on Mount Sinai. For me, the mountain is a place par excellence for God's revelation.

An important element of the exodus narrative is the voice from cloud (φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης): this is another element of the wilderness theophany. From the cloud came the voice of God. God is the one speaking from the cloud, like the divine voice in second Isaiah. This is a very important element of the theophany. During the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, a voice (phone) was heard from heaven. The mention of the word (φωνή) here is an echo of the exodus event. The voice that calls Moses on Sinai during the episode in the burning bush, Mark wishes to understand that this history of salvation that has been brought by Jesus is already written in the prophet Isaiah. At his baptism, Jesus is consecrated by the spirit to be light of the nations, to free people who are oppressed. This is an echo of the servant of Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-13. The voice over the river Jordan: "this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased", this voice is similarly like the one in Isaiah 42:1 which elected the servant.

The voice from the cloud (φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης) is a sign of the presence of God. The presence of the cloud (*nephos*) in the transfiguration account is, therefore, not to be associated with

⁸⁰ Miller, "Seeing the Glory, Hearing the Son," 501.

either the ascension or the Parousia but most probably with the presence of God.⁸¹ Harrington testifies the cloud as sign of God, the cloud is a symbol of divine presence. He said it in these terms: “Since God was assumed to be the author of life and the ground of hope it is not surprising that the cloud became also a symbol of the divine presence”.⁸² We have the description of the divine manifestation or divine presence in the book of Exodus 40: 34-38, when the clouds covered the tent of meeting. The voice φωνή came from heaven and said: “this is my son, whom I love, listen to him”. This voice is also found during the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1: 11. Here I see that Mark is faithful to his identity of Jesus in his Gospel. At the beginning of his Gospel Mark told the readers already that the gospel is about Jesus Son of God, later Son of Man. This identity is confirmed here by the voice from the cloud. The divine voice (φωνή) that speaks of Jesus at his baptism is the same voice that was spoken in the mountain during the transfiguration in the presence of Moses and Elijah and the three apostles. Mark recalls here the exodus justification, as it being recalled in the prophet Isaiah 42: 1 this same voice spoke of the prophet as elected.

The voice announced the identity of Jesus ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός . Harrington will mention that: “the voice approves Jesus as the representative and revealer of God, thus lending divine authority to his difficult teachings about Christology and discipleship during the journey narrative. The disciples are urged to hear and obey him”.⁸³ This identity of Jesus started in Mark 8: 27 when Jesus asked his disciples: “who do men say that I am?” The voice from the cloud is the voice of God the father. The coming of overshadowing cloud and the voice from heaven confirm the presence of God. In Exodus and Mark, both cases the clouds cover (Καταβαίνοντων: *katabaino* verb-present active participle-genitive plural masculine : to descend, come down, fall) the

⁸¹ Miller, “Seeing the Glory, Hearing the Son,” 81.

⁸² Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 270.

⁸³ Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 271.

mountain, the same period of time “six days” and the people present in the theophany hear a voice from the heaven. David M. Miller mentioned these similarities between Mark 9: 2-8 and Exodus 24 when he says: “in Exodus 24, the cloud covers the mountain for six days, whereas in Mark there is at least a six-day period before the cloud appears. God who manifests himself through a voice. The reaction of fear by the disciples is a part of the theophany. Likewise in Exodus 20 the Israelites were terrified to hear the voice of God and they said to Moses: “speak to us yourself they said to Moses, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die” (Exodus 20: 19).

On the mountain Jesus was transfigured: this form or change of form that Jesus took in the transfiguration is for me also a sign of a theophany wilderness. The physical transformation of Jesus is done by God. The verb μεταμορφώθη : (*metamorpho*) verb –aorist indicative passive-3rd person singular (he was transfigured) in v. 2 is in a passive voice: “he was transfigured”. God is the agent of the transfiguration. Jesus as God by taking this form is manifesting himself as God. How he will be after his death. His garments became gleaming. The white garments is a sign of epiphany. Jesus who manifest himself to his disciples. Jesus is showing his disciples his future glory. Moses face glowed with divine radiance after meeting with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34: 29-35)⁸⁴.

God’s presence in the cloud, the voice of God, the mountain are echo of the exodus from Egypt experience. After liberating his people from Egypt, God will set a Journey for them through the wilderness to the Promised Land. God will confirm his covenant with his people on the Sinai.

Linking the voice of God in the baptism of Jesus and the voice of God on the mountaintop, I say that Mark is identifying Jesus as the new Moses who will lead the true people of God in the new exodus. The presence of Moses and Elijah recalls the prophetic role of the servant in the new

⁸⁴ Boring, *Mark a Commentary*, 260.

exodus. The prophets are normally the preparers of God who is to come. In the transfiguration, (9:2-8) Moses and Elijah, appear from the desert as witnesses. Mark is building his narrative on that exodus tradition.

In the transfiguration account of Luke 9:31: “They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem”. Moses and Elijah were talking about Jesus’ departure. Jesus is going to make an exodus to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his mission of redemption and salvation through his death and resurrection. Matson in his article: “The Glory of God: Echoes of Exodus in the Gospels” underlines this exodus of Jesus to Jerusalem by saying that: “in the transfiguration scene, Moses and Elijah were seen in glory speaking about Jesus’ departure, literally his exodus which he was to fulfill in Jerusalem. The reference to a journey to Jerusalem and its integral relationship to the death-burial-resurrection of Jesus is seen few verses later, at the beginning of the travel narrative portion of Luke’s gospel”.⁸⁵ Jesus exodus towards Jerusalem was by his passion. This journey of Jesus to Jerusalem fits very well into the exodus tradition. Through this Journey, Jesus is making the same movement as the exiles of Babylon did, going back to Zion, land of God’s dwelling. Jesus goes to Jerusalem purges the temple, heals the people.

In the transfiguration of Mark, the spirit comes on Jesus and declares Him Son of God. Mark is depicting Jesus as the servant of Isaiah 42:1 on whom the spirit of God rests and appointed him as deliverer of the refugees of Babylon. There were some pervasive views up to the first century that Israel’s exile continued and the early Jewish-Christians tried to “use the exodus as a paradigm for explaining the significance of Jesus as liberator and founder.”⁸⁶ This new

⁸⁵ Mark A. Matson, “The Glory of God: Echoes of Exodus in the Gospels,” *Leaven*, Vol.21, (2013): 88.

