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RECEPTION HISTORY OF חרם IN DEUTERONOMY 7:1–2 AND 20:16–18

Case Studies in Reception History of חרם
in Early Christianity, Colonialism Interpretation, and the Korean Church

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Abstract

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By Jaeseok Heo

The thesis questions the problem of simplistic appropriation of חרם: How do biblical scholars and ministers in the twenty-first-century understand the command of חרם and the following conquest narratives? How do they suggest alternative approaches heeding and paying attention to several crucial misuses in history? Therefore, this paper chooses חרם, as the representative concept of war violence in the Hebrew Bible, to suggest alternatives and corrections. The thesis explores how a voice of חרם has been accepted and interpreted in the history of interpretation. The benefit of this approach is not to produce a unified answer, but to entertain multiple possible interpretations and receptions, but to resist a simplistic/literal application of חרם. Especially, through an overview of historical/ancient Near Eastern materials and cases of reception history, the thesis will connect the insight of the ancient Near Eastern context to reception history of groups of receivers in multiple contexts. Through an overview of cases of reception history, the thesis will insist that interpreting חרם should not be fixed in a just theoretical dimension, but should be discussed in the actual field of religion and faith.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Issues and Research Importance

חרם in the Hebrew Bible is problematic.[1] Philip D. Stern vividly describes חרם as "a large-scale massacre of an enemy with the biblical concept of holiness…[which] causes gnashing of teeth, chills of the spine, and head-scratching bewilderment to many readers of the Bible."[2] His account implies that the problem is not just a matter of philological or textual difficulties of understanding. Rather, according to Jerome F. D. Creach, the scriptural commands of חרם—usually translated as "destruction" or "under the ban"—are directly connected to the legal *justification* of "violence" or "warfare" in the Hebrew Bible.[3]

In relation to a role of justifying war, conquest, genocide, annihilation, and so on, חרם has been regarded as a highly authoritative "divine" command, because in its legal context (Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code), the direct voice of YHWH establishes the *ḥēremic* command at every critical moment related to conquering the Promised Land—through the intermediacy of Moses (See Deut 5:22–33 and 7). Therefore, reading *ḥēremic* passages throughout the Hebrew Bible not only bewilders readers and interpreters, but also discloses forceful and violent characteristics of the

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[1] Henceforth also referred to as its English transliteration: *ḥrm*—verbal from; *ḥērem*—noun form; and for adjective indication, this paper using the form *ḥēremic*.

[2] Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Ḥērem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), ix.

[3] Jerome F. D. Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 97–98.

Hebrew Bible. Moreover, *prima facie,* this brutality can generate possible dangers of oversimplifying the characteristics of YHWH and cause latent possibility of violent reaction against the passages. Thomas Paine, in *The Age of Reason,* well describes this problematic issue:

> [T]he first thing to be understood is, whether there is sufficient authority for believing the Bible to be the word of God, or whether there is not? There are matters in that book, said to be done by the express command of God, that are as shocking to humanity, and to every idea we have moral justice, as any thing done by Robespierre, by Carrier, by Joseph le Bon, in France, by English government in the East Indies, or by any other assassin in modern times, When we read in the books of ascribed to Moses, Joshua, &c. that they (the Israelites) came by stealth upon whole nations of people, who as the history itself shows, had given them on offence; that they put all those nations to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy; that they utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul of breathe; expressions that are repeated over and over again in those books, and that too with exulting ferocity; are we sure these things are facts? Are we sure that the Creator of man commissioned these things to be done; are we sure that the books that tell us so were written by his authority?[4]

This paper, therefore, starts to analyze and review the situation—related to the passages of violence in the Hebrew Bible—with critical questions because these cases of interpretation still have painful effects on the majority of the indigenous people.[5] The fundamental queries toward these interpretative cases and traditions should be: Do the plain texts of *ḥērem* themselves actually intend literal conduct of war and conquering in their contemporary situations? How should biblical interpreters in the twenty-first-century understand the command of חרם and the following conquest narratives? How can they suggest different (or alternative) approaches while paying attention to some direct and literal cases of application (i.e., appropriation) in history of reception?

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[4] Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (New York: Wright & Owen, 1831), 69–70. Also cf., Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 97.

[5] Still, Brett points out native Americans and Australians. See Mark G. Brett, *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 79.

Facing these inquiries, this paper will scrutinize חרם, as a representative concept of war violence and forceful domination in the Hebrew Bible, through (1) re-approaching the actual texts, textual contexts, and cultural backgrounds, (2) researching various cases of interpretation, and (3) suggesting interpretative alternatives, and if necessary, hermeneutical corrections. As many scholars have proclaimed, however, extracting *the* unified meaning from the text of חרם is almost impossible because of the complexity of philological definition of the term, *ḥrm,* the diverse usages of the term in different contexts, and the difficulties of historical or cultural reconstruction of the context.[6] Hence, this paper will focus on (1) reading and exegeting the text of חרם in detail based on modern biblical scholarship, (2) surveying how a voice of חרם has been interpreted and accepted in the history of reading, and (3) comparing and contrasting critical cases in its reception history to support diverse meanings and usages of חרם, and ultimately, to reconsider its simplistic-literal application. This purpose of approach aims to counter some interpretative traditions which have insisted on only one and unified voice from חרם. Through the reception history of *ḥērem,* this paper will observe its multifaced cases of receptions which have been very different, coherent, and sometimes, contradictory. These cases, as a whole, will be converged into one critical thesis of this paper: Reconsidering a simplistic-literal approach to the *ḥēremic* texts. Also, the thesis will emphasize that interpreting חרם should not be fixed in a theoretical dimension but should be discussed in the actual field of faith communities and religion.

Facing the factor of war and violence in the Hebrew Bible, pragmatically, this research, "Reception History of *Ḥērem,*" will (1) directly overview the problematic texts

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[6] Cf., Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Brett, *Decolonizing God*; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*.

per se, (2) review the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the passages, and (3) suggest multifaceted cases of interpretation through exploring the canvas of reception history. Giving critical analyses and reviews about the reception cases of the texts of violence and terror, the primary purpose of the thesis is reconsidering a simplistic reading and literal application, and ultimately, contributing constructive ways of interpretation to contemporary theologians and ministers.

B. Method: Reception History

The philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer is first and foremost the theoretical foundation of this paper's methodology. Jonathan Robert's remarks with regard to the definition of reception history and philosophical contribution of Gadamer deserve to be quoted at length:

> Reception history…is usually—although not always—a scholarly enterprise, consisting of selecting and collating shards of that infinite wealth of reception material in accordance with the particular interests of the historian concerned, and giving them a narrative frame….Gadamer argues that understanding comes from open-minded, benevolent dialogue, and when linked to his attempts to recuperate tradition, this leads to him endorsing a way of thinking about the past that can be quite surprising to those schooled in a hermeneutics of suspicion. He depicts tradition as a kind of benevolent inheritance in which the acolyte may trust. The trusting, questioning relationship that can be developed with tradition is a paradigm of his dialogical model of truth….The spirit of Gadamer is attempting to provide space for a dialogical relationship between what that has meant and what that might mean, between the dominant scholarly lines of interpretation of a range of biblical books, and new scholarly readings of moments of biblical reception.[7]

Looking at reception history as a tool inspiring "a dialogical relationship" between texts,

[7] Jonathan Roberts, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, ed. Christopher Rowland, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1–6.

interpretative contexts, and interpretations themselves, the thesis will actively proceed to research reception materials, their historiographies and cultural contexts, and their overall relationship within the narrative framework. Succinctly, reception history is "theoretical and practical interactions between text, context and audience."[8]

Therefore, for researching reception history of חרם, focusing on interaction between texts and interpretations—i.e., communication between *ḥēremic* texts and their recipients—is one of the most significant points of this paper. Furthermore, through reviewing these interactions, this research can help scholars understand how the narratives of reception in receptive communities have contributed their interpretation, identity, and action—acknowledging "what a text can do" in the horizon of reception history.[9] In his detailed analysis of a theory of reception history, Brennan W. Breed gives brilliant insight to the purpose of this thesis: "[T]he biblical reception historian asks what a text can do. Here is the mandate: demonstrate the diversity of capacities, organize them according to the immanent potentialities actualized by various individuals and communities over time, and rewrite our understanding of the biblical text."[10] Based on Gadamer's philosophical foundation and the importance of textual-contextual communication, Breed tries to establish a systematic theory for surveying reception history:

> [R]eception history is not primarily an interpretative practice (i.e., "What does this text mean?"). Rather, reception history creates a model of repeated textual experimentation (i.e., "How might this text function?"). To be sure, creating a model of textual experimentation does require much reading, but this reading is

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[8] Emma England and William John Lyons, "Explorations is the Reception of the Bible," in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice* (London, NYC: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 3–13.

[9] Cf., Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 116–141.

[10] Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 141.

> of a different sort from interpretation. Instead of reading one version of a text and producing a meaning, reception history as I understand it would read—that is, organize and thus make sense of—the history of a text's unfolding capacities. This kind of historical survey would thus produce a map of the text's ever-expanding potentials.[11]

Within this larger framework, Breed presents three sets of approaches: (1) surveying critical scholarship, (2) figuring out "context," and (3) examining the broad and diverse history of reception in communities.[12] As this paper will suggest, it is indispensable to examine from broad literary reviews and historical reconstruction to the reception cases for conducting a survey of reception history. Without this methodological and hermeneutical criterion, the method would be too tenuous to protect against criticism regarding the subjectivity of reader focused reading.

One of the exemplary scholars and analyses that well reflect this paper's methodological interest is Mark G. Brett's observation and interpretative approach to the texts of violence (also cf., § II. D.).[13] To the question, "what a text can do," Brett firstly focuses on important precedent traditions that largely paralleled with the formation of biblical materials (e.g., Neo Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian materials). Second, through shedding light on the relationship between ancient Near Eastern parallels and

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[11] Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 142.

[12] In his theory of reception history, Breed critically revises the definition of "original meaning" and "original context." According to his approach to the "originality," the original context is not absolute, but undecided multiplicity; therefore, biblical texts have been formed in very different contexts, environment, and literary foundations—there is no fixed or so called original context. About *the* author, Breed says, "The author of a text cannot claim a position of absolute dominance over the productive powers of his or her text, nor can the audience be delimited in a necessarily objective manner so as to give theoretical clarity to the concept of 'original audience.'" Finally, "meaning is an effect of signification produced by reading and is not an inherent property of any text…there is no necessary priority [of] the boundary between 'original meaning' and receptions." See Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 114–115. Therefore, although this paper will survey and suggest the ancient Near Eastern contexts and parallels, and the literary and historical contexts of several key passages, the intention of this survey is not to fix the "absolute" original context, but to use these contexts and parallels as constructive tools for observing the texts' capacity based on reception history theory and for efficiently comparing critical cases in a much clear sense. Also see Breed's research process and case study. Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 140–162.

[13] Brett, *Decolonizing God*.

biblical sources, Brett attempts to listen to some "different" voices and meanings from key problematic texts of violence. Finally, Brett points out (1) what these texts of violence have done, (2) what readers and receivers have misunderstood (the texts' contexts and literary intentions); and (3) how the process of resistance and reframing can critically contribute to the situation that violent texts have affected.

With the scholarly concerns of Breed and Brett, the framework of reception history "of *ḥērem*" that this thesis tries to define is observing the precedent tradition of "war violence" in ancient Near Eastern parallels and discussing its various contexts in both history and literature. Since the text has been considered as very violent and problematic, it is worthwhile for researchers to analyze what the passages of war and conquest have done and what sort of results their interpretations have affected. Finally, all these research processes proceed to examine key cases in reception history of חרם in different groups of receivers. The conclusion part of this thesis, therefore, may reveal more problematic reality in historical cases and can suggest interpretative alternative proposals vis-à-vis resisting destructive application of the Hebrew Bible and justification of any violence. This is the reason why this paper will actively import and engage in not only broad, but also deeper aspects of חרם within the framework of reception history.

C. Organization

For this purpose, (1) the first chapter will start with recognizing and comparing the most significant scholarly work about חרם. This chapter will discuss how the theme of חרם has been studied in biblical scholarship and what characteristics and connotations from חרם scholarship has usually focused on.

(2) After an examination of scholarly work at length, the paper will offer important ancient Near Eastern data in relation to the theme of *ḥērem*: חרם as a *consequence* of reception. The title, "חרם as a Consequence Reception," implicitly indicates that the biblical חרם was *also* one of the results of reception activity from ancient Near Eastern culture and tradition: definitely, חרם is not *ex nihilo.* Therefore, within a research trajectory of this paper, recognizing the relationship between the ancient Near Eastern parallels and the texts of חרם should be the initial stage of investigation. In this chapter, the thesis will compare the usage and nuance of חרם in the Mesha Inscription and the Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon to חרם in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History.

(3) After discussing the ancient Near Eastern materials, this paper will proceed to inspect the hermeneutical conversation *within* the Hebrew Bible. First, targeting the most critical portion of the passage of חרם is essential. In the Hebrew Bible, חרם (both in verbal and noun forms) occurs no less than 80 times.[14] Among them, this paper especially focuses on חרם in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic History (Joshua to 2 Kings). Why should *ḥēremic* laws and narratives in the book of Deuteronomy and other Deuteronomistic history be significant? As Dennis T. Olson points out, one of the reasons is the frequency: "[T]he Hebrew root *ḥrm* occurs 80 times in the HB, with 51 of the occurrences in Deuteronomy–2 Kings."[15] The frequent appearance in the book of Deuteronomy and in the other Deuteronomistic literature implies that חרם was actively employed as one of the major concepts in the literary collection of the Deuteronomic School—indicating not only recurrent emergence of the

[14] Norbert Lohfink, "חרם," *TDOT* 5:180–199.
[15] Dennis T. Olson, "Ban, Banishment (Ḥērem)," *EBR* 3:412.

term חרם, but also its developed usages and connotation, compared to the other usages outside of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic history. Moreover, these *ḥēremic* passages in the Deuteronomistic literature have an evident form of a legal command, which literally authorizes genocide and domination in the context of military conquest. This chapter will read and exegete חרם in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 (within the context of Deut 6–7) and 20:16–18 (within the context of Deut 20). Then, a brief discussion about several important "practices" in the Deuteronomistic history will follow.

(4) After establishing חרם in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history as the pivotal sample of biblical *ḥērem,* this paper will finally explore critical cases of reception: חרם, as a *beginning* of reception. Although major scholarly work and biblical commentaries have well analyzed and interpreted what חרם can mean and how that meaning had been developed within the Hebrew Bible, they have rarely mentioned or focused on how the theme of חרם has been interpreted and received in the pragmatic field of religion and people's real lives. Therefore, the proposed agenda of this thesis is significant in three aspects: First, readers will notice the actual cases of reception and tendency of interpretation of חרם. Second, readers will understand both problematic and constructive cases of application of חרם in the history of Christianity. Third, readers will be able to interpret the texts of חרם based on this fruitful foundation of interpretation and reception history. For this purpose, this paper will suggest three significant groups of cases of reception of חרם: (1) חרם in early Christianity—especially, Origen's allegorical reading; (2) חרם in American–Australian colonialization history and the era of imperialism in the nineteenth to twentieth century; (3) חרם from the Korean Church.

In the concluding chapter of this paper, the thesis will carefully demonstrate the

multifaced possibilities of interpretation of חרם, from ancient Near Eastern comparison and biblical exegesis to all these "actual" cases of reception. The survey and analysis of these cases of reception will be concentrated into one formulated flow of narrative: Emphasizing meanings in receptive context, resisting literal understanding, and reforming readers' understanding *about* and *of* the text.[16]

[16] Roberts, "Introduction," 1; Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 141.

II. חרם IN LITERATURE REVIEWS

This chapter will examine the most important scholarly work about חרם in the history of modern biblical scholarship. In this chapter, this paper will deal with the scholarly work of Gerhard von Rad, Moses Weinfeld, Susan Niditch, Mark G. Brett, and Jerome F. D. Creach. One should focus on how the theme of חרם has been considered and centered.

A. Gerhard von Rad

Gerhard von Rad is one of the pioneers who seriously considers חרם in the book of Deuteronomy regarding the concept of *holy* war in ancient Israel.[17] Maintaining this specific concept of *ḥēremic* war is very different and contrasts with the Covenant Code (Ex 20:22–23:33) and the priestly law (Lev 27:28), von Rad points out the war ideology in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History had been formed based on the "older" ancient sources and, therefore, had generated visible—i.e., physical—tension within the text.[18] According to von Rad, "the old holy wars were waged simply for the defensive protection of the physical existence of the YHWH amphictyony."[19] The texts of חרם in Deuteronomy 20:10–18, 19–20, however, strikingly deliver a different idea

[17] Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, ed. Marva J. Dawn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 115.

[18] Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 116.

[19] Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 117–118.

compared to this older ideology of war process: "a very humane inclination…, the initial offer of peace (v. 10)…, and the purpose of war, which directed against the worship or belief of the enemies…contradicts completely the spirit of the old wars."[20] This means the Deuteronomic war ideology modified a "truer" procedure of war in the context of the ancient Israelites (or in the ancient Near Eastern context), and it finally added "rationalized motivation," which aimed wars of *religion* against the Canaanite cult.[21] Von Rad calls one to understand *ḥērem* within this perspective. Although the ostensible appearance of the text of חרם seems to introduce incoherent orders of war compared with the Deuteronomic humanitarian concern, this incoherency can be evidence of an amendment of the concept of *ḥērem* from the older war ideology by the Deuteronomic hand, toward cultic and ritual dimensions.

B. Moses Weinfeld

Considering *ḥērem* as an unrealistic and utopian theory devised by Deuteronomy, Moses Weinfeld focuses on the broad relationship between the theme of "dispossession" and חרם against pre-Israelites population (esp. *ḥērem* in Deut 7:1–2; 20:10–18).[22] For Weinfeld, the conflict of scriptural descriptions between Joshua 10:40, 11:12–14, and Judges 1, and historical applications of חרם in the Rabbinic records during Hasmonean society (ca. 140–116 BCE) are two major ideas for supporting an *utopian* ideology of

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[20] Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 116–117. The order of sentences are changed for flow.

[21] Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 118.

[22] Moses Weinfeld, "The Ban on the Canaanites in the Biblical Codes and Its Historical Development," in *History and Traditions of Early Israel*, ed. André Lemaire and Benedikt Otzen (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1993), 149–155.

חרם.[23] "The law of *ḥērem* in Deuteronomy is then a utopian law which was written in retrospect. Deuteronomy adopted for itself…in the manner of his theoretical *ḥērem*."[24] Weinfeld's argument glimpses the process of reception history within the books of Deuteronomistic history (esp. within Joshua and Judges) and the historical situation (esp. in Hasmonean period). His thesis is that חרם as the ideal law of utopian hope, opens a stronger Deuteronomic understanding and modification of חרם, than what von Rad suggests. In Weinfeld's argument, חרם is not just rules of war against religious and cultic aspects, but also reveals "the utopian ideology of Deuteronomy"—the ideal status of society and religion through theoretical application of חרם.[25]

C. Susan Niditch

Susan Niditch carefully focuses on חרם not only in the book of Deuteronomy, but also in the whole Hebrew Bible. Niditch establishes two trajectories of usages and meanings of חרם (1) as the ban in the context of sacrifice for YHWH and (2) as the ban in the context of God's justice.[26] The theme of the "ban-as-sacrifice" can include the broad meaning about "a solemn promise that human beings will be devoted as a sacrifice to god in *thanks* for victory" through the form of an oath (Italic added, see Num 21:2–3).[27] According to Niditch, the problematic notion of the ban as human sacrifice is the older concept of ban, which is deeply related to human or child sacrifice.[28] This concept

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[23] Weinfeld, "The Ban on the Canaanites in the Biblical Codes," 153–154.
[24] Weinfeld, "The Ban on the Canaanites in the Biblical Codes," 154.
[25] Weinfeld, "The Ban on the Canaanites in the Biblical Codes," 155.
[26] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 28–29; 56–58.
[27] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 34–37.
[28] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 46–48.

of the ban as sacrifice can an embrace earlier memory of חרם from its ancient Near Eastern context, which might be frequently connected with "dedicating" or "devoting" human sacrifice for triumph of battles (cf., the Mesha Inscription, and also Jephthah in Judg 11). In this situation, the theme of "the ban as God's justice" emerged by the hand of the Deuteronomic school, which not only appeared against the concept of human sacrifice, but also objected to the prevalent pagan worship and polytheistic ideologies on behalf of the sincere Yahwists:

> The Deuteronomic writers condemn the sacrifice of children…They must have been extremely uncomfortable with the ideology of vowing one's human enemies as an offering sacrificed to God. For these writers, the ban becomes something else that has to do with matters of justice and injustice, right and wrong, idolatry versus worship of the true God. *Ḥērem,* the ban, becomes a form of enacting the punishment or curse for Israelites and non-Israelites alike. Idolaters are perceived as deserving of the ban.[29]

Thus, *ḥērem* as God's sacrifice in the older sacrificial context had been overshadowed by the *ḥērem* as God's justice by the Deuteronomic movement at the time of Hezekiah and Josiah (i.e., at the time of the Deuteronomic reformation, ca. 8th–7th BCE). Although the underlying theme of *ḥērem* as God's sacrifice is still coexisting in the Hebrew Bible (Num 21:2–3; Judg 11:30), the ban as God's justice is now *prevailing* with the Deuteronomistic ideology in the final form of the Hebrew Bible. In this sense, Niditch designates Deuteronomy 7:2–5 and 13:12–18 as a "covenantal framework for the ban as God's justice," and also entitles Deuteronomy 20:10–18 as the "[ordered] war ideology"—i.e., ideological war process—which was imported and modified by a later hand of Deuteronomic redactors.[30] Niditch mentions that "in the Deuteronomists'

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[29] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 49.
[30] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 62; 66.

theoretical system, the ban appears to be controlled by juridical cautions and concerns, a guardian of a united, whole, and pure Israel, a means of combating the enemies of purity, internal and external."[31] Concentrating on these developing layers of *ḥērem,* Niditch emphasizes how to read *ḥērem* in Deuteronomy within the focus of the justice of YHWH. In her conclusion, the concept of the ban as divine justice strongly supported the idea of the Josianic reformers in the seventh-century BCE, who preserved and imported the older warring tradition—the ban as God's sacrifice—as well as altered this tradition through their ideological lens of ethnic purity and religious piety.[32] Niditch never mentions the ban as excommunication, utopian ideology, or emblematic practices. Rather, carefully viewing חרם as based on the Hebrew Bible, she understands חרם within a developing stratum of war and war ideology in ancient Israel, and within the later prominent view of the Deuteronomic identity and ideology. In the following chapters, according to Niditch's perspective, this paper will further scrutinize this process of development in detail.

D. Mark G. Brett

Mark G. Brett is one of the scholars who starts a conversation between the concept of חרם and its pragmatic application in some activities of reception. In his book, *Decolonizing God,* Brett offers "a series of sketches illustrating how biblical texts were implicated in the language of colonialism."[33] Brett's argument is that some problematic texts, which reveal the idea of war and conquest, have been misused regardless of not only their literary, but also cultural contexts; have supported legitimate

[31] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 68.
[32] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 152–155.
[33] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 8.

conquest—colonialism; and have justified violence against the indigenous. He selects Deuteronomy 7:1–3 and 20:16–17 as significant representatives. Brett argues that although the text of חרם and its contexts have different implications, they have been just theorized, traditionalized, and brought "monstrous damage in modern history."[34] His position against this implemental usage of biblical חרם critiques several important tensions among *ḥēremic* texts and conquest narratives in the Hebrew Bible—to counter its exclusive literal reading and to support alternative interpretation.[35] Also, Brett reminds the reader of the strong *Sitz im Leben* (i.e., setting in life) of texts of *ḥērem* in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history: Under the control of the Neo-Assyrian empire in the seventh-century BCE, "the quest [for Deuteronomic writer] to formulate an exclusivist worship of Yahweh is itself shaped by a mimetic logic that borrows from Assyrian culture while resisting foreign influence, appropriating the imperial discourses of loyalty, violence and punishment."[36] Furthermore, textual tensions in Joshua and Judges, incoherent applications in the narratives of Jericho and Ai, and historical reconstructions (e.g., archeological excavation in the site of Canaan) are enough to support his view that Deuteronomy uses חרם as just a "[metaphoric] assertion of national dignity over against the dehumanizing tendencies of empire" and as "an anti-imperial assertion of dignity before God."[37] Brett opens vivid discussion between biblical interpretation and historical reception. He not only approaches the connection between חרם and colonialism very carefully, but also suggests alternative interpretations

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[34] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 79.

[35] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 80–82. Cf., Ex 23:20–33; Lev 27:28–29; Josh 6:21–25; 9; 11:14; and 1 Sam 15:12–19.

[36] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 91. About "a mimetic logic," this paper will continue discussion in the following chapter III.

[37] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 91–92.

based on its historical and literary parallels for critically reviewing some simplified cases of reception which caused disastrous consequences and suffering.

E. Jerome F. D. Creach

Jerome F. D. Creach begins his important argument by mentioning, "One of the greatest challenges the church faces today is to interpret and explain passages in the Bible that seem to promote or encourage violence."[38] חרם is one of the most problematic representatives for this purpose. Rather than trying to reconstruct the theme of חרם in a literal or literary sense, however, Creach focuses on the symbolic and emblematic intention of the composition of חרם because when Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history were probably written or redacted, there would be *no real* Canaanites: "the story of placing the people of the land under the ban seems to have this reform movement [by kings Hezekiah and Josiah] largely as an emblem of purification, but was not meant to be taken literally."[39] He makes further comments that the order of *ḥērem* was probably *designed* at that time to enhance its emblematic role: sincerity to Yahwism. Maintaining this viewpoint, Creach also advocates the emblematic and allegorical interpretation of Origen who "believed that the ultimate goal of biblical interpretation was to unite the believer of Christ…the spiritual aspect was the key to the Christian life."[40] Creach strives to disentangle the overt tensions between the ostensible meaning of the text and its problematic application at present. This emblematic and

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[38] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 1.

[39] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 98. At this point, Creach's argument and interpretation is clearly based on historical-critical analysis of the text of חרם.

[40] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 102.

allegorical approach can also be one of the important ways of reviewing reception history.

Scholarly analyses and interpretation of the concept of חרם have been detailed and profound. One of the coherent aspects in this inclination of interpretation, however, is that scholarship, from von Rad to Creach, has been very watchful for literal reading and applications into pragmatic contexts. Ironically, this scholarly tendency is closely related to the history of interpretation of חרם. Since there has been much misunderstanding and abuse of biblical חרם in history, scholarship has tried careful analysis as much as possible to prevent recurring readings in a superficial dimension. For supporting this watchfulness, historical, literary, and socio-cultural data from critical violent passages have supported a more constructive criticism and hermeneutical approach—emphasizing the academic capacity of today's interpreters who can access the text more precisely than any other time period.

At this point, the history of reception also contributes to not only observing distinctive processes of *reactions,* but also how specific concepts and meanings from the Bible have been *saturated* with the lives of recipients. Therefore, this paper will enter into the world of reception history of חרם at two points: חרם—a consequence of reception and חרם—a beginning of reception.