⁸⁶Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible,” 354.

understanding of Exodus, which Richard Clifford calls “Exodus III,”⁸⁷ carried with itself some apocalyptic mindset. Many Jews hoped that the coming messiah would liberate them and bring them back to their land. The exodus motif and narrative explain to us how Yahweh has redeemed and restored his people. Israel went through many crises of deportation out of her homeland. The Israelites lived as refugees and captives in Egypt and Babylon. That is why exodus motif has become a paradigm to explain the salvation of Israel. The exodus became an analogy for interpretation as Israel went through crises of diminishment and of restoration, or, to use biblical language, endured divine judgment and renewal.⁸⁸ In the exodus narrative God is the one who saw the oppression of his people. He will send Moses in the first exodus. In the second exodus He will equally reveal Himself to the servant and Cyrus to deliver his people. In the New Testament, God will reveal himself fully in Jesus Christ.

IV. Jesus Entrance Jerusalem as an Exodus

Mark 11: 8-11

καὶ πολλοὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἔστρωσαν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν, ἄλλοι δὲ στιβάδας, κόψαντες ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν.

καὶ οἱ προάγοντες καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔκραζον Ὡσαννά· Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου·

Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυεὶδ· Ὡσαννά ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις.

Here Again in this text, the word ὁδόν: (hodos) Noun Accusative Feminine Singular (road) appears again. The journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem is describe an exodus. The *hodos* of Jesus leads him from Galilea to Jerusalem. This *hodos* will later ends on the cross. The formula

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible,” 358.

εἰς τὴν ὁδόν can be translated as on the road, or in the way. That formula is a clear indication that Jesus is moving, He is making a journey, He doing an exodus. The exodus journey to the promised land is here replaced in Mark by Jesus' exodus. Jesus goes to the holy city of Jerusalem, and suffers and dies there for the redemption of his people. The goal of the new exodus was Zion, so it is also the goal of Mark. For Mark, preparing a way at the beginning of his gospel has a programmatic role. Jesus will cleanse and purify his way by his ministry before arriving in Jerusalem.

Mark is going to make an allusion of the exodus justification in this text of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem which was also known as the holy land. We had already said and explained that the final destination of the exodus event was in Zion the town of God. Mark here takes again the exodus motif and applies it on Jesus who enters the holy city of Jerusalem. First and foremost, Mark makes allusion to the prophet Zechariah who foresees the messiah who will come and sit on a donkey (Zechariah 9: 9). On his return to Zion, the liberation of the people of Israel will be ended. In the same manner, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem marks also the fulfillment of scriptures and its mission to set men free. That is the reason why the episode of the passion of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Mark 10:45 makes reference to the prophet Isaiah 53:10 and 53: 12.

The *hodos* that Jesus will take to lead him to Jerusalem will end on the cross. Jesus is taking the *hodos* of the sufferings, rejection and death. God in liberated and brought back joyfully the exiles from Babylon to restored Zion. Jesus by his *hodos* to Jerusalem will triumphally restored the temple, his victory over the death by his resurrection. The triumph of God joyfully promised by Isaiah will be realized in Jesus way to the cross.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Boring, *Mark a Commentary*, 37.

The goal of the second exodus was Zion. The exiles will come back from Babylon not with tears and deception, but they will come back with joy and wealth. God restored the lamented Zion. Yahweh rebuilt the devastated Zion. Jesus entrance in Jerusalem is to also restore Zion by bringing in his Βασιλεία: (basileia noun –nominative singular feminine: royalty, rule, a realm, and kingdom). This Βασιλεία will be revealed on the cross. He is entering as a king of peace. That is why the crowd acclaim him as the savior with this formula Ὡσαυτά which means “save us”. Jesus enter Jerusalem as savior.

In Isaiah 44: 28, the prophet told us that the Temple will be rebuilt, the returnees from Babylon will carry the sacred vessels (Isaiah 52:11). Jesus’ entry in Jerusalem will restore the Temple to its purity and holiness as God’s city. In the new exodus God and his people entered victoriously in Jerusalem, Jesus will enter triumphantly ally to Jerusalem as messiah and Son of God. In the new exodus, Yahweh liberated the captives of Babylon and led them to Zion. Jesus will also lead the new community to the kingdom of God by liberating them from sins by his death and resurrection. Rikki E. Watts depicts the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem as the foundation of the new covenant and new people by his death and resurrection. He explains that: “ In terms of Mark, just as the first exodus entailed a journey followed by the blood of the covenant and meal at the mountain of God, so too Mark’s Jesus at the end of the journey speaks of the blood of the covenant in the context of a meal in Jerusalem, that is, Mount Zion”.⁹⁰

Jesus made an exodus by his journey from Nazareth and entering in Jerusalem. In the previous chapter, I highlighted that the goal of the new exodus was Zion like Canaan in the first exodus. Jesus is making the same journey, entering the holy city. He will liberate the city and the people by his death on the cross. Jesus leads all the people on the highway of holiness to the New

⁹⁰ Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus and Mark*, 352.

Jerusalem. The exodus is not only from Egypt to Canaan and from Babylon to Zion. From the Christian perspective, Jesus is making an exodus. Richard Clifford explains the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem as the perfection of the exodus. He says: “they view the exodus not only as a movement from Egypt to Canaan but also from Babylon to Zion. Jesus was seen as bringing the journey to its proper conclusion”.⁹¹ In Second Isaiah, the restoration of Israel was to bring back the exiles to Zion. In gathering the sons of Israel in their homeland, God will bring them back and they will form a nation again. Second Isaiah’s restoration was focused on the outcasts of Israel. For Mark the exodus of Jesus to Jerusalem will bring salvation is not only for Jews but also for the Gentiles. The identity of the people of God has changed, this identity has moved now beyond Israel. The good news and the salvation will cross the land of Israel to the nations. The Gentiles are now included in the salvation of Jesus. I also have remarked that in Isaiah 49:6, the new exodus equally concerns the nations that is the Gentiles. The suffering servant of the new exodus will gather and form a new Israel in Zion.

During his entry in Jerusalem, Jesus will be characterized in the same characteristics of the suffering servant of Second Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4-6). On his going to Jerusalem, Jesus faced his passion and death without fear. He was afflicted, he was wounded, like a lamb taken to the slaughter, like a sheep before the shearers He was Silent. During his passion Jesus remained silent before Pilate, the Sanhedrin and Herod (Mark 14:61; Matthew 26:62-63; Luke 5:35). This a clear depiction of the suffering servant of Second Isaiah. These depictions will be applied by the evangelists to Christ during his passion and death (Mark 10:32-34; 14:65).