III. BIBLICAL חרם, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF RECEPTION

חרם is not *ex nihilo.* The biblical concept of חרם is never separated from its ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context. It is very important for readers and interpreters to consider the ANE parallels of חרם as a starting point because biblical writers—in this case, the writers belonging to the Deuteronomic School—tried to express their ideology of religion and community by importing and modifying several key social-cultural materials, which already existed in the contiguous environment.[41]

Therefore, we can call the biblical חרם a *consequence* of reception from ancient Near Eastern sources. C. L. Seow gives insight for using the specific term, "consequence," which generally means "result" or "outcome," but also connotes "effect of actions" and "reaction." Reflecting Ulrich Luz's methodological approach, Seow concerns the relationship between *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of influence; how a text is worked out in reality—i.e., works in other media, such as homilies, visual arts, music, and action) and *Auslegungsgeschichte* (history of interpretation—i.e., what is in commentaries and theological writings).[42] Rather than drawing clear distinctions between *Auslegungsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte*, Seow focuses on their reciprocal

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[41] The overall notion about some biblical themes and concepts are from ancient Near Eastern context as reception comes from Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014); Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). Also, Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 79–93 (esp. 82–83); Stern, *The Biblical Ḥērem*, 19–50.

[42] C. L. Seow, "Reflections on the History of Consequences: The Case of Job," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 561–563.

relationship—"'history of influence' is inclusive of 'history of interpretation.'"[43]

Seow employs the term "consequences" or "history of consequences," with this regard, to describe these wide-ranging engagements to all interpretative attempts: "One may indeed speak meaningfully of 'interpretation,' 'reception,' 'influence,' 'effects,' and 'use,' but none of these terms suffices as a rubric for all the types of engagements of and encounters with the Bible. I prefer to speak, therefore, of the 'history of consequence,' using 'consequence' to connote *what comes after* (as in the history of interpretation and reception) as well as *impact* and *effects*." Therefore, when the thesis uses the term "consequence" regarding the ancient Near East, this usage implies not only that biblical חרם in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History just presupposes or literally paraphrases ancient Near Eastern parallels, but also that *ḥēremic* passages in the Hebrew Bible are *all inclusive consequences of influence*—i.e., reading, interpretation, impact, and effect—from these precedent materials which were dominantly pervasive in the contiguous areas that biblical materials had been formed.

Thus, conversation between ancient Near Eastern materials and the Hebrew Bible should be a primary point before proceeding with the research about reception history. The major approaches of this chapter are as follows: (1) defining how the theme of חרם appeared and was used in selected "key" ANE literature; (2) indicating what the meanings and connotations of חרם in these ancient Near Eastern parallels implies; and (3) figuring out how their meanings and relational contexts are similar or different comparing to the biblical חרם. For these approaches, this paper will choose the Mesha Inscription (ca. the mid-ninth century BCE) and the Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon (ca. the

[43] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss, German ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 95. Recited in Seow, "Reflections on the History of Consequences," 563.

mid-seventh century BCE, esp. 672 BCE) as representative parallels of biblical חרם.

A. The Mesha Inscription

The Mesha Inscription (MI), which was discovered in 1868, has been considered "an authentic monument from the first millennium BCE."[44] The MI recounts the battle and victory of King Mesha of Moab against King Omri (r. 876–869 BCE) of Israel (esp. 835 BCE; biblical parallels are 2 Kgs. 1:1; 3:4–5).[45] Mentioning "King Omri" and also "DWD" (דודה, line 12), the MI reveals one of the oldest parallels that is closely related to the history of the dynasty of ancient Israel in the Hebrew Bible.[46] M. Patrick Graham points out, "Most scholars believed that the MI made significant contributions to those engaged in the reconstruction of ancient history."[47] Careful comparison between the MI and the Hebrew Bible has generated several important understandings about the historical dynasty of ancient Israel and its socio-religious structure. S. R. Driver also summarizes notable historical information extracted from the MI:

> (1) the re-conquest of Moab by Omri; (2) the fact that Mesha's revolt took place in the middle of Ahab's reign, not after his death (as stated, 2 Ki. I.I); (3) particulars of the war by which Moab regained its independence; (4) the extent of country occupied and fortified by Mesha; (5) the manner and terms in which the authority of Chemosh, the national deity of Moab, is recognized by Mesha; (6) the existence of a sanctuary of YAHWEH in Nebo; (7) the state of civilization and culture which had been reached by Moab at the end of the tenth century

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[44] M. Patrick Graham, "The Discovery and Reconstruction of the Mesha Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 75.

[45] Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 195.

[46] Cf. The Tel Dan Inscription (ca. 870–750 BCE). See Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 295–296.

[47] Graham, "The Discovery and Reconstruction of the Mesha Inscription," 80.

BCE.[48]

Because there are not only some similarities, but also several differences, the task of historical reconstruction based on the MI has been considered significant work in the history of biblical scholarship. About the differences, however, broad scholarly consensus—about different aims of the historical view (i.e., historiography) of each literature, which generally omit disadvantageous historical accounts against their own kingdom—is now focusing on the "close correspondences between Israelite and Moabite religious language and practice," rather than sharp "reconstruction" or figuring out what is true or false.[49] At this point, the importance of חרם in and from the MI should be emphasized.

Christopher Hays notes, "The Mesha Inscription demonstrates striking similarities with Judean historical writings pertaining to the same period. [According to the MI, w]hen Mesha overthrows Nebo, he kills all the Israelite inhabitants, even using the same verb (*ḥrm*) that is used in the Bible for the same practice of total annihilation of enemies and their property."[50] The language and custom of חרם in the MI are some of the oldest ANE parallels that share cognation, semantics, and syntax. Through this parallel, one can deduce the language and custom of חרם at least existed, and it might be one of the familiar concepts of warfare in the ANE context. Through reading and comparing actual text from the MI, therefore, this paper proceeds with the comparative analysis between חרם in the MI and the Masoretic Text.

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[48] S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew text of the Books of Samuel: With an Introduction on Hebrew Palaeography and the Ancient Versions, and Facsimiles of Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), xciv. Recited from Graham, "The Discovery and Reconstruction of the Mesha Inscription," 80.

[49] Cf., Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 297; Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 196; Stern, *The Biblical Ḥērem*, 19–20.

[50] Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 196.

1. חרם in the Mesha Inscription: Meaning and Interpretation

The Mesha Inscription lines 14–18[51]	Translation[52]
[14]מחרת: ויאמר לי כמש לך אחז את נבה על ישראל: וא [15]הלך בללה ואלתהם בה מבקע השחרת עד הצהרם: ואח [16]זה ואהרג כל[ה] שבעת אלפן ג[ב]רן ו[ג]רן וגברת ו[גר] [17]ת ורחמת: כי לעשתר כמש החרמתה: ואקח משם א[ת כ] [18]לי יהוה ואסחב הם לפני כמש: ומלך ישראל בנה את	[14]…Maharatites. And Chemosh said to me, "Go, seize Nebo against Israel." So I [15]went at night and I fought against it from daybreak until midday. I seized [16]it and I killed all of [them], seven thousand men and boys and women and girls [17]and "wombs" because I *had dedicated it to the ban* for Ashtar-Chemosh. I took [the ves]sels [18]of YHWH and I dragged them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built…

In the MI line 17, the word החרמתה (lit. "I had dedicated it to the ban") shows clear usages of חרם in this passage. Considering its context, the passage begins with the first-person voice of Mesha, son of Chemosh, king of Moab, who asserts that Chemosh, the divine warrior of Moab, commanded conquest war against Israel (*l.* 14). Lines 15–18 indicate that Mesha followed the command of Chemosh, and detail how he conducted military actions specifically. The term החרמתה—*Hiphil* perfect 1cs, r. *ḥrm*, with a 3fs suffix—informs the reader of a distinctive consequence of action: killing "seven thousand men and boys and women and girls and 'wombs'" (*ll.* 16–17).[53] Although the conclusive action of Mesha formed in a *ḥēremic* dimension, we do not know whether Chemosh

[51] The original text of the MI is from Kent P. Jackson and J. Andrew Dearman, "The Text of the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

[52] The translation is from both Kent P. Jackson, "The Language of the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 97–98; Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 194.

[53] For grammatical note, Jackson, "The Language of the Meshaʿ Inscription," 115.

actually mentioned how Mesha had to destroy the city exactly. The details in the MI, however, have been striking because this conduct of חרם can also shed light on the philological and semantic origin of biblical חרם. This would be one of the evidences of the widespread ancient Near Eastern culture of war, which was deeply related to divine warfare promoted by divine intervention.[54] Mattingly describes the conspicuous similarities between חרם in the MI and the Hebrew Bible: "The MI's use of the term חרם in reference to a divinely sanctioned war 'is the only clearly attested example outside of the Old Testament' and, as such, 'it reveals the similarity between the sacral war practices of Israel and those of Moab…': (1) oracle, (2) departure, (3) battle, (4) capture of the city, (5) slaying of the populace, (6) *ḥērem*, and (7) taking booty."[55] This analysis demonstrates that biblical writers would also be very familiar with it, and they probably accepted and imported the concept of *ḥērem* into their sacred literature: חרם as a consequence of reception. Problems emerge, however. חרם in the MI, the word that reveals one of the ANE prevalent traditions and thoughts on war, is not exactly coherent with biblical חרם, especially חרם in Deuteronomy 7 and 20. Why have some critical differences still remained? How can one recognize them and understand their tension? Also, how can one extract the intention of such literature?

2. חרם in the Mesha Inscription and the Hebrew Bible

If one considers the view of Niditch, חרם in the MI seems similar to the earlier tradition of חרם in the Hebrew Bible, חרם as sacrificial function to the deity (cf., Num

[54] Gerald L. Mattingly, "Moabite Relision and the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. Andrew Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 233.

[55] Mattingly, "Moabite Relision and the Meshaʿ Inscription," 234.

21:2).[56] חרם, however, in specific forms of the legal code and its application in the books of Deuteronomy (esp. Deut 7:2) and Deuteronomistic History shows different functions—"the ban as God's justice" (also see § II.).[57] It could be the distinctive purpose that Deuteronomy ultimately tried to deliver. First, in Deuteronomy, the intermediator for the deity declares specific terms and details of חרם, not an oath or report form to the deities by humans first (cf., Mesha *ll.* 15–17 and Deut 7:1–2). Second, the precise purpose and reason of חרם are suggested: "Make no covenant with them" (Deut 7:2, NRSV), "Do not intermarry with them" (Deut 7:3), "break down their altars, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire" (Deut 7:5), and "*because* the LORD your God has chosen you" (Deut 7:6, italic added).[58] Unlike the MI (also see Mesha *ll.* 18–34), the purpose and reason of חרם in the context of Deuteronomy are not just ultimate victory in the battle achieved by offering human sacrifices. Third, the Deuteronomic concept of חרם declares more than mere military or political victory, nor does it flaunt the superiority of the deity in the context of human battle, which represented divine power. The different contexts between the MI and the Hebrew Bible, and their revealed purposes support this idea. The context of חרם in the MI is a political-military conflict between two kingdoms, which was a very common and pervasive power dynamic in human history. The context of חרם in Deuteronomy, however, is closely related to forming religious identity: building up a community of faith based on piety toward YHWH (see § IV. A. B.).

As Niditch addresses, חרם in the initial stage of forming biblical literature contains and implies both sacrificial usages in divine-human relationships and justice

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[56] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 28–29.
[57] Also see § II. Susan Niditch. Cf., Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 46–49.
[58] For the sequence and comparison in detail, see Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 104–107.

issues for YHWH in a religious society—but the early composition of the text gives priority to the former. However, since Deuteronomic ideology and theology had a great effect on a significant part of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Deuteronomy to 2 Kings and Jeremiah), the Deuteronomistic perspective of חרם, retaining justice and piety toward YHWH, is now seen as stronger and more pervasive.[59] However, at the first stage, regarding the MI, earlier biblical tradition of חרם (e.g., Num 21:2–3) clearly shared common ground with ANE tradition of חרם. This is a preliminary demonstration that biblical חרם neither emerged from a vacuum nor developed only *within* the Hebrew Bible. Then, the books of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic History probably imported this concept of חרם directly from the ANE context and within their own literary inheritance, interpreted it, and reshaped its function based on their perspective and ideology of the ideal community.[60] Therefore, examining this specific first step is the first and foremost for researching the Deuteronomistic reception of חרם—and also for further reception history of חרם, which implies both sacrificial and pious usages. The following ANE source, the Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon, will support a more explicit perspective of the Deuteronomic reception of חרם in the context of the seventh-century BCE.

B. The Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon

The Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE) has been thought of as one of the most important archeological discoveries because the VTE "bears many affinities with treaties

[59] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 56–58.
[60] Also see Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:180–199.

of the second millennium B.C., especially those made by the Hittite kings, and with Old Testament covenants."[61] According to the treaty text itself, the VTE was written and made in 672 BCE by King Esarhaddon of Neo-Assyria (r. 681–669 BCE).[62] In terms of the VTE, what D. J. Wiseman mentioned, "Old Testament covenants," possibly designates the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code (Deut 12–26). It is highly possible that the social and historical context of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code shares the same period with the VTE. According to the scholarly consensus, the reigns of Kings Hezekiah (715–687 BCE) and Josiah (640–609 BCE) in Judah were the most likely historical points at which Deuteronomy was composed and read (cf., 2 Kings 22:8).[63] Also, the Deuteronomic Code, for its forms and contents, has been considered a legal covenant or treaty parallel with ANE suzerainty treaties because the covenant factors and processes show clear similarities.[64] Since Deuteronomic reformation was probably developed under Neo-Assyrian domination, these similarities also can be one of the evidences of Deuteronomic reception influenced by the contagious ANE culture. So, חרם in Deuteronomy should also be considered in the context of Neo-Assyrian culture and tradition. Brett emphasizes the importance of the relationship between חרם in Deuteronomy and the VTE:

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[61] D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), 3.

[62] Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon*, 1–2.

[63] Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, WBC 6A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), lxviii–lxix; Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*; Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990); Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966); Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996).

[64] These representative factors could be (1) identification of the suzerain; (2) history of the relationship between suzerain and vassal; (3) stipulations; (4) provision for deposit of copies of the treaty in temple; (5) a list of divine witnesses; and (6) curses (and blessings). Cf., Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 179–189.

> [T]here are a number of striking comparisons between Deuteronomy 13[65] and the treaties of King Esarhaddon, suggesting that the Yahwist requirement for exclusive loyalty to Israel's God was modeled on Assyrian material…Deuteronomy 13 is particularly relevant to the *ḥērem* theme, since immediately following the portion adapted from Esarhaddon's treaty…even Israelites who are proven disloyal to Yahweh shall be punished by having their entire town, people and livestock, devoted to the ban.[66]

Therefore, in terms of חרם in Deuteronomy, it is reasonable for interpreters to examine the VTE and compare it with biblical literature. Through reading the VTE and Deuteronomy, the following section will discuss how/why they are different and what can be inferred from them.

1. חרם in the Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon: Meaning and Interpretation

Here is the translation of The Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon § 10, 12:[67]

§ 10 (*ll*. 108–122)

> [108][(You swear) that you will not listen to, or conceal, any word] [109][which is evil, improper (or) unsuitable concerning Ashurbanipal, the crown prince] [100][son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, (or to things which) are] [111][not seemly nor good either from the mouth of his enemy] [112][or from the mouth of his friend or from the mouth of his brothers] [113]or from [the mouth of his sons or from the mouth of his daughters,] [114]or from the mouth [of his brothers, his uncles, his cousins,] [115]his family, members of [his father's line, or from the mouth of your brothers] [116]your sons, [your daughters, or from the mouth of an oracle-priest,] [117]an ecstatic-[priest, or from the mouth of a prophet,] [118]or from the mouth of a[ny of the masses] [119][as many as they are,] [120](but) that you will go and report (it) [121][to Ashurbanipal, the crown-] prince [122][son of Esarhaddon, king of

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[65] Along with Deuteronomy 7 and 20, Deuteronomy 13 also reveals a strong duty of faithfulness to YHWH: the community must punish and ban (*ḥrm*) those who go and worship other gods (Deut 13:7–15).

[66] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 82.

[67] The transliteration and translation of the VTE is from Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon*, 37–40. Also cf., Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), 33–34.

Assyria.]

§ 12 (*ll.* 130–141)

[130](You swear) that should anyone—as concerning Ashur[banipal, the crown-prince] [131]son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, [who has] [132]made the treaty with you concerning him— [133]speak to you of rebellion and insurrection [or killing,] [134]to their [detriment] and their destruction, [135]then you will not listen to (it) from the mouth of [anyone]. [136]You will seize the perpetrators of insurrection, [137]you will bring (them) before Ashurbanipal, the crown-prince [138]If you are able to seize and put them to death [139]then you will seize and put them to death [140]and you will destroy [their name and [141]their seed] from the land.

Both § 10 and 12 show the distinctive setting, atmosphere, and decisions in relation to rebellious and wrong actions against the imperial power. Among them, § 12, lines 138–141 are notable: "If you are able to seize and put them to death, then you will seize and put them to death, and you will *destroy* (Akk. *ta-du-ka-šá-nu-u*) [their name and their seed] from the land" (italic and Akkadian transliteration added). This commandment declared the punishment for misdemeanors committed by speaking and swearing against the imperial authority. In this case, the verb sequence, "seize," "put them to death," and "destroy," is a clear process of implementation of judgement. In *l.* 140, the Akkadian verb *dâkum* means "to kill and destroy," "beat as punishment," and "defeat enemy, city in battle."[68] In this line, the key verb, *ta-du-ka-šá-nu-u*, "you will destroy"—which is followed by the suffix form meaning "their name and their seed"—designates physical punishment and total annihilation against all those who did evil and rebellious acts against the emperor. Although the Akkadian etymology of חרם, *(ḫ)arāmu/erēmu,* which means "to cover" or "to separate" was not directly mentioned and

[68] Jeremy A. Black et al., *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 53–54.

used in these VTE passages, the settings and consequences of the VTE §10 and 12 reveal some significant similarities with the context of חרם text in Deuteronomy.[69]

2. חרם in the Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon and the Hebrew Bible

Therefore, this section will compare the VTE and the חרם text in Deuteronomy 13 in terms of (A) subject and setting, (B) object of accusation, and (C) adjudication.

(A) Subject and Setting

> From the mouth of his enemy…or from the mouth of his friend or from the mouth of his brothers…or from the mouth of his sons or from the mouth of his daughters…or from the mouth…his uncles, his cousins…his family, members of his father's line, or from the mouth of…or from the mouth of an oracle-priest…an ecstatic-priest, or from the mouth of a prophet (The VTE § 10)
>
> If prophets or those who divine by dreams appear among you and promise you omens or portents…If anyone secretly entices you—even if it is your brother, your father's son or your mother's son, or your own son or daughter, or the wife you embrace, or your most intimate friend—saying (Deut 13:1, 6, NRSV)

The introductions of their subjects and settings show striking similarity. Although Deuteronomy presents a much shorter and more succinct statement, both statements of subject and setting clearly indicate the same two aspects: (1) prophets, all family members, and kin; (2) something related to "uttering with mouth": "If your family members and all relatives say/swear something from the mouth." Based on this subject and setting, comparing their object and accusation should follow.

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[69] Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:188.

(B) Object of Accusation

> (You swear) that you will not listen to, or conceal, any word…which is evil, improper (or) unsuitable concerning Ashurbanipal, the crown prince son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, (or to things which) are not seemly nor good either from the mouth…(You swear) that should anyone…speak to you of rebellion and insurrection or killing, to their [detriment] and their destruction…
> (The VTE § 10 and 12)

> If anyone secretly entices you… saying, "Let us go worship other gods," whom neither you nor your ancestors have known…any of the gods of the peoples that are around you, whether near you or far away from you, from one end of the earth to the other…
> (Deut 13:6–7, NRSV; Also cf., Deut 13:1–5,)

Although both passages begin with a similarity of subject and setting, their objects of accusation are very different. In Deuteronomy 13, the text accuses the Israelites of polytheistic faith and idol worship, whereas the VTE clearly indicts rebellion and debasement against the imperial authority of Kings Ashurbanipal and Esarhaddon. This means their objectives aim in different directions: Deuteronomy concerns religious piety, whereas the VTE clings to political insincerity. After this, long and detail adjudications of these accusations immediately follow.

(C) Adjudication

> [T]hen you will not listen to (it) from the mouth of anyone…You will seize the perpetrators of insurrection, you will bring (them) before Ashurbanipal, the crown-prince…If you are able to seize and put them to death…then you will seize and put them to death and you will destroy (*dâkum*) their name and their seed from the land…
> (The VTE § 12)

> [Y]ou must not yield to or heed any such persons. Show them no pity or

> compassion and do not shield them…But you shall surely kill them;…saying, "Let us go and worship other gods," whom you have not known…you shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword, utterly destroying (*haḥārēm*) it and everything in it—even putting its livestock to the sword… (Deut 13:8–15, NRSV)

The parallel themes of killing, putting them to the sword, and seizing appear in both passages. It seems that they converge again with the same adjudication. Ostensibly, the judgment for both religious and political impiety seemed to be total annihilation of those who showed religious blasphemy and political rebellion. One should ask, however, whether we are reasonably able to match "*haḥārēm*" (Deut 13:15) and "*dâkum*" (*l.* 140). Although English translation indicates the same concept, "destroy," the meaning of the Hebrew term חרם in Deuteronomy is more than just physical destruction or elimination: utterly devote or total separation.[70] Therefore, Deuteronomy also made some changes in its adjudication part from the VTE. Borrowing the popular platitudes found in Neo-Assyrian treaty forms, which identify subject and setting, חרם in Deuteronomy 13 delivered a different object of accusation—religious impiety toward YHWH, and changed the decree of judgment slightly, *dâkum* to *haḥārēm*.

In the whole parallel process, cause and effect is going in a different direction. As mentioned before, based on scholarly consensus, assuming the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code was affected by the treaty form of Neo-Assyrian culture, it borrows only its overall form, some platitudes, and structure; at the same time, the biblical text changes its ultimate concerns from political and imperial loyalty between suzerain and vassal to religious piety and accusation of idolatry (also cf., early Israelites'

[70] I will mention this meaning and connotation of חרם more in chapter IV. Also see Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:181–189.

henotheism). Brett mentions the reason for this "mimetic logic" could be for "resisting foreign influence, appropriating the imperial discourses of loyalty, violence and punishment."[71] This paper wants to emphasize, however, that this parallel and reception conveys more than merely "resisting foreign influence." Rather, importing and receiving the Neo-Assyrian treaty form, the Deuteronomic writers changed the context of חרם from total destruction (*dâkum*), which was probably very widespread in the Neo-Assyrian context to protect the imperial authority and the divine kingship, to religious piety toward only YHWH. חרם was no longer declared in a political context, but meant the way of religious sincerity in a forming (literary) or reforming (historically) moment of society. In its reception from the Neo-Assyrian treaty context, the text of חרם in biblical literature probably was formed and shaped to establish the religious sincerity of the community—the ideal fidelity to YHWH.

C. Synthesis: חרם, A Consequence of Reception

חרם is definitely not *ex nihilo.* In the Mesha Inscription, the term חרם emerged in the context of a conquest war of King Mesha of Moab, from the voice of Chemosh, the Moabite deity of war. This is one of the oldest parallels of biblical חרם in ANE discoveries. This concept of חרם in the MI probably shaped some preliminary concepts of חרם in the Hebrew Bible—the ban-as-sacrifice. In the book of Deuteronomy, however, the Deuteronomic writer imported and changed the context and connotation of חרם from sacrifice to forming a religious society—they interpreted the text and reshaped its function through their view of the ideal community.

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[71] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 91.

The Vessel Treaty of Esarhaddon shows more specific platitudes, context, and literary form. Although the Akkadian etymology of חרם was not revealed in the VTE text, the literary framework and rhetorical flow of the passage is clearly related to the biblical חרם text, Deuteronomy 13. The biblical חרם in Deuteronomy 13 imported the framework of the political and imperial command in the VTE, which declared the rebellious against the imperial authority. Using similar concepts, flow, and rhetoric, however, biblical חרם reveals its distinctive concern: clinging to exclusive piety to YHWH. Now, one can carefully say חרם in the Hebrew Bible was born in the womb of the ancient Near East; yet, as this paper has explored, its details and specific usages are clearly different and reveal its distinctive purpose. This process of reception can contribute to hearing a relatively accurate voice of חרם. Necessarily, this is the reason why this paper begins with חרם, a consequence of reception from the ancient Near East.

From now on, bearing in mind our findings, the paper will go on to a brief analysis of biblical חרם in the books of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history. How have meaning and concept been precisely developed in the Hebrew Bible? How exactly are their connotations different or coherent? How does further reception history begin?

IV. חרם IN DEUTERONOMY AND DEUTERONOMISTIC LITERATURE

Before we proceed to read the text itself, one important question of this thesis should be remembered: Does the term of *ḥērem* actually intend literal conduct of war and conquest in their contemporary situations? According to the literary review and the data from the ancient Near Eastern parallels, the legal texts of war and conquest written by the Deuteronomic school turned out to be "more" than a literal level of command. The question is, however, how biblical readers have approached the text itself and have heard its exegetical messages with all these "informative" ancient parallels, historical backgrounds, and functions of its literary and political context. This question, therefore, leads this thesis to the inside of the text to form a strong connection between an intertextual reading of the *ḥēremic* passages and its extratextual cases in reception history.[72]

As demonstrated previously, the significant process of reception is already started within the textual connections in the Hebrew Bible. Niditch informs one that the prevailing theme of חרם in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history is in relation to the justice of the deity, and the development of this thesis' argument has explored how the ANE materials were directly and contextually connected with both earlier memory of חרם and the Deuteronomic revised version of חרם. In order to survey this purpose, this paper will target the *ḥēremic* legal code in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:16–18 as the

[72] For the idea, see Richard B. Hays et al., *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 8–9.

sample passages, which expose the prevailing meaning of חרם and signify the clearest example of the most developed form of ideology. Through reading these texts, we can appreciate what חרם in the text foremost denotes on the literary level; how the detailed genre and contexts of חרם are functioning in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic literature; how the Deuteronomic passages can be connected with the "faithful" Deuteronomistic practice; and how these usages and relations should be formed and interpreted in our context.

A. Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:16–18

Deuteronomy 7:1–2 (NRSV, Hebrew added)

> [1]When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you—[2]and when the LORD your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy (הַחֲרֵם תַּחֲרִים) them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy.

Deuteronomy 20:16–18 (NRSV, Hebrew added)

> [16]But as for the towns of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. [17]You shall annihilate (הַחֲרֵם תַּחֲרִימֵם) them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as the LORD your God has commanded, [18]so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the LORD your God.