⁹¹ Clifford, “The Exodus in the Christian Bible,”127.

V. Christian Understanding of the New Exodus

The Christian meaning of the exodus is related to the paschal mystery of Christ. The Christian understanding of the new exodus is that Jesus is the new Moses who fed people in the desert as Moses did. Jesus chose twelve disciples, who represented the twelve tribes of Israel, forming a new community, thus re-founding Israel. Jesus entered into a covenant with his disciples at his Last Supper. He offered a new law from which all other traditions were to be anchored: the law of love. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34) Jesus is the new temple; people do not need to go to Jerusalem to worship, as true worshippers could revere God in the Spirit and Truth revealed in Jesus, the Messiah (John 4: 34).⁹² Jesus’ healing ministry and miracles also epitomized the liberation needed by those who were possessed by demons and those with infirmities. Finally, Jesus liberated his people by offering his own life on the Cross. In all this, Israel does not cease to exist, but Jesus made all things new: “Behold, I am making all things new.” (Rev. 21:5) From this perspective, Jesus is the culmination of the “three exodus” moments and ties them together.

In the previous chapter, I said the first and second exodus ended with the constitution of a nation, a people. The effect of Jesus’ death is a new covenant with people both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews and Gentiles, together, are now the new people of God. Christians look at the death and resurrection of Christ as their great redemptive event. The resurrection of Christ is even greater than the first and second exodus. Jesus, by his passion, death, and resurrection, brings salvation both to Jews and Gentiles. Kenneth explains this view of the Christian message considering the death and resurrection of Christ as ultimate: “the early church saw in Christ’s sufferings the fulfillment of the role of the Messiah. This effected the conflation of the roles of the servant and

⁹² This comes from Jesus’ long conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42 where Jesus reveals to her that he is the awaited Messiah.

messiah. Jesus as messiah fulfils the role of the suffering servant”.⁹³Yahweh delivered the exiles from the oppression of Babylonian and made them his people. Jesus delivered his followers from sin and made them the people of the New Covenant. In the New Testament Jesus is the recapitulation of the exodus through his baptism, forty days in the desert and ‘conquest’ of Canaan culminating in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his triumph in heaven.

This Chapter has underlined the use of exodus language and exodus narrative gospel of Mark. There are many quotations from Isaiah in the Mark. I have demonstrated how and why Mark made use of the exodus narrative. At the beginning of his gospel Mark is quoting the text of Second Isaiah. Mark depicted John the Baptist as this voice crying in the desert to prepare a way to the Lord. Likewise in Second Isaiah a voice crying out to make a highway through the wilderness for Yahweh. The way of the Lord both in Second Isaiah and Mark have to be straight. I have demonstrated that in Mark there are many allusion to the wilderness narrative. Jesus is in the wilderness forty days and nights as Israel wandered forty years in the desert.

On the mountaintop he is transfigured and the voice of God is heard. Moses on the Sinai was transfigured and he also heard the voice of Yahweh talking to him and to the people. The goal of the exodus was the promise land Canaan and Zion. The exiles of Babylon will come back joyfully in the restored Zion. Jesus by his entrance to Jerusalem will do the same exodus from Nazareth to Jerusalem the holy land, the city of God. He will enter joyfully. He purify the temple. He restored Jerusalem the city of God by his death and resurrection. His exodus will end in Jerusalem on the cross. He will become the way to all his followers to eternal life. Mentioning the wilderness, the way in the desert, the wild animals, the forty days, the voice that comes down from

⁹³ Kenneth D. Litwak, “The Use of Quotation from Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in the New Testament,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, (December 1988): 392.

heaven, living in peace between the wild animals recalls here the good usage of the exodus justification by the evangelist Mark. Jesus is truly the right Moses, the right servant of God. Mark depicts him in the mode of the exodus tradition. The Christians found in Christ the fulfillment of the exodus. Jesus accomplishes his exodus on the cross.

Chapter Three

Pastoral Considerations from the New Exodus in the Context of the Refugee Crisis in Cameroon.

In this last chapter, I will explore pastoral considerations of the new exodus in the context of the refugee crisis in Cameroon. After the message of consolation to the exiles (Ex.40: 1-3), God prepares a way for the return of the Jews from Babylon to their homeland. Cyrus and the servant prophets played a great role for the repatriation of the exiles. God will make Zion the final destination, a place of security and prosperity, a place flowing with milk and honey. The refugees in Cameroon are facing a similar situation to that of the Jews in Babylon. Refugees, by and large, will have the desire to go back to their homeland. I am going to identify and examine the cause of the refugee crisis in Cameroon. Though many people are abandoned and very desperate, they are never abandoned by God. The church must look for solutions which will improve the situation of the refugees and work with the government to allow the refugees to return to their homeland. That is why the theme of the new exodus can inspire both the church and the government in Cameroon. This chapter will have the following main points:

- The political and geographical position of Cameroon: In this part, I will examine briefly the geographical situation of Cameroon. In order to examine the situation of refugees in Cameroon, one must first have an understanding of the country and its neighbors.
- Secondly, I will focus my attention on the sectarian group known as Boko Haram. I will have to give the origin of this sect, then the origin of its actions which have caused many people to run away from their villages and towns to find themselves in Cameroon as

refugees. Thereafter, the negative influence of this sect from the economic, social, and security perspectives will be examined.

- Thirdly, I will base myself solely on the refugee camp in the north of Cameroon, more specifically in the far north region with its regional capital at Maroua. I will also describe how refugees are treated and their desire to go back to their country of origin. The fundamental question here remains: how refugees can return to their land when there is neither security nor infrastructure, in the wake of the devastation at the hands of Boko Haram.
- For the fourth and last part of our work, titled “Concrete Actions for the repatriation of the refugees,” I suggest to the government and the church in our country that it is not enough to tell the refugees to go back to their country or different localities, but measures must be adopted to concretely help the refugees return to their territories safely. Among the many suggestions, I recommend that for these refugees to be comfortable in their localities of origin there should be economic security above all social amenities, in order to sustainably support the refugees’ return to their homes. In addition to local organizations, the church should be willing to work to ensure that the refugees are nourished both spiritually and materially.