1. Translation Issue

In these passages, the phrase, הַחֲרֵם תַּחֲרִים,[73] is translated into, "utterly destroy" and "annihilate" in not only the NRSV Bible, but also several other major English Translations (e.g., NASB, KJV, JPS, and NIV). The Septuagint (LXX) usually translates חרם into ἀφανίζω (lit. destroy, Deut 7:2) and ἀνάθεμα (lit. dedicate and curse, Deut 20:17).[74] These translations, however, do not exactly match what the ancient Hebrew term of חרם entirely embraces.[75] For translating חרם, J. P. U. Lilley mentions, "it is not easy to find an unambiguous equivalent in English for *ḥērem*."[76] A more urgent problem is, however, these translations in the English Bibles (or in any translations e.g., Korean) can generate some serious stereotypes and misunderstandings. The first and major meaning of חרם is not just confined to "break," "destroy," or "devastate"—i.e., physical harm (cf., the case of ἀφανίζω). According to the standard Hebrew dictionaries, חרם is much closer to the meaning of the "devoted thing" or "devotion," and the secondary meanings of "ban" or "destruction" come next.[77] Its verbal form, *ḥāram*, also has the meaning of "to devote and dedicate" first, and then "to put the ban."[78] *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* offers much specific information: Both verb and noun forms based on the root, *ḥrm,* indicate "to dedicate," "dedication to the secularly unusable to destruction or to cultic use only," and then "to ban and

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[73] הַחֲרֵם תַּחֲרִים, Hebrew verb *hiphil* infinitive absolute with verb *hiphil* imperfect the second person masculine singular. This verbal form and syntax implies emphasis and intensification. For the usages and meaning of Infinitive Absolute, see C. L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 250–251; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 587 (§ 535.583.581g).

[74] J. P. U. Lilley correctly points out: "The RSV and NIV prefer 'devoted thing' for noun, and 'totally destroy' for the verb, which is accurate but leads to many marginal notes. See J. P. U. Lilley, "Understanding the Herem," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 169.

[75] Lilley, "Understanding the Herem," 169.

[76] Lilley, "Understanding the Herem," 169.

[77] BDB, 356.

[78] BDB, 355.

excommunicate."[79] Along with these dictionary definitions, the secondary meanings of "extermination" or "genocide" are introduced in a narrower dimension. Therefore, simply focusing on the typical English translation, "to (utterly) destroy," may cause significant misreading without considering the important connotation of the term: חרם is usually used in cultic setting in relation to "devotion." Also, since there are several other Hebrew words which specifically indicate the meaning of physical "ruin and destroy" (שׁחת), "strike" (נכה), "break" (שׁבר), "frustrate" (פרר), "abolish" (אבר), "devastate" (שׁדד), "exterminate" (שׁמד), and so on, recognizing what *kind* of action חרם denotes is an indispensable step before entering into the biblical passages.

Lohfink helps to explain the broad range of religious and cultic connotations. While pointing out that this religious implication of חרם has been largely lost in the history of transmission and tradition of interpretation, Lohfink emphasizes that חרם was used to designate "a special act of consecration…[which] consecrate something or someone as a permanent and definitive offering for the sanctuary."[80] Further, he supports the etymology of the Semitic root, *ḥrm,* which shares the perspective of "separate" (cf., קדשׁ) or "forbid."[81] In war situations in the Deuteronomistic literature, this basic meaning of חרם probably had further developed to "consecrat[ing] a city" and putting "its inhabitants to destruction" comes secondarily.[82] The translation of the English Standard Version (ESV) well indicates this primary direction of the connotation. Rather than saying simply "utterly destroy," the ESV translates Deuteronomy 7:2 as "you must devote them to complete destruction," and adds "that is, set apart (devote) as an offering

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[79] *HALOT,* 353–354.
[80] Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:188; 196.
[81] Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:187–188. Also compare this meaning with the case in the VTE.
[82] Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:188.

to the Lord" in its footnote. It may mean that the ESV creates more place to think about the etymological meaning of חרם. Therefore, understanding חרם as a physical genocide inevitably reveals a fundamental limitation. Interpreters should center on broader and deeper possibilities for interpretation that cannot be easily revealed on the surface of the translation.

2. Genre and Literary Context of חרם in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:16–18

The next step in this paper is to consider genre and literary context of חרם in the legal context in Deuteronomy. Yair Hoffman points out the matter of legal genre of חרם in Deuteronomy: "The Deuteronomic legislator is the only one in the Pentateuch to articulate the idea of the *herem* as an affirmative law. It is first mentioned in 7,1–5, outside the framework of the legal codex (Chaps. 12–26), nevertheless it is phrased there as a law, rather than as a merely homiletic idea. It appears again in 20, 16–18 as part of the legal codex, concretizing the former rather abstract law through a specific example."[83]

Though Deuteronomy 7 does not belong to the so called Deuteronomic Code, Deuteronomy 7:1–11 overtly indicates that these imperatives are functioning as the "commandment—the statutes and ordinance" from YHWH (Deut 7:11). YHWH commands these statutes and ordinances, and Moses intermediates between the deity and the people. As Niditch mentioned, Deuteronomy 7—along with the Ten Commandments and *Shema* (Deut 6)—functions as forming a legal and covenantal framework, which introduces the beginning of the covenantal relationship between YHWH and the Israelites. After this initiation, one must also consider the following legal code in

[83] Yair Hoffman, "The Deuteronomistic Concept of the Herem," *ZAW* 111 (1999): 198.

Deuteronomy 20:10–20 that specifies its ideological order of warfare.[84] The legal genre emphasizes two important issues: First, this law comes from YHWH at the time of reforming the community—just before conquering the Promised Land; Second, this legal commandment has a forceful authority over its recipients to actually implement the divine commandment.

The larger literary context of this legal commandment of חרם, however, offers critical objections for readers not to solely consider this command as an exact regulation of actual warfare. Interestingly, after the passage of the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy 7:1–2 is located in the middle of an arrangement of four developing sequences in relation to sincerity with YHWH: First, the commandment of the *shema* (Deut 6:4–9): "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (v. 5, NRSV); second, the warning against pagan worship and disobedience of the commandments of YHWH (6:10–25); third, the command of חרם (7:1–3); fourth, the restriction of intermarriage with the pagans and commands for destroying the shrines of other deities (7:4–11); and finally, the promise of blessing and reward for obedience to the covenant of God (7:12–26). Within the bigger context of Deuteronomy 6–11, the coherent theme of Deuteronomy 6–7 mainly deals with obedience to the commandments and a sincere relationship with YHWH.[85] In other words, the command of *ḥērem* is located in the midst of calls for sincerity toward YHWH because "you are a people holy (קָדוֹשׁ, lit. consecrated and separated) to the Lord your

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[84] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 62; 66.

[85] For grouping and understanding the larger context, I followed the several scholarly researches of the structure of Deuteronomy conducted by Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, 137, 155–157; Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 49–54. According to their work, Deuteronomy 6-11 is a unit, which expands and further explains the initial Commandment, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Deut 5:6). Cf., Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses*, 49–50.

God" (Deut 7:6a)—the *ḥēremic* order is not in the middle of the political or international regulation of wars and battles.[86]

A much more explicit and pragmatic legal form of חרם in Deuteronomy 20:16–18 has also a distinctive context in relation to the relationship with YHWH and the war ideology. Deuteronomy 20:16–18 indicates חרם is not a simple behavior of conquest in order to greedily attain the wealth of a community—i.e., territory or booty. According to Deuteronomy 20:10–15, the preliminary action of *ḥēremic* warfare is a "proclamation of peace" toward towns "that are very far from" the Promised Land (Deut 20:10, 15). If these far towns accept the terms of peace, the Israelites can kill only men and take women and livestock as the spoil. Jeffery H. Tigay mentions the preliminary action for peace and following conduct as "the general rule" of war; and "cities attacked by Israel are to be offered an opportunity to surrender."[87] This "general rule" of war in Deuteronomy 20:10–15a does not mention חרם yet, but uses "besiege" (צור), "smite" (נכה), and "take" (לכח)—the more universal terms used to describe the moments of war and battle (cf., Josh 6–7, 10–11 and 1 Sam 13–14).[88]

The specific rules of חרם come after this universal rule (Deut 20:16–18). The back and forth in its literary context can imply two important things: First, even in normal situations of war, the primary strategy of the Israelites army is proclaiming terms of *peace* (Deut 20:10) first—in other words, these terms of peace indicate the primary

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[86] Cf., Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 105–107.

[87] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 188–189.

[88] Hoffman claims the ambiguous objects of this general rule: "all the towns that are far from you" (Deut 20:15). According to him, if the law functions as the law, all dictums are supposed to be very clear. He, therefore, argues this set of law is a later accretion. This paper will discuss this aspect in following chapters, which concern historical contexts. See Hoffman, "The Deuteronomistic Concept of the Herem," 201.

intention of avoiding battles and meaningless slaughters.[89] One can legitimately say this universal law of warfare for Israel is the premise of an ideal system for conducting warfare. Second, the specific rules of חרם in the following verses are very different from these previous universal instructions of war. One might ask why the rule of חרם is set apart against only the Canaanites tribes in the Promised Land, and what the difference is between חרם and the general-ideological activity of war previously described in Deuteronomy 20:10–15a. Lohfink carefully posits that חרם in Deuteronomy 20:10–18 actually contains the purpose of strict *limitation* on doing reckless warfare; rather, חרם is distinguished from the general rule of war to stress a more specific religious purpose of devotion. Deuteronomy 20:18 conclusively exclaims the appropriate purpose of this חרם: "so that [the Canaanites] may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the LORD your God" (v. 18, NRSV).

Glimpsing the larger literary units is also significant. Deuteronomy 20:5–9 (before the *ḥēremic* command) gives the condition for exemption from war and battle: For those who (1) built a new house (v. 5), (2) planted a vineyard (v. 6), (3) engaged a woman (v. 7), and (4) are afraid or disheartened (v. 8). Rather than instigating a strict political slogan of war-doing or indicating a power dynamic between nations for ultimate victory, these idealistic (even unrealistic) regulations for exemptions allows readers to expect that the whole context of Deuteronomy 20 is explicitly not confined within a simple-secular level of warfare. Also, Deuteronomy 20:19–20 (after the *ḥēremic* command) mentions the interesting but somewhat abrupt commandment: "you must not destroy [the city's] trees by wielding an ax against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down." (20:19). For understanding this abruption,

[89] Lohfink, *TDOT* 5:197.

Jacob L. Wright's insight deserves to be introduced: "The authors of Deuteronomy (or of its sources) may also be making a *fortiori* argument that applies to human life as well: If one may not even harm the fruit trees of the enemy in order to accelerate a city's surrender, how much more so should one not torture captives for the same purpose—an equally well-attested method of warfare."[90] Given the literary context of "saving trees" along with Deuteronomy 20:5–9, 10, and the *ḥēremic* command, according to Wright, the saving tree passage is now implying lenient actions in warfare. Along with Deuteronomy 20:10, which commands, "When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace," these passages of war regulation in Deuteronomy 20 (20:5–9; 10–15; 19–20) can be closely connected with ultimate mercy in warfare, rather than political belligerence. In Deuteronomy 20:10–18, therefore, the rule of חרם is not located in the typical process of war; instead, among the horizon of war ideology, it was supposed to be conducted as a protective action from spiritual corruptions against YHWH (as revealed in Deut 7:5–6, 20:18).

To sum up, examining the literary contexts of חרם in Deuteronomy 7 and 20 can develop the discussion this paper tries to do in much larger dimensions. First, חרם in Deuteronomy 7:2 is in the middle of the commands related to obeying the covenant of YHWH and worshiping YHWH alone. It clearly emphasizes keeping purity as the people of YHWH. *Ḥērem* can be one of the methods to consecrate and separate the Israelites themselves for holiness (קֹדֶשׁ, lit. apartness) to YHWH in this context. Second, the structure of Deuteronomy 20:10–18 indicates חרם is supposed to be distinguished from

[90] Jacob L. Wright, "War Crimes and War Laws," Unpublished Article (Atlanta: Candler School of Theology, 2017): 6–7. This article is unpublished which was introduced as class materials. For further discussion, see Jacob L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19–20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft," *JBL* 127 (2008).

general cases of warfare. Even the strategy of war in these verses is not ultimately belligerent against the enemy, but tries to give alternatives and seeks a peaceful solution first (Deut 20:10). חרם, after these rules, reveals its limited application for the Canaanites tribes with its firm purpose: do not sin against YHWH first and foremost and keep religious and spiritual cleanliness. Also, through Deuteronomy 20:5–9; 19–20, one should recognize the (larger) literary context of the passages do not concern either unnecessary genocide or political violence for maintaining international hegemony. Rather, they introduce the most idyllic form of war ideology through locating *ḥēremic* passages between the passages of merciful actions during the war.

Therefore, examining the literary context of biblical חרם in Deuteronomy is one of the most important points that readers should notice before surveying its reception history—conclusively, it must be understood differently from the general (or secular) activities of war. Now, the following study of the historical context will also support the findings from analyzing the literary context and will contribute to establishing firmer criterion for reasonable interpretation.

3. Historical Context: חרם in Historical Deuteronomy

In biblical scholarship, the historical context of the composition of the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code (Deut 12–26) is one of the most controversial subjects. Generally, however, the development of historical criticism has supported the possibility of later redaction (double or triple) of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code (including the Deuteronomistic History), rather than literally adhering to the

Mosaic authorship.[91] At this point, examining and understanding the larger historical context of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Code will also help readers to comprehend the social-political context of חרם in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history.

There have been many works of scholarship seeking to figure out a more accurate social and historical context of Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Deuteronomistic history. In his commentary, Duane Christensen gives us a concise overview of the history of critical research: through the scholarly consensus, one may notice that many scholars have pointed out the reigns of Kings Hezekiah (715–687 BCE) and Josiah (640–609 BCE; cf., 2 Kings 22:8) in Judah as the most likely historical points at which the earlier form of Deuteronomy was composed and read.[92]

At that time, the Northern Kingdom had fallen (722 BCE), pagan worship was exceedingly prevalent inside Judah (2 Kings 18:4–5; 23:4–19), and threats from outside the kingdom—Neo-Assyrian threats—were growing. Tigay's conclusive note matches well with this view of historical context:

> The fall [of the Northern Kingdom] must have prompted serious soul-searching in the south, encouraging a favorable hearing for their program and leading to Hezekiah's reform…the program was put in writing as Deuteronomy or an early version thereof. Suppressed, or at least hidden, during the reign of the paganizing king Manasseh, the book reemerged and became the program of Josiah's sweeping reform.[93]

According to Tigay, the religious reformations of King Josiah "were clearly inspired by

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[91] For overall discussion, see Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 178–188; Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Serise (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

[92] Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, lxviii–lxix.

[93] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, xxiii–xxiv.

Deuteronomy."[94] Also, Christensen mentions that Wilhelm de Wette (1780–1849 CE) set the specific context for the emergence and formation of Deuteronomy based on interpreting 2 Kings 22: "The book of Deuteronomy was identified with the scroll found in the temple in Jerusalem under the reign of King Josiah."[95] Along with the development of biblical criticism, scholars have argued that the reformations conducted by both Hezekiah and Josiah largely share the major concern of the Deuteronomic Code—centralized worship and religious purity for YHWH only.[96] Therefore, according to these date, this paper claims the most plausible historical context for Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic literature is from the middle eighth century BCE to the late seventh century BCE.[97]

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[94] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, xx.

[95] Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, lxviii.

[96] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, xx–xxiv.

[97] For further scholarly materials about the historical context of the composition of Deuteronomy, this paper suggests the chart which is made by Iksang Lee, "Criticizing Samuel, the Judge and the prophet," Jerusalem: Tel Aviv University, 2013. The information in the chart is based on Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, 18–24.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Benzinger</th><th>Burney</th><th>Stade, Sanda</th><th>Eissfeldt</th><th>Jepsen</th><th>Smend</th><th>Cross</th></tr>
<tr><td>722 BCE
(Fall of NK)</td><td colspan="6">Pre-Deuteronomistic Work (on developing, not fixed book)</td></tr>
<tr><td>622 BCE
(Josiah's Reform)</td><td>R^1
(621–597 BCE)</td><td>R^D
(621–600 BCE)</td><td></td><td>Dt
(621–607 BCE)</td><td></td><td></td><td>Dtr^1</td></tr>
<tr><td>597 BCE
(1st Exile)</td><td rowspan="3">R^2
(Exile–Post Exilic)</td><td></td><td>R-Stade
(597–586 BCE)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>586 BCE
(Fall of SK; 2nd Exile)</td><td></td><td rowspan="2">R-Sanda
(after 587 BCE)</td><td>Dt^2
(after 560 BCE)</td><td>R^1 R^2
(Priestly Compiler)</td><td>DtrG+DtrP DtrN
(after 561 BCE)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>539 BCE
(Fall of Babylon)</td><td>R^{D2}
(Post Exilic)</td><td>R
(Post Exilic)</td><td></td><td></td><td>Dtr^2</td></tr>
</table>

Although scholars have tried to figure out the historical context of the composition of Deuteronomistic literature as much as they can, it is hard to pinpoint the exact literal or historical contexts of the books of Deuteronomistic history. This thesis, carefully granting the theory of "double redaction," centers on the

How can this historical situation be related with the commands of חרם? The historical context of Deuteronomy is based on a crisis of politics and religion, which occurred at a later time than the historical Moses. In other words, when Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history were probably composed—whether the texts of חרם were composed and redacted before the exile or after the exile—there would be no actual Canaanites, Promised Land, or conquest wars. Creach shares his understanding of the historical context of חרם in Deuteronomy: "the story of placing the people of the land under the ban seems to have this reform movement [by kings Hezekiah and Josiah] largely as an emblem of purification, but was not meant to be taken literally."[98] This means the order of חרם was probably *designed* for its contextual usage. It is almost impossible to prove whether the historical חרם was actually executed or not, based on current historical and archaeological data. Rather, the research of the historical context of חרם in the Deuteronomic literature clarifies the intention for the existence of חרם in the text: The historical compilers and redactors imported and applied the idea of חרם (e.g., from the ANE parallels, see § III. A. B.) at the crisis of political suppression and religious impurity (i.e., the threat from neo-Assyrian or neo-Babylonian) to inspire religious virtue. How do readers interpret חרם in Deuteronomy, which was probably composed after the disappearance of the Canaanites? At this point, if considering the historical and political situation at the time of Hezekiah and Josiah and so forth, the idea of חרם is closely connected to the formation of the society in terms of religious purification and ritual reformation, rather than solely physical engagement in actual and political warfare in the Promised Land.

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most probable moment of initial redaction is converged to between 622 and 597 BCE (i.e., the monarchy/pre-exile).

[98] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 98.

4. Summary

According to this terminological, literary, and historical analysis of the *ḥēremic* legal form, readers should recognize it is dangerous to simplify the meaning of חרם in the book of Deuteronomy. If one cannot consider all these processes of exegetical approach and historical reconstruction in detail, it is very easy to miss the literary intention and connotation of חרם in the current form of the text. Therefore, as demonstrated in this chapter, a close reading and examination of חרם can be a significant key for understanding the *ḥērem*ic commands—which seemingly support war and annihilation through the voice of YHWH—in the multiple stratum of contexts. This exegetical and contextual information also can be a strong hermeneutical anchor (i.e., criterion) when this paper deal with critical cases in reception history (See § V.).

As the paper already mentioned in the introductory paragraph, the process of reception of חרם is already revealed within the following narrative. Therefore, the succeeding conquest narrative—e.g., the narrative of Jericho in Joshua 2 and 6, the record of the conquest in Joshua 11:16–23 and Judges 1–2, and several war reports against Amalek in the first Samuel 15—could be considered within the framework of this literary, historical, and contextual analysis of the code of חרם in Deuteronomy 7 and 20. In the reception history of חרם, however, many important cases actively cite the several passages from the conquest narrative without any consideration for the process of exegetical and contextual reading. These cases also have generated another problem—identifying human conquerors with biblical characters who faithfully fulfilled the *ḥērem*ic commandments. Concerning this issue, the paper will briefly engage the conquest

narratives themselves—especially the books of Joshua and Judges—and analyze how the following conquest narrative actually implemented and conducted the *ḥērem*ic legal command and war theory in Deuteronomy.

B. In the Deuteronomistic History: The Conquest Report in Joshua and Judges and the Narrative of Jericho

Here is a common misunderstanding: It seems like the narratives in the Deuteronomistic history depict the characters "sincerely" fulfilling the commandments of חרם during the Israelites' conquering process in the Promised Land. Even plain texts, however, are explicitly showing the ancient Israelites never conducted the *ḥērem*ic law carefully in the process of conquest. Although this nonfulfillment (i.e., disobedience) has been pointed out by many major biblical scholars and commentaries, lay communities have easily centered on only some dynamic scenes of destruction and dramatic victory during the conquest.[99] Therefore, in response to the prevalent assumption about חרם in the conquest narrative, this paper will suggest literary clues that reveal some critical incoherence and evidences that may be more helpful in understanding the function of חרם in the conquest narrative. This chapter, therefore, will (1) handle the inconsistent conquest reports in Joshua 11 and Judges 1–2, (2) analyze the narrative of Jericho and Ai, and (3) suggest archeological reconstruction of the site of Jericho for further discussion.

1. The Incongruent Conquest Report: Joshua 11:16–23 and Judges 1–2

Joshua 11:16–23 reported,

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[99] Especially, see Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 112–116; Brett, *Decolonizing God*; John J. Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); Olson, *EBR* 3:412–417.

> So Joshua took all that land…For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be *utterly destroyed,* and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses… Joshua utterly destroyed them with their towns…So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war
> (Italics added, Josh 11:16–23, NRSV)

This is a very clear report that says the conquest war is finally over, and Joshua and the Israelites have accomplished the command of חרם (v. 20) during the whole process of war. After chapter 11, the literary structure of the book of Joshua introduces the list of conquered kings (Josh 12) and the distribution of the territory (Josh 14–28) among the tribes. The problem is, however, this clear "conclusion" and the well-structured reports of the distribution obviously contradict the first two chapter of the book of Judges, which chronologically follows the book of Joshua:

> After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the Lord, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them…Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you into the land that I had promised to your ancestors. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you. For your part, do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land; tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my command. See what you have done! So now I say, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you."
> (Judges 1:1, 2:1–3, NRSV)

According to the report of the book of Judges, (1) many Canaanites and their cities still remained, (2) the land has never had rest from war, (3) YHWH reproaches the Israelites because they actually violated the law of חרם.[100] Within these inconsistencies, the passage emphasizes the Israelites' violation related to חרם only in covenantal and religious dimensions, rather than in the dimension of political victory and a larger scale

[100] Cf., Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, AB 6A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 63–67.

destruction (Cf., Deut 20:16–17).

2. The Conquest Narrative of Jericho and Ai

Ones of the most dramatic scenes among the conquest narratives are the victories against Jericho and Ai. The command of חרם from Deuteronomy, however, is not fulfilled in this moment of victory: (1) the Israelites saved Rahab and her family, and (2) Joshua took booty—all metallic treasures from Jericho (Josh 6:19–21); and the livestock and spoil of the city from Ai (8:27). Ironically, the Israelites destroyed all the people and livestock at Jericho, whereas they kept livestock and some undefined booty one the contrary. Critically and naturally, the question about the principle of חרם should be revealed.

For this confusion, Creach critically points out, "the ban in Joshua was not actually carried out according to the strict rules laid out in Deuteronomy 7:1–5 and 20:10–20."[101] Given that these conquest narratives come first in the literary structure of the book, and given that these stories are endowing the symbolic value of the fulfillment of the promise and covenant of YHWH, the absence of the principle of חרם at the initial stage is difficult to understand. These literary discrepancies are now supporting the important findings from this paper's analysis of literary and historical context of חרם in Deuteronomy. Furthermore, historical reconstruction, based on the development of archeology in the twentieth century, of the conquest narratives in the land of Canaan deserves notice.

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[101] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 118.

3. Archeological Discoveries from the Site of Jericho.

Reviewing important archaeological discoveries is also essential to understanding the relationship between the *ḥēremic* principles in Deuteronomy and its observance in the following narrative. The archaeological data can make some critical hypotheses about the reliability of the historical authenticity of the text; in other words, this assistance from the development of archeology and scientific analysis can also be beneficial to examining the authenticity of the conquest narrative.[102]

J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes—pioneering historians as well as theologians—systematize the relationship between archaeological data and several important biblical narratives. Their historiography clearly aims for a critical direction, which mainly attempts to discern the historical facts and supporting evidence that the biblical narratives describe. According to Miller and Hayes' research, the conquest war in the Promised Land and the execution of *ḥērem* never happened:

> Archaeological excavations have shown that the end of the Late Bronze Age [(1500–1200 BCE)] was a time of widespread city destructions west of the Jordan. Many scholars have been tempted to attribute these city destructions to the invading Israelites and to see this as confirmation of the historicity of the conquest narratives in the early chapter of Joshua…There are however, three major problems with this use of the archaeological evidence. 1. The Late Bronze Age city destructions in Palestine were part of a general pattern that pertained throughout the ancient world, and it is not clear from the artificial record that these cities were destroyed simultaneously or as the result of a common enemy. Indeed, it cannot be established archaeologically that they were all destroyed by military action. 2. The sites where artificial remains indicate city destructions at the end of the Late Bronze Age, with a few exceptions (Lachish, Hazor), are not the ones that the biblical account associates with the conquest under Joshua. 3. Most of the sites that are identified with cities which the biblical account does associate with the conquest, on the other hand, have produced little or no

[102] Coogan's work can be a good place to start for overall understanding. See Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 178–182, 199–203.

> archaeological indication even of having been occupied during the Late Bronze Age, much less of having been destroyed at the end of the period. Prominent among such "conquest sites" are Arad (present-day Tell Arad), Heshbon (Tell Hisban), Jericho (Tell es-Sultan), Ai (et-Tell) and Gibeon (el-Jib).[103]

More specifically, at Tell es-Sultan, the historical place of Jericho, "excavators have found no evidence of occupation at the ten-acre site during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age, the probable context for the events narrated in the book of Joshua."[104] Given the data, it is almost impossible to match the archaeological data with the biblical narratives and commands of חרם in the Deuteronomistic History to testify to the historical accuracy of the text.

The lack of archaeological evidence of the conquest war implies that, specifically, the *ḥērem* itself was not literally executed. This approach is more critical than a comparison of the literary incoherence between Joshua and Judges or contrast between the narratives of Jericho and Ai. Therefore, the following questions are raised: How can these inner discrepancies and details from historical/archeological reconstruction change the readers' perspective of חרם in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History? Even one of the closest passages (i.e., having the closest relationship in literary composition) exposes the low possibility of strict observance of legalistic חרם; then how can later interpretations or receptions confidently allege the royal road to interpreting חרם?

C. Synthesis: חרם in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature

Now, this paper can give *one* of the answers to this question, "Do the texts of

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[103] Jamse M. Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 55.

[104] Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 207.

ḥērem intend a literal conduct of conquest war in the contemporary situations?" The answer is: "probably not!" It is difficult to say the texts of חרם merely designate a literal implementation of genocide, conquest, and domination in their contemporary contexts. Also, based on the ANE analysis and Niditch's approach, this thesis suggested the function of חרם in literary units and composition is more than the physical aspect of extermination. Rather, as this paper mentioned in the chapters on literary and historical context of the Deuteronomic חרם, one possible interpretation is that if there were no actual חרם in the moment of settlement, it is very plausible that the concept of חרם was composed at a later time during the monarchy to establish religious ideology at the moment of the Neo-Assyrian crisis (See § III. B. 2. and § IV. A. 3.). The heritage of this research, conclusively, warns against a too simplistic reading in the contemporary interpretation.