III. 1 Geographical and Political Situation of Cameroon

Cameroon is located in central Africa. The name Cameroon does not come from any of the Cameroonian languages, but rather Portuguese. On his arrival in Cameroon in the year 1884 at the Wouri estuaries, the Portuguese explorer Fernand Do Po discovered that the Wouri River was teeming with prawns. He gave this area the name “*Rio dos Camaroes*” which means “the river of prawns” in Portuguese. It was later translated *Kamerun* in German, *Cameroun* in French and *Cameroon* in English. The total surface area of Cameroon is approximately 475,650 square

kilometers, and it borders the Atlantic Ocean, enabling access to both Europe and America. Cameroon shares a long boundary with its western neighbor, Nigeria. Congo lies to the south, the Central African Republic to the east, and Lake Chad to the north.

Be it from a demographic, cultural or climatic standpoint, Cameroon is very diverse, containing the different peoples and cultures of Africa. Cameroonians take pride in this diversity and often refer to their country as “Africa in miniature”. Cameroon has a vast virgin forest in the equatorial region, mountains, hills, and plains in the savannah. Politically, Cameroon’s history is unique. In 1884, Cameroon became a German protectorate. In 1918, after the Germans lost the First World War, Cameroon was divided into two protectorates: French and British. French speaking Cameroon got its independence in 1960. English speaking Cameroon became independent in 1961. The two parts of the country came together in 1972 to form the United Republic of Cameroon with a federal system. It became the Republic of Cameroon in 1984. Administratively, Cameroon has ten regions with 58 divisions, for a population of about 22.77 million. There are about 250 ethnic groups in Cameroon, and the two official languages are French and English.

From a religious perspective, Cameroon is a secular state. There is freedom of worship, but Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religions are the main religious traditions. From an economic standpoint, agriculture forms the backbone of the economy. Cameroon exports crude oil, timber, minerals, and a variety of cash crops.

This panoramic view of Cameroon paves the way for a better understanding of the complexity of the refugee crisis currently unfolding in the country. For instance, based on our presentation of the geographical situation of Cameroon, it is clear why most refugees in Cameroon come from Nigeria. Nigeria shares a very long and porous border with Cameroon. This will equally

help understand the Boko Haram sect and its impact on both sides of the border between Cameroon and Nigeria.

III.2 Boko Haram

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that made its appearance in 2003 in Nigeria. This radical sect promotes an ideology contrary to all forms of authority from the West, and accordingly attacks all symbols of the state. In my work, I focus on this sect and its role in the refugee crisis at the border between Nigeria and Cameroon.

Based in Nigeria, the Islamic sect Boko Haram has committed many atrocities and crimes. Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram controls vast swaths of land in Nigeria. Boko Haram members attack villages, mosques, churches, markets, and other similar places where they seek to inflict heavy casualties on local populations. In an article entitled “insécurité transfrontalière, perturbation des échanges et léthargie des marches”, Djanabou Bakary argues that the members of the Islamic sect Boko Haram specifically target places and events that bring together large numbers of people such as markets, parks, mosques, etc.⁹⁴

The Nigerian town closest to Cameroon is Maiduguri. Maiduguri has paid a heavy price in the struggle against Boko Haram. In the opinion of Human Rights Watch:

The attacks of the Boko Haram sect by a group of armies against the villages and during important assemblies either private or public are very regular. They have concentrated on the Borno⁹⁵ state with their other groups in the local environments. Borno is a state situated in the north of Nigeria, and in the east by the Yobe state, and the frontiers with Cameroon. The attack on the army by the Boko Haram sect and the abuse on the Nigerian army took place between 2009 and 2012, in which so many people died.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Djanabou Bakary, *Insécurité Transfrontalière, Perturbation des Echanges et Lethargie des Marches*, in *Kaliao Revue pluridisciplinaire de l'école Normale Supérieure de Maroua*, Maroua, Juin 2014, 73.

⁹⁵ Borno and Yobe are Nigerians Towns sharing boarder with Cameroon.

⁹⁶ Human Rights Wach, “Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria” October 2012.

As the attacks on villages and towns were becoming more frequent, the population started fleeing towns and villages in Nigeria and Cameroon. Some fled to the hills, spending almost a week without water and food. A situation not unlike the Israelites' in the desert on their journey to the promised land.

Moreover, the sect continues to grow in number. It seizes goods and kidnaps people for ransom. Among those kidnapped, government workers, religious and expatriates are priority targets. Its kidnapping activities came to the limelight when 276 Nigerian schoolgirls were kidnapped, sparking the #BringBackOurGirls campaign. Apart from looting and kidnapping, the group is known for committing suicide attacks, the destruction of villages, schools, administrative buildings, churches, mosques, etc. Boko Haram members equally attacked health centers and hospitals leading to the closure of some health facilities, leaving the local population stranded.

With the destruction of public buildings, schools, and health centers, people had no option but to flee, seeking exile in safer parts of Nigeria and across the border in neighboring Cameroon. As a result of the massive influx of refugees, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) opened refugee camps in the north of Cameroon. In addition to the refugees arriving from Nigeria, Cameroonians living close to the border have been internally displaced, seeking refuge in safer parts of the country, staying with relatives or in makeshift camps. The main refugee camp welcoming Boko Haram victims is at Minawao in the far north of Cameroon.

III. 3 The Settlement of Nigerian Refugees in Cameroon

In August 2016, I was serving as assistant pastor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish Bidzar in the Archdiocese of Garoua in the North of Cameroon. A faithful day after the celebration of the morning Mass, I saw a crowd of about 250 children sitting in the parish yard. They were clearly not from around Bidzar. I later found out that these were children from Nigeria that had

just arrived after trekking over long distances, running away from Boko Haram. They were welcomed, and I ordered the parishioners to look for something for them to eat. The children narrated their ordeal and expressed their longing to be back home. But the fundamental question is, where are they going to since most of their parents are dead, their houses destroyed, their cattle, sheep, goats and their agricultural crops all destroyed? All have been destroyed and the villages are empty and deserted. Two days later the Cameroonian government took these children into the refugee camp at Minawao where the other Nigerian refugees were settled.

Many refugees from Nigeria enter Cameroon after covering very long distances on foot. These include men, women and children. The state newspaper *Cameroon Tribune* states: “the new arrivals have escaped from current attacks for about three weeks in the region of Gwoza in the Borno state of Nigeria, before their quest for security in Cameroon. According to the authorities, about 5500 refugees arrived in Kolofata, 3000 in Kerawa, and 370 in Mora, in the district of Mayo-Sava and from Logone-and-Shari.”⁹⁷ Most of these refugees are generally relocated to the Minawao camp run by the UNHCR.

III.3.1 The Minawao Refugee Camp

Minawao is located in the Far North of Cameroon. It is home to a refugee camp run by the UNHCR for victims of the Boko Haram sect. Approximately 35000 Nigerians live in this camp. Fatouma Zara indicates that the camp is not big enough carter for the needs of the refugees.⁹⁸ The newspaper *Septentrion* equally denounced this state of affairs.⁹⁹ This camp has been designated by the Cameroonian government as the unique site for hosting refugees coming from Nigeria. This

⁹⁷ Cameroon Tribune, No 10669/6868 du 9 septembre 2014.

⁹⁸ Fatouma Zara Laouan, *Analyse Rapide Genre-Déplacement de Population dans les Arrondissements de Tokombere et Mora-Extrême Nord Cameroun*, (Maroua : Juillet, 2015), 6.

⁹⁹ Septentrion Infos, No 153 du Janvier 2014.

camp is their Egypt and Babylon where they are awaiting the day of their liberation to return their native land to carry out their normal commercial activities, and their traditional houses.

III. 3.2 The Life of Refugees in the Minawao Camp

The fundamental problem faced by the refugees living in the camp at Minawao is that of cohabitation. The refugees come from diverse backgrounds. There are notably Muslims and Christians living together against their will. In effect, many Christians blame Islam for the rise of the Boko Haram sect. The Cameroonian government equally perceives these refugees as a potential threat to national security. As such, it tends to confine them to the refugee camp, preventing them from mingling with the local population. Cameroonian security forces believe that some of the refugees are Boko Haram members or sympathizers.

At Minawao, refugees live under tents. Minawao is found in the Sahel desertification zone. Here, there is extreme exposure to heat, with temperatures up to 40 degrees Celsius. The refugees often go for many days without drinkable water. The distribution of water is being rationed daily. For example, every family that is living in the camp ought to be contented with 14 litres of water a day¹⁰⁰. The shortage of water creates health problems and the risk of an outbreak of diseases in the camp. So, there is a shortage of this basic commodity which is not well treated, and worst still there are very insufficient toilets. There is also a lot of promiscuity which is very risky to the health of the refugees, hence exposing them to so many diseases such as malaria, typhoid, meningitis, diarrhea etc.

Furthermore, nutrition is an issue. Very often, the refugees do not have enough to eat. Food for two is often provided for a family of five. At the camp at Minawao, especially when the sun is

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Journal lepoint.fr du 12 janvier 2018.

overhead, one could see refugees' queueing up in order to get something that will sustain their families during the distribution of food. *The African* newspaper sounds the alarm about the insufficient amount of food in the camp at Minawao as it states: "A Nigerian woman of age 60 living here with seven children complains that she is not being given enough food"¹⁰¹. There is equally lack of electricity in the camp.

The UNHCR states that if the living conditions of refugees in their camps are not favorable, they are vulnerable:

Under the pressure of the living conditions in the camp, the values, as well as the individuals are in trouble. Easily, tensions could result violence in the camps. In effect, there is supposed to be an emergency unit for the amelioration of these values in the long term. It becomes very serious when the regular financial aid is no longer there and above all the basic needs are not available, hence the refugees in the cause of fighting tool and nail in order to have something to eat, they go an extra mile neglecting the conditions of their food due to the drastic reduction in the ration of food. Consequently, this often affects their health and hence the death rate is normally high especially to those who are not strong enough."¹⁰²

The living conditions in the camp at Minawao are deplorable.

Having lost their land, the refugees of Minawao can be likened to the Jews in their Babylonian exile. Walter Brueggemann highlights the loss of land when someone is in exile. He says: "The exile is for the Bible the sharpest point of discontinuity when none of the old tradition or conventional institutions any longer seem valid or trustworthy. Exile without land or even prospect of land was indeed Israel's null point when every promise seemed void".¹⁰³ The Cameroonian government has the duty to protect her population and envisaged to divide the Nigerian from the Cameroonian refugees. The fundamental question that continues to puzzle my

¹⁰¹ Cf. journal. Lepoint.fr du 12janvier 2018

¹⁰² Le haut- commissaire des Nations Unies pour les refugies, parlant a la 58eme session de la commission des Nations pour les droits de l'homme a Genève, le 20 Mars 2002, Source <http://www.unhcr.org/3c988def4.html>.

¹⁰³ Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997), 9.

mind is that of the refugees going back. Where will they be going to, when all has been destroyed, no security, and no stability in the towns and villages they intend to go to? There are many of them who have lost hope for the future, for instance someone who has lost his shop, house, a herd of cattle and goats all stolen, his environment empty with no human resources, there is complete destruction of the land.

In this same line, one Nigerian refugee called Fatta shares her own experience: “I had a little shop; I sold rice, beans, and groundnuts. One day the sect Boko Haram came to our village and started killing people with their arms. I escaped with my grandmother and my children. We slept in the bush for several nights without water, food or shelter until we arrived at the camp at Minawao three years ago.”¹⁰⁴ Let us consider another example, this time around a widow from Banki, a town in northern Nigeria. Her husband died a terrible death; that is he died while he was running away from the barbaric sect. The feeling of the loss of identity and the thought of tragic loss of family members creates in the refugees the desires and experience to return back home. Like the Judeans who were forced to march out of Judah, Nigerian refugees have lost their loved ones through violent death and separation. How can we send these refugees to a place well suited to their needs? How can we send them to their native lands where there is no security? This is where we can draw lessons from the second exodus. I will invite the state and the church of Cameroon not leaving out that of Nigeria to search for concrete solutions to the appalling situation of the refugees; practical measures to facilitate the repatriation of the refugees to their own native land.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ HCR enquête menée entre Septembre et Octobre 2015.

¹⁰⁵ HCR, Enquête menée entre Avril et Septembre 2016.

We also need to take into consideration Cameroonians who have moved out from the frontiers to the interior of the country. These internal refugees also merit the attention of the church and the power in place, because they have lost all they had.

III.4 Preparing for the Repatriation of the Refugees

In the wilderness a voice cries: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.” (Isaiah 40:3-4) These elements, desert, valley, mountain... are the source of anxiety for the return of the Babylonian exiles. God will transform the hostile road between Babylon and Zion into a secured road for the safe return back. Richard Clifford explains the way in which God removed the obstacles, and prepared and eased the way in which the Judeans will return. He says among many other things: “The way of the Lord which eliminates valleys, mountains and hills and all the steeped and rough places that is the desert, disarming its terror and threats.”¹⁰⁶ The return journey of the Judeans will be without obstacles.