Through these arguments, first, this paper set the ancient Near Eastern parallels as the conceptual beginning of חרם. Second, this research suggested a broad range of biblical exegesis, terminological analysis, and contextual review. Third, this paper compared the *ḥēremic* code in Deuteronomy with *ḥēremic* narrative in the Deuteronomistic History. This process gave supporting information and a standard for how biblical חרם functions in the Hebrew Bible. All following cases in reception history of חרם in later chapters can be compared with these functions from the literary composition and historical reconstruction of Deuteronomistic חרם. This paper will now deal with חרם in reception history. Through these cases, this thesis will pursue how several key interpreters have approached this problematic text, how the consequences of interpretation have affected the people's religious and cultural contexts, and how this research can suggest constructive insight for further hermeneutical development.

V. חרם, A BEGINNING OF RECEPTION

The preceding chapters presented the essential groundwork for studying the reception history of חרם. As scholarly experts of reception history have mentioned, this preparation step can function as the theoretical and contextual foundation before searching for "what the text can do" in the living history of reception.[105] These data can lead readers and interpreters to more diverse and productive capacities of the text.[106] As this paper suggested up to this point, חרם has a very complex composition with multiple stratum (literary and historically, cf., § IV.). Inevitably, this complexity and multiplicity has vividly interacted with the interpretation of the text and history of reception. The critical agenda, therefore, that this thesis proposes is (1) how these textual and contextual voices from חרם have intersected with various cases in the reception history; and (2) how this intersection can generate a map to rewrite one's understanding about so called problematic texts of terror in the Hebrew Bible.[107]

Therefore, this chapter, which is named "חרם, as a *Beginning* of Reception, will not only actively, but also critically, engage with actual cases in reception history. Literary, historical, and contextual data from the passages of חרם and the conquest narratives will also be employed to critically compare these data in each case. Part of the academic significance of this review is that one can observe what has happened when

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[105] Cf., Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 116–141; England and Lyons, "Explorations is the Reception of the Bible," 3–13.

[106] Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 140.

[107] Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 141.

violent and problematic texts have been received and have caused some actual actions. We can paraphrase Breed's question and ask, "What have the *ḥēremic* texts done?" In the following chapters, therefore, this thesis will introduce three significant cases: (1) Origen's allegorical reception in early Christianity, (2) Cotton Mather's conquest ideology in the colonialization period and Lin Onus' depiction of the indigenous' response to colonialism, and (3) the South Korean Church's war ideology and exclusive usages against the outsiders.

A. Early Christianity: Origen's Allegorical Reception of חרם

Origen (184–253 CE) wrote one of the earliest interpretations of *ḥērem* in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history. In his book, *Homilies on Joshua,* Origen mainly focused on the spiritual aspects and emblematic meanings of the conquest story in Joshua 6–7 as an allegory of "the spiritual battle" of early Christians—forming believers' faith, life, and unity.[108] According to the notes from Creach, Origen "believed that the ultimate goal of biblical interpretation was to unite the believer of Christ…[also] the spiritual aspect [of the text] was the key to the Christian life."[109] Although Origen did not explicitly mention or interpret the term *ḥērem* itself in Deuteronomy in his books of homilies, the thoughts of Origen were deeply saturated with his interpretation of the conquest story conducted by Joshua at the Promised Land.

Origen mentions,

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[108] Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, ed. Barbara J. Bruce and Cynthia White (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 32–35; cf., Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 101–102.

[109] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 102.

> In the time of Moses, it was not said, as it is in Jesus' [i.e., Joshua's, Gk. Ἰησοῦς] time, that "the land rested from wars" (Josh 11:23). It is certain that also this land of ours, in which we have struggles and endure contests, will be able to rest from battles by the strength of the Lord Jesus alone. Within us, indeed are all those breeds of vices that continually and incessantly attack the soul. Within us are the Canaanites; within us are the Perizzites; here are Jebusites.[110]

For Origen, the battles and wars for conquest of the Promised Land have a spiritual stratum of meaning, and these texts designate symbolic battles in the early Christians' religion and faith. Origen explicitly mentioned the Canaanites, Perizzites, and Jebusites (cf., the list in Deut 7:1b) and asked, where they are *now*? Origen's answer was that these tribes, designated as the objects of *ḥēremic* annihilation, and the accompanying conflicts were "within" the spiritual dimension of believers.[111] In this case, rather than directly focusing on the meaning of the literal letters, Origen tries to find the benefits of symbolic and spiritual readings to constructively apply these problematic conquest narratives to the lives of Christians.[112] His allegorical approach and application sets the fundamental setting of spiritual interpretation of the *ḥēremic* code and conquest narrative in reception history.

Also, Origen's reception of חרם and his homily open another possibility for reading the texts of *ḥērem*. As this paper previously explored, the ancient Near Eastern, literary, and historical approaches to the texts of חרם and several other findings can be clearly connected to Origen's emblematic way of reading. In other words, the meaning based on historical-critical analysis and examination of historical and literary context ironically can also support Origen's allegorical reading and spiritual application. This way of symbolic reading and spiritual application is coherent with the texts of *ḥērem* in

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[110] Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 34.

[111] Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 34.

[112] See Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 101–102. Also, this way of interpretation is one of the most remarkable features of Origen's interpretative perspective.

Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:10–20, which were probably composed during the religious reformation of Hezekiah and Josiah. Truly, Origen could not examine the text of *ḥērem* and the conquest story using historical-critical methodology or archeological discoveries as the twenty-first century scholars are conducting. Origen's efforts to extract the spiritual meaning behind the letters well implies his attempts to read the text closely as well as precisely. Therefore, along with the study of terms and context, it is valuable to think about Origen's approach as one of the earliest distinctive cases of reception, which is also similar to several recent scholarly interpretations of the text of *ḥērem*.

B. Reception in the Colonialism Era: Cotton Mather and Lin Onus

Concerning what the *ḥēremic* texts have done in history of reception, one of the most significant, but critical, cases in reception history of חרם is the usage of חרם in colonialism in the nineteenth to twentieth centuries around the world. In the reception history of חרם in the colonialism period, several cases explicitly indicate the reading of *ḥēremic* texts culminated in a form of justification for violence and domination by powerful and wealthy "Christian" states. This "violence" based on the text, paradoxically, is never coherent with the literary and historical analysis of the text itself—as this paper has suggested in the previous sections (§ III and IV). In other words, this overall situation may indicate that the *ḥēremic* laws and narratives have been imported—in a very exclusive sense—to support a specific ideology of some dominant groups in the power dynamic among national, cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. Their actions supported by חרם, not surprisingly, have had an enormous effect on not only the history of biblical interpretation and reception, but also the history of Christianity worldwide.

As this paper critically emphasized in § I (see the quote from Paine's *the Age of Reason*), the Hebrew Bible, especially the texts of חרם and the conquest narratives, has been appropriated as "a text book of colonialism," representatively, in the continents of North America and Australia.[113] In this chapter, the thesis mainly focuses on particular cases of reception in the era of colonialism in these historical contexts: The first case will be the Puritan Preacher Cotton Mather's sermon in the context of the colonial history of Native Americans, and the second, Lin Onus' painting, *And on the Eighth Day,* which describes Australian colonization experience, will support the analysis of the first case.

1. Cotton Mather: Against the Amalek

Cotton Mather (1663–1728 CE), the Puritan Preacher in New England, "promoted the genocide of Native Americans by calling them *Amalek* and calling for vengeance against the Amalek that is now annoying Israel in the Wilderness" (cf., 1 Sam 15, italics mine).[114] Mather interpreted the *ḥēremic* narratives to support his exclusive agenda for conquest war in the early colonialization history of North America. In his sermon, *Soldiers Counselled and Comforted* written in 1689, Mather directly mentions,

> Face them then, and when you do it, imagine you have that voice from Heaven sounding in your Ears; Josh. 1. 9. Have not I commanded thee: [such a Commander have you!] Be strong, and of a good Courage; Be not affraid, neither be thou Dismay'd; for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. At the first Appearance of the Tawny Pagans, then Courage! brave Hearts: Fall on! Fall on Couragiously…And for a close, Let me mind you, that while you Fight, Wee'l pray. Every good man will do it, in secret and in private every day; and publick Supplications also will be always going for you. We will keep in the

[113] Niels Peter Lemche, *The Old Testament Between Theology and History: A Critical Survey* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 314–316.

[114] Roland Herbert Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation* (New York; Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 167–168; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 90. Cf., 1 Sam 15:3: the text of *ḥērem* against the Amalekites. Also see Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 3–4.

> Mount with our Hands lifted up, while you are in the Field with your Lives in your Hands, against the Amalek that is now annoying this Israel in the Wilderness. It was the Watch Word which a Battel once Commenc'd withal Now for the Fruit of Prayer! Now for the Fruit of Prayer. To gather that Fruit will be your Errand into the Thickets of our Scythian Desarts.[115]

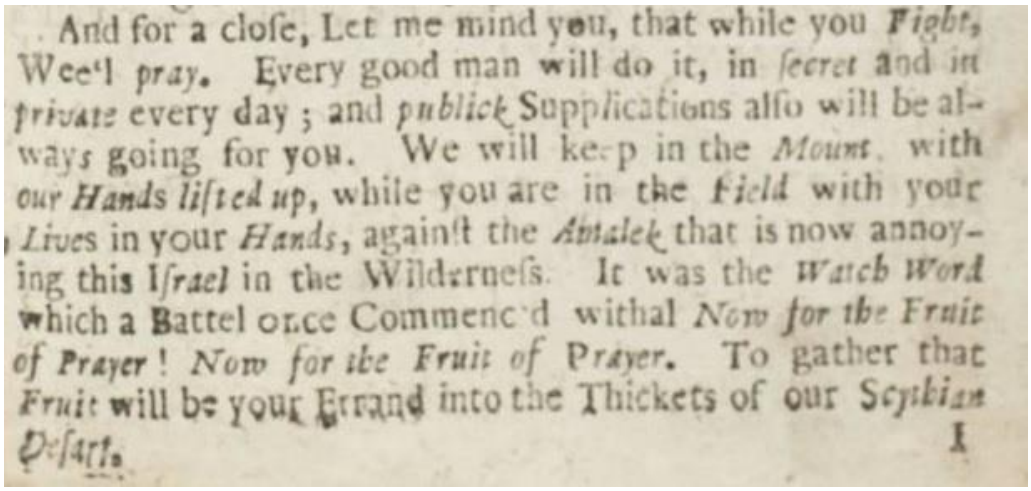
And for a close, Let me mind you, that while you *Fight*, We'l *pray*. Every good man will do it, in *secret* and in *private* every day; and *publick* Supplications also will be always going for you. We will keep in the *Mount*, with *our Hands lifted up*, while you are in the *Field* with your *Lives* in your *Hands*, against the *Amalek* that is now annoying this *Israel* in the Wilderness. It was the *Watch Word* which a Battel once Commenc'd withal *Now for the Fruit of Prayer*! *Now for the Fruit of Prayer*. To gather that *Fruit* will be your Errand into the Thickets of our *Scythian Desarts*.

FIGURE 1. Cotton Mather, *Soldiers Counselled and Comforted,* 37.

Along with several Spanish Christians and the Puritan conquerors (cf., Bainton's examples), Mather is the one who most explicitly cited conquest passages from the books of Exodus (esp. 17:8–13) and Joshua, and justified their "holy" warfare by these sorts of biblical analogies.[116] John J. Collins is also anxious about this "problematic" analogies and interpretations: "The English Puritan revolution was justified repeatedly by biblical analogies drawn from the OT…the Puritans of New England applied the biblical texts about the conquest to their own situation, casting the Native American tribes in the role of the Canaanites and Amalekites."[117]

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[115] Cotton Mather, *Souldiers Counselled and Comforted, A Discourse Delivered unto Some Part of the Forces Engaged in the Just War of New-England Against the Northern and Eastern Indians* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1689), 28; 37.

[116] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 167; Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?*, 19–20.

[117] Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?*, 19–20.

Since Mather's own preaching was written and preserved, his interpretation, analogy, and reception as a form of sermon for the actual soldiers in New England have been regarded as an exemplary source which reveals a very specific perspective—how Christian conquerors viewed and applied the conquest narrative in the era of colonialism.[118] Further, Mather's "reception" of biblical *ḥērem* against the Canaanites and conquest narratives of Moses and the book of Joshua gives a very specific perspective on how Christian conquerors in these contexts applied the passages of conquest and triggered their *actions* toward the other for their specific purpose.

The case is not solely limited to Mather's comments and New England context but broadly appeared worldwide. Designating the Hebrew Bible as "a textbook for colonialism," Niels Peter Lemche identifies the conquering story against the Canaanites—who were inferior paganists—"was part of the ideological baggage of European imperialists and colonizers throughout the nineteenth century…the Bible was the instrument used to suppress the enemy."[119] Similar with Mather, "a Protestant European white elite and its ethics have for centuries dominated North American society…the European colonists found in the Bible legitimation for their acts."[120] Lemche actively claims that the ideological foundation of colonialization and imperialism in the nineteenth to twentieth century was the legal command of conquest from YHWH at Mountain Sinai against inferior paganists in the Promised Land. Revealing coherent thoughts about these instrumental usages of the *ḥēremic* command, Brett also alleges that

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[118] This is the reason why many scholars of biblical war and colonialism always mention Cotton Mather as a representative figure who justified conquest narrative in the Hebrew Bible for the purpose of colonization and domination. See Creach, *Violence in Scripture*; Brett, *Decolonizing God*; Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence*; Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*; Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*.

[119] Lemche, *The Old Testament Between Theology and History*, 314–316.