The repatriation of the Minawao refugees faces a number of obstacles. First of all the refugees of the camp of Minawao are mixed up with different cultures put in place and hence, they are marginalized or treated as outcast. The refugees are materially without resources, and there is no clear indication about how they will find a means of survival. The decision of repatriating refugees has to take note of its effectiveness. These refugees of Minawao have to return to their homeland in a dignified manner.

III.4.1 The Role of the Church

¹⁰⁶ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 75.

The church has a role to play in coming to the aid of all those who are vulnerable. The pontifical council for migrants and persons who are refugees had this to say: “Refugees and other persons in different countries not theirs have always had or occupy a place in the heart of the church.”¹⁰⁷ In Babylon just as in Egypt, the Lord was the first person to console His people. He nourished them with faith and hope; their exile was not the end of their lives. The refugees of Minawao could also consider Minawao as their Babylon and Egypt. The church in Cameroon and Nigeria has a role to play in the provision of spiritual, moral and material help to the refugees.

For instance, the church could help the refugees of Minawao to understand that they are not alone and abandoned in their situation. The church is with them to convey divine succor and journey with them. As for Christ Himself, He was a refugee in Egypt. And only a refugee can best understand the feelings and emotions of a refugee. God is then in this Minawao camp to guide and console the refugees. In Isaiah 41:14, God addresses the Israelites: “The Lord says, small and weak as you are, Israel, don’t be afraid; I will help you. I, the holy God of Israel, am the one who saves you.” The Israelites were reduced to a state of insignificance and incompetence, but God made Himself their redeemer and savior. Yahweh assured them of His presence and His salvation. Richard Clifford says: “Yahweh addresses the people of Israel as the one who liberates them. This is seemingly a quotation from the psalms of lamentation. Psalm 22:6 “But I am a worm and no man. Such lament must have been much used in exile as it confesses weaknesses.”¹⁰⁸ A refugee is a vulnerable person who has lost all hopes and counts on God for help.

God took the Israelites out of Egypt and Babylon to their native land, this same God will also bring back the refugees of Minawao to their native land. The church should play this role

¹⁰⁷ Conseil Pontifical pour la Pastorale des Migrants et des Personnes en déplacement, *Accueillir Jésus-Christ dans les refuges et les Personnes déracinées de force*, Cite du Vatican, 2013, 13.

¹⁰⁸ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 66.

before all as consoler and of presence to the Minawao refugees. As without moral and spiritual support a refugee has lost all hope of life. The presence of the Cameroonian and Nigerian churches should be like a moral help to the refugees and the assurance that they are not abandoned. The first chapter of Second Isaiah has this to say. In Isaiah 40:1-3 that Yahweh was the first person to console, comfort the Babylonians on exile. Consolation brings comfort and perseverance, perseverance brings hope, and our hope will not deceive us. God will always hear the cry of the distressed and the abandoned. The Babylonian exiles were feeling helplessness and God will console and rescue them.

In the same vein, the episcopal conference of Cameroon could offer pastoral care to refugees in the Minawao camp. It can notably contribute in fighting the stigma associated with the refugee status, as well as feelings of fear and rejection. The Babylonian exiles cried out their desolation to God because they felt in themselves this loss of identity and human dignity. To be in exile is to experience a total and absolute desolation. To be uprooted from one's home to a foreign land produces the most profound form of poverty and human suffering that one can endure. This is a terrible experience which should never be underestimated. We sometimes have the tendency to regard this experience as losing all our possessions and material wealth but it is here a superficial and inexact manner to see the reality. This one is much more painful. In fact, material wealth can be recovered, but the wounds born of the experience of being uprooted and separated are more profound and more difficult to heal.

The Minawao refugees still have the trauma of war in mind, of the loss of their family members and their wealth. The exiles of Babylon equally lived with the memory of Jerusalem's destruction. A psycho-social assistance from the church is important. Fatouma Zara Laouan studied the trauma lived by refugees: "the majority escaped after the villages got attacked by the

group of armies, they lived where we were. Witnesses of the barbaric exactions and violence which they recounted were traumatized. The men were slaughtered systematically, at times in front of their wives. The young boys were systematically forcefully enrolled to fight for Boko Haram. In one village there was no young boy between those that were displaced, they were all taken away by the insurgents. Girls and young women were taken to serve as sexual slaves to the insurgents’’.¹⁰⁹ The presence of the Church will not only give them courage but also cultivate a positive mindset in them. Sometimes we think that material help is the first thing for the refugees but spiritual and moral care is fairly important.

The refugees of the Minawao camp have material needs like food, shelter, and water but these cannot make up for all the things they have lost. They need another type of help, they need spiritual help, a priest, a pastor, someone they can trust, someone to whom they can speak about their experience of utter desolation. This role was well played by the servant prophet opposed to the deception of the exiles of Babylon. One of the first roles of the servant prophet was to create hope and confidence in the exiles. William S. Morrow explains properly this role of the servant when he says: “one of the primary impulses of the prophet’s ministry is to offer the captives a new sense of self and a new vision of Israel’s God”¹¹⁰. The Cameroon church can equally play this role to assist the refugees of the Minawao camp.

One of the greatest sufferings of the refugees of the camp of Minawao was to discover that they were undesirable everywhere they went. They felt rejected by their own country and they sought refuge in Cameroon, hoping for sympathy and comprehension. Instead of that, they found hostility and rejection. The experience of being rejected was one of their greatest sufferings. They

¹⁰⁹ Laouan, *Analyse Rapide Genre-Déplacement de Population*, 4.

¹¹⁰ William S. Morrow, “Comfort for Jerusalem: The Second Isaiah as Counselor to Refugees,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Volume 34,(1998): 85.

ran away in search of security, refuge and consolation. They find themselves in a foreign land with a different language and a different culture. All these changes reinforced their sense of solitude, in a world where no one seems interested in their story. They are seen as a threat by the natives of their land of refuge.

Being far away from one's homeland is akin to being dead. The refugees of Minawao experienced a situation similar to that of the Jews during their Babylonian exile, even if the context is different. As such, the message of the Second Isaiah is as valid for the refugees of Minawao as it was for the Jews in Babylon. The church of Cameroon can channel that message. In his Angelus of Sunday 10th July 2016, Pope Francis had this to say:

Let us ask ourselves “Is our faith fertile? Does our faith produce good acts? Would I be friendly or I should only pass nearby? Am I one of those who select people for pleasure?” We must ask ourselves these questions because at the end we will be judged on acts of mercy. God will tell us “But do you remember that time on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho? That man half dead was me. Do you remember? That hungry child was me. Do you remember? That migrant that many want to chase away is me”¹¹¹.

III.4.2. The Role of the State

The message from Second Isaiah on the new exodus also contains a social liberation, economic, and political perspective. King Cyrus of Persia played a major role in the liberation of the Judeans from the Babylonian domination. He did not only let them go but he gave them the means to rebuild their devastated town and temple. The Cameroonian and Nigerian states must also play a role in favor of social and economic liberation.

¹¹¹ Pape François, Angélus du dimanche 10 Juillet 2016. <http://www.news.va/fr/news/angelus-le-pape-invite-a-ne-pas-decider-qui-est-mo>, Consulté le 10 Mars 2018.

The state of Cameroon, in its right to manage its territory, wants to send the Nigerian refugees back to their homeland at all costs. As highlighted above many refugees are now faced with a dilemma: how will they return to a homeland where there is no hope of life? How will they live on a land where insecurity reigns, where everything has been destroyed and where the riches are lost. More to that, how can they establish themselves in a foreign country that does not want them? How can we repatriate them? The Cameroonian and Nigerian states could prepare the repatriation of the refugees of the Minawao camp as in the exodus from the second Isaiah.

In my first chapter, I looked at how God prepared the repatriation and the return of the refugees of Babylon to Zion. This inspired us to say that for the refugees of the camp of Minawao, the states of Cameroon and Nigeria have to put in place necessary conditions for their repatriation.

III.4.3. Restoration of Peace and Security

Security is not yet guaranteed in the devastated areas from where the refugees of the camp of Minawao originate. In the second exodus, Babylon will be defeated (Isaiah 47: 1-15) so that security and peace should be restored in the region. The rise of Cyrus as political messiah will bring peace and security. It will be useless sending the refugees back to their native land. The two countries, that are Cameroon and Nigeria, should first and foremost destroy completely the Boko Haram terrorist group in order to liberate the territories destroyed. There is supposed to be the complete eviction of all the terrorist groups in the abandoned areas so that the refugees could go back to their native land. Until there is peace and security in the territory, the return of the refugees to their land will be tantamount to sending them to the slaughter house.

God was the guide of the people on their return from Zion. The road between Babylon and Zion was a road with different kinds of obstacles. Yahweh said: "I will lead the blind by a road they don't know, by paths they have not known, I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before

them into light, the rough places into level ground.” (Isaiah 42:16) On their way back the people from Judah were sure God will be their guide and obstacles will no longer exist on their way home. The state should play the role of a facilitator for the repatriation of the refugees of Minawao. Many obstacles are still on the road of return between Cameroon and Nigeria: lack of security, lack of food, destruction of the environment by war, lack of infrastructure, thirst because we are in a semi-arid zone.

Looking at life before, there was peace, security, and calm. The second part of Isaiah shows us how the return from the Babylonian exile was joyful, peaceful, and triumphant: “You shall go out in joy, and be led into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, instead of the bear shall come the myrtle, and shall be the Lord for a memorial for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off”(Isaiah 55:13-14). The hostile desert that stands between the exiles and their home is broken by the making of a road through it¹¹². The first condition necessary for the repatriation is to stop war, violence or threats to public security. But when it is uncertain, the repatriation is not necessary. The stability is necessary and primarily necessary for the return. Peace and security will permit firstly to acquire the territory and this will assure the refugees that their lands are now free and ready to welcome them. In the exodus of Babylon, the desert as a place of anguish, arid place, place of thirst and famine, place of suffering has been transformed by God into a place of habitation. God has placed a road and water to facilitate the return of his exiled people from Babylon. There will be no more suffering, no famine, no more threats as God will keep watch over his people.

¹¹² Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading* , 66.

III.4.4 Reconstruction of Infrastructures

As I see it, the infrastructural implantation is more important to permit a joyful and important repatriation of the refugees. The refugees must have the assurance of having a place to live that they can call home. They have lost their homes and other material goods have all been destroyed. For the refugees to return to an empty place is making them to begin from zero. To bring back his captives from Babylon, Yahweh supplied them with enough water in the desert, he prepared a way for them in the desert, and he made food ready for them, and even planted trees all along the way of the desert so that his people should not feel the pain of heat or famine of the desert. The journey of the exiles from Babylon was not arduous (Isaiah 42:12-20). The migration of the refugees from the camp of Minawao to their land of origin will be done in good conditions. In the wilderness, aware that the journey will be painful and complicated, Yahweh put in the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle and olive. These trees will later serve for the reconstruction of Zion. Yahweh totally transforms the desert which is between Babylon and Zion. Clifford explains the presence of these species (cedar, acacia, myrtle and olive) as a sign of God who makes the return journey possible: “Thus the very elements that make travelling impossible in the desert, the hostile land, lack of water, and food are to be utterly transformed.”¹¹³ The region between Cameroon and Nigeria, from where the refugees come, is a region not only deserted, but equally a region completely emptied from its human resources, materials and infrastructures which necessitate a reconstruction. The two countries should have as primary preoccupation the reconstruction of infrastructure: hospitals, schools, roads, boreholes, shops or even provide social amenities. The reconstruction of infrastructure will enable the refugees to find back their place of origin in livable conditions

¹¹³ Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading*, 75.

Among the refugees, there are civil servants, cattle rearers, shopkeepers, and farmers. These Minawao camp refugees had left their villages and their commercial activities and their productive resources behind them and sought refuge in another land or they have no land and resources. Everyone passed at least one source of revenue for the subsistence of their family and also for the payment of their children's school. The Minawao Nigerian refugees lost all their possessions because of the terrorist group Boko Haram that provoked their departure. Their houses were burnt and destroyed. Everything they had were destroyed and seized by the sectarian group. In a refugee camp, the refugees have been reduced to humanitarian assistance which, at this point in time, has become insufficient. Everything to them seems all gone. These refugees in the Minawao camp have the desire to go back to their homes but they do not have the courage or the means to go back and begin life again afresh. The government has to think of how to integrate the refugees in the Nigerian society by searching for a subsistent means.

There are some refugees who pass their time in the camp without occupation, depending on foreign help. These types will not be able to integrate easily--either socially or financially. The refugees also have to be taken care of economically, and I propose that the Nigerian and the Cameroonian governments should devise a significant project that will permit the refugees to work for their own revenue. Without this aid, the return of the refugees to their native land will be very complex. The simple return of the refugees to their native land is not sufficient; it has to be accompanied with financial and structural means. If the refugees do not have shelter or jobs that can generate revenue, they will continue to feel excluded from the ancestral land. Many refugees without financial help, without shelter, and jobs will have great difficulty reorganizing their lives, even in their own country. The country's situation has to be ameliorated in order to welcome these refugees of Boko Haram from Minawao.

In this chapter, we have discussed the pastoral repercussions of the new exodus and Second Isaiah, focusing on the refugees of North Cameroon and Nigeria to help in the recession of the refugees of the Minawao camp. We have examined the principal cause of this Nigerian exodus in Cameroon, namely, Boko Haram. Then, we have identified how the refugees escaping from the sect in search of security and peace have found themselves in Cameroon in a refugee camp at Minawao with painful situations and hardship. These refugees have always had the desire to go home, and at times the Cameroonian government wished to send them back by force. The greatest question here remains how to send back refugees to their homeland where there is no peace or security. We have suggested that sending them back to their native land should be prepared. From the religious point of view, the church is called upon to intervene on the spiritual and social levels. A pastoral care to the refugees will give them a lot of courage and perseverance. The church, in this great gesture of charity, must manifest assistance and solidarity towards the refugees of the camp at Minawao.

As for the state, the government should prepare a joyful and worthy welcome to these refugees in their territory. The first thing which preoccupies the state is to maintain peace and security. Unless there is a calm and peaceful atmosphere in that region, we cannot send them back. The government also has to construct infrastructure, since daily necessities of the refugees were destroyed by the terrorists. Again, the government has to see a means of reintegrating these populations by providing work for them and constructing social amenities like hospitals, health centers, and schools. All these conditions put in place will enable the refugees to feel at home again.

CONCLUSION

I have suggested an exegesis of Second Isaiah with particular focus on the new exodus. I have notably analyzed four exodus motifs. The first exodus motif was the preparation of a way in the desert. Yahweh has called a prophet to pave a road in the desert. On this road in the desert, God does not forget his people. This first motif reminds us of the first exodus of the Israelites who were in the desert for forty years. God fed them and gave them water that flowed from the rock. The desert was like a place of inhospitality, agony, and fear. God is going to transform the desert into a habitable place. He is going to supply water and plant trees for the return of his people to their native land. The second motif was that God himself will guide his people. As in the exodus in Egypt crossing the red sea in a pillar of cloud and fire God led his people, in the same way here he does not only liberate the refugees in Babylon but he moves with them in the desert. As a third motif, we have focused our attention on Zion. The road across the desert and the transformation of the desert all lead to the triumphant entry into Zion. The exiles from Babylon left Babylon in joy and procession. The final goal is Zion. The Israelites left Babylon not due to hatred as in Egypt, but in procession. Destroyed and ruined by the Babylonians, Yahweh is going to rebuild Zion, his holy city; he is going to rebuild the ruins of Zion. His people will no longer be called the abandoned, but these children will return in a city reconstructed and rebuilt. The fourth motif was the role of the prophet servant as the guide in the second exodus. That was our object for the first chapter.

In our second chapter, we have laid emphasis on the example of the good utilization of the new exodus in the Gospel according to Mark. The evangelist Mark makes good use of the exodus. He cites profusely from the second part of the prophet Isaiah. Mark begins his gospel in the desert. A voice resembles that which we find in the prophet Isaiah; it equally asks that we prepare a way for the messiah in the desert. John the Baptist who prepares the way for the Lord or the messiah

who is to come after him recognizes this voice. In the same line as in the second point, Mark shows Jesus in the desert during forty days and forty nights. Mark makes alludes to the exodus in Egypt. The third point to which the evangelist Mark alludes is the transfiguration of Jesus. He is transformed on the mountain as Moses did on Mount Sinai. On this mountain of the transfiguration a divine voice addresses Jesus. The mountain and the voice constitute very important elements in the narratives of the exodus event. We noticed clearly that the evangelist Mark makes good use of the exodus event. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem constitutes the fourth point of the second chapter. In the first exodus in Egypt the people crossed the desert to arrive at the Promised Land. In the new exodus of the prophet Isaiah the final destination was Zion. In the gospel of Mark, the triumphant entry of Jesus in Jerusalem constitutes an exodus. Jesus crossed Nazareth by passing through many villages; he healed and converted many of the sick on his way. He was welcomed triumphantly in the holy city, the city of God. Jerusalem will constitute his final exodus. His exodus will end in Jerusalem on the cross. Mark builds his Gospel by making good use of the exodus. The Christian consideration of the new exodus was the last point of our second chapter. In the opinion of the Christians, Jesus is the new Moses, the prophet par excellence that has accomplished his mission in the old and the new exodus.

In the last chapter, we have envisaged the manner in which the new exodus of the prophet Isaiah can be applied from the pastoral point of view. We took off from the situation of the Nigerian refugees in Cameroon. The fundamental question in the last part of our work has to do with how the refugees can be sent back to their homeland in the best possible conditions. The sect Boko Haram caused the refugee crisis. The refugees have found a new home in the refugee camp of Minawao. We have also pointed out some difficulties and suffering that is affecting the refugees in their camp at Minawao, and above all their wish to go back to their respective promised native

lands. They suffer materially, morally, and spiritually. That is the reason we base our focus on the new exodus of the prophet Isaiah where Yahweh paved a way in the desert to lead his people; he led his people by providing for them in times of hunger and thirst. He was at the forefront of their journey as a guide on the way to Zion. Yahweh did not only facilitate their journey, but he re-established their towns that had been destroyed. For this reason, in the last part of our work, I have challenged the states of both countries involved that is Nigeria and Cameroon, and above all the Church, to prepare the minds of the refugees for a return to their native lands. The first condition is that the refugees should have peace and serenity both internally and externally. Secondly, it will be proper to organize their going back both psychologically and morally. The reconstruction of infrastructure and social amenities for the refugees is also paramount. This is because their villages have all been destroyed, their riches looted, and their houses burnt. The two states should think primarily about reconstructing infrastructure. Just as the servant prophet preached faith and hope in God in the midst of distress, the Church should bear a message of hope to these refugees. Hope was the way of the Israelites. God saw their pain and he did not abandon them.

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