[120] Lemche, *The Old Testament Between Theology and History*, 316.

the biblical directives of חרם "had a significant impact in modern histories of colonization" against the Australian natives and had abused to support the Western imperialism.[121] Toward the crucial question, "How were these brutal actions conducted in human history?" these scholars have carefully maintained that the passages of violence, discrimination, and conquest in the Hebrew Bible have been appropriated to justify *ḥēremic* violence in the world by Christian conquerors, who identified them as "the new Israel."[122]

As these scholarly voices point out, their way of reception of *ḥērem* was surprisingly aggressive. Sometimes, this justification of violence is compared to the Crusades, but worse still, the reception of Christian conquerors and their "religious" supporters caused a global level of catastrophe in human history.[123] Although we must not generalize too easily the cause of colonialism in the nineteenth century conducted by the Christian European white explorers, no one can deny the fact that several critical processes of conquest and domination were justified and supported by biblical interpretation. Particularly, the reception of חרם promoted their logic (or theory) of domination, which pretended to be Christian mission activity. In the recent era of Postcolonialism, inevitably, most of the ruled and suppressed in the Third World have criticized the suppressors' selective appropriation of the biblical verses and claimed that Western Christianity should be held accountable.[124] In the following paragraphs, this

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[121] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 79–93.

[122] Lemche, *The Old Testament Between Theology and History*, 316; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 97–98.

[123] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 168.

[124] Postcolonial theology is one of the strongest theoretical and pragmatic tides in the history of Christian theology, which reflect this criticism. Cf., Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 178–204; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Pui-lan Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

paper will examine the voice of aboriginal people, who suffered in the context of colonialism. Through the perspective of the indigenous, the painting, *And on the Eighth Day,* well reflects the violent tradition of the reception of חרם by colonialists, and contains sharp criticism against their exclusive appropriation.

2. Lin Onus: *And on the Eighth Day* (1992)

Lin Onus (1948–1996), the Australian aboriginal artist, depicted how the indigenous perspective understood the colonization project by the Western Christian colonists, particularly the United Kingdom:

FIGURE 2. Lin Onus, *And on the Eighth Day* (1992)

Brett cites and explains the relationship between this painting and biblical justification of colonization of Australia:

> In his painting 'And on the Eighth Day,' the Australian Aboriginal artist Lin Onus presents a visual satire on the first chapter of the Bible: English angels arrive bearing sheep, fencing wire, a gun, a Bible, and disinfectant. "On the sixth day," the artist commented, "God created the earth, on the seventh day he rested, and on the eighth day he stuffed it up for Aboriginal people." Lin Onus' commentary is manifestly true of colonial ideology: the land needed to be fence in, subjugated with a gun, civilized with a Bible, and disinfected of unwanted elements…Its prior inhabitants were either killed or denied their rights, and far from bringing disinfectants, the colonists brought diseases that killed Aboriginal people in breathtakingly large numbers.[125]

In relation to the reception history of חרם and the conquest narrative, this painting vividly describes how colonial ideology was connected with biblical appropriation and the pretense of mission activities by the "superior" Westerners. The painting is full of symbols: (1) English angels who were clothes made from the Union Jack—the national flag of the United Kingdom; (2) a lamb and a thorny metallic fence, held together, which ironically implies the image of the mission from the Gospel as well as strict subjugation "through" the mission; (3) a gun which symbolizes a forceful invasion and slaughter; (4) the Bible which was a major agency and basis of the invasion; and (5) a black cloud behind the angels, which identifies the gloomy future of small trees—aboriginal people—through its covering the sun.

Through these images, the painting not only censures biblical justification of the invasion, but also parodies incompatible images between the core spirit of Christianity (e.g., reconciliation and salvation) and the logic of colonialism (e.g., conquest and domination). The title of this art work, *And on the Eighth Day,* as Brett mentions, depicts how so called followers of God devastated God's creation and order so quickly—on the eighth day—and how they spoiled all the worlds that God originally prepared for the

[125] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 7–8.

Aboriginal people.[126] To the indigenous in Australia (also in North/South America and Asia), the Bible and the "Good News" paradoxically came with genocide and suppression. The painting shows how Onus received and satirized the *ḥēremic* texts and consequence of appropriation from a different perspective—responding to the case of Mather and other Spanish conquerors. His critical reception against the appropriation in the era of colonialism explicitly discloses not only how the colonialist received and appropriated the *ḥēremic* texts, but also blames the paradoxical characteristics of Christianity, which were reflected in the eyes of the suppressed.

3. Summary

In this chapter, this paper explored the passages of חרם and the conquest narratives that were used and appropriated to support a specific ideology and purpose. Cotton Mather's sermon is placed as one of the clearest reception cases of חרם, which designated Native Americans in New England as the Amalekites and identified the conquerors as the new Israel who moved against the Promised Land. Mather's reception of the conquest narrative was actually applied to the situation and legitimated the Puritan conquerors' crusading warfare: "The particular violence of the Hebrew Scripture has inspired violence, has served as a model of and model for persecution, subjugation, and extermination for millennia beyond its own reality."[127]

Researching the reception history of חרם, Lin Onus' work, *And on the Eighth Day,* was also examined and compared to the other cases in the colonialism context. First,

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[126] Brett, *Decolonizing God*, 7.
[127] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 4.

this painting is a brilliant work of art, which reflects the perspective of the native people against the Christian conquerors' reception of *ḥērem.* Second, this painting reveals Onus' own reception of the conquest and domination from the civilized Christian states through some ironic images in the painting: e.g., a lamb and thorny fence; a gun and the Bible. Finally, all these perspectives and ironies critique the justification of violence and conquest through biblical appropriation. Through this reception, one can notice the interpretative tendency of חרם and how it actually functioned in the context of colonialism.

C. Korean Church: A Microcosm of the Reception History of חרם

The South Korean Church (i.e., communities of Christian Protestants in South Korea, henceforth referred to as "the Korean Church") has had two dilemmas in relation to the interpretation of חרם.[128] First, literal readings and applying biblical passages of חרם in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:16–18 is more prevalent than careful scholarly and hermeneutic approaches conducted by previous scholarship in the Western context.[129]

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[128] At the beginning, the matter of translation is essential. The standard Korean translation of חרם is "진멸" (殄滅, Jin-Myeol). "Jin-Myeol" in the Korean language only has the meaning of "annihilation" and "kill everyone." First, this translation cannot embrace the meaning of "dedication" or "separation," which the etymological root חרם contains (See § IV. A. 1.). Second, the term "Jin-Myeol" is only used in the context of warfare and battle—especially, applied to living organisms. This conveys a more violent connotation than the English term "destroy." This matter of translation can be one of the causes of the dilemma that the Korean Church has.

[129] There are also two possible reasons for these phenomena. First, while the Korean translation of the Bible was introduced in the late 1800s, the historical and theological works of Western scholarship were translated and presented around the middle of the 1900s, after the Korean War. This gap accelerated the use of the literal or "absolute" reading of the "holy scripture"—the Asian way of reading the sacred book (경전, 經典), closely connected with the Buddhism and Confucianism culture. For a broad and introductory understanding of this atmosphere, see the final chapter of the Korean translation of The Story of the Bible, which was added by the translator. Cf., Larry Stone, *The Story of the Bible: The Fascinating History of its Writing, Translation, and Effect on Civilization*, trans. Hong Byeongryong (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

Second, since the Korean War in 1950 and the Armistice in 1953, the threat of war and destruction has been growing because of the increasing political and military tension between the North and South. Due to this ceaseless and impending threat of warfare for a long time—over 60 years—the reading and interpreting of חרם by the Korean Church reveals a strong proclivity to regard biblical war stories as their own. חרם has been a very good source for the Korean Church to encourage their members and all people who were living under excessive ongoing threats of war, and to generate a cohesive national ideology, which considers the North Korean government and army as dangerous outsiders. Therefore, these two dilemmas—literal understanding in the initial stage of evangelization and direct application to the actual war situation—have caused two representative aspects of reception in the Korean Church community in relation to a literal and simplistic appropriation in a conquest and military context, like Cotton Mather (see § V. B. 1.),[130] or strict social, nationalistic, and religious exclusivism, like Rabbinic Judaism.[131]

With this initial approach to חרם—which is a problematically simplistic reading based on this paper's concern so far—the Korean Church developed a very specific interpretative tradition: finding their *own* voice (social and contextual) from the Hebrew Bible, abreast the development of a historical-critical approach, theological interpretation, and emerging notion of reception history. After finishing their academic degree in the United States and Germany, and returning to their home context, the first and second generations of Korean biblical scholars questioned the existing interpretation of חרם

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[130] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 167–168; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 90. Cf., 1 Sam 15:3: the text of *ḥērem* against the Amalekites. Also see Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 3–4.

[131] Ronen Reichman, "Ban, Banishment (Ḥērem)," *EBR* 3:417–418.

and proposed a broad (or more corrective) way of reading with the translated versions of scholarly books and articles.[132] One of the most significant alternatives was that they tried to distinguish secular warfare in reality, closely related to the North Korean authority, from *ḥēremic* war in the Scripture. These Korean interpreters not only focused on historical-critical analysis and archeological data about חרם and the conquest narratives,[133] but also emphasized literary contexts and the intertextual relationship of *ḥēremic* text in Deuteronomic literature. With this academic scholarship, church pastors also started to deal with multiple dimensions and layers of חרם texts: the ancient Near Eastern relationship with biblical חרם, Deuteronomistic redaction in the era of Hezekiah and Josiah, and several inconsistencies around the commandment of *ḥēremic* war (in Deut 7:1–2 and 20:16–18) in the following conquest narratives (see § IV. B.). Through this developing process of research, the Korean Church gradually acknowledged חרם does not simply connote "annihilation," that the Korean translation of חרם, "진멸" (殄滅, Jin-Myeol), strongly (or solely) contains (see n. 125). With this hermeneutical conversion, allegorical and "spiritual" interpretations emerged and became prevalent, similar to Origen's (§ V. A.).[134] This overall circumstance has drawn one of the most distinctive reception traditions of חרם in the Korean Church. Within a very short period—thirty to forty years in the middle of the twentieth century after the Korean War—the reception history and tradition of חרם in the Korean Church has reflected various cases of reception of חרם: a *microcosm* of the whole reception history of חרם.

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[132] Sa-Moon Kang is the representative of the first and second generation scholars who studied the matter of divine war in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern, and actively applied the result of his research in the context of South Korea. See, Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine war in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1989), especially, 80–84.

[133] For specific details see previous chapters II–VI. Representatively, see Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 71–72.

[134] Cf., Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 32–35; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 102.

This dynamic development of thoughts, sermonic interpretations, and church reception of חרם in the Korean Church not only reveals its earlier interpretative stage, which is largely simplistic, but also implies the latter scholarly, theological, and emblematic concerns. Moreover, the Korean context has developed its distinctive perspective of reception, differentiated from several examples of reception of חרם in history. The most significant issues of this chapter, therefore, are: (1) How distinctive the reception cases in the Korean Church context have been. (2) How the Korean Church has developed their own interpretation of חרם in their specific context—social and political. (3) How their interpretation has been different from and similar to several traditions of reception which were previously observed in this thesis. (4) How their specificity can contribute to reading and understanding the חרם texts in the actual biblical context. For this purpose, the thesis will suggest four examples of reception which have been delivered in the forms of sermons, scholarly journals, and group movements in local faith communities in Korea.[135]

As mentioned in the introductory passage, the reception of חרם in the Korean Church has developed in very specific ways. One of the critical reasons is that the Korean War has never ended, but North and South Korea has been under a ceasefire for the longest time in modern history. In this situation, over nine million Christian believers belong to the Korean Church, and 160,000 pastors and ministers[136] have revealed diverse perspectives and interpretations about חרם and the conquest narratives in recent decades. In this first half of the section, this paper gives two cases of reception,

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[135] All data were translated from the Korean language into English, and English titles, if applicable, were added in the footnotes.

[136] This data is based on "Korean Population and Housing Census in 2010–2015." Cf., www.kosis.kr.

conducted by one Korean church pastor and one seminary scholar, especially the interpretation and connection of חרם with North Korea and the Korean military context.

1. Whal Kim: חרם, Korean War, and North Korea

(A) Argument

Whal Kim (김 활) is a senior pastor of Twelve-Basket Myong-Sung Church, an emerging activist and conservative advocate of the value of the early traditions of the Korean Church. In his sermon script, "The Bible and War," Kim interpreted *ḥēremic* war as an essential political and religious activity for people.[137] About possible war against North Korea in the future, he delivered the interpretative message of חרם by saying, "When the North Korean Army invades South Korea by military force, do we just stay still? No. We must fight against them to defend our country that God is governing and to protect our freedom."[138] For this sermonic interpretation, he mentioned and used Deuteronomy 7:1–2 and 20:10–18. He claimed,

> Although we must seek peace and proclaim peace for the nation first (see Deut 20:10), military force and a systematic war strategy are essential for maintaining this peace. The best way for nations to protect their peacetime and independence is to support and develop the strongest and most defensive military force. The existence of the commandment of חרם implies the preparation for impeding war in our lives.[139]

Kim's interpretation of חרם represents two significant aspects on behalf of the

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[137] Whal Kim, "The Bible and War," *Knowing Christianity and the Bible Right,* 7 September 2015.

[138] Kim, "The Bible and War," 34–42.

[139] Kim, "The Bible and War," 48–55.

initial Korean reception history of חרם. First, Kim admitted the necessity of actual warfare and military force using the texts and conquest narratives of חרם. He argued that because *ḥēremic* activity, and war itself, were essential components in its historical and biblical context, Christians in South Korea should be prepared for any kind of upcoming warfare and military conflicts.[140] Second, using the theme of חרם, Kim explicitly mentioned the supposed enemy, North Korea. Refuting the lesson of Jesus Christ, "But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" (Matt 5:39), Kim argues, "If the nations had sought their peace and security in the way the New Testament encouraged when the Korean War broke out, there would be no democracy, peace, and development in South Korea now."[141] Kim's interpretation argues that Christians should support military warfare and suspect blind "pacifism." For Kim, the strong biblical foundation, which bolsters the necessity of power against our enemy, is the text of חרם. Although he did not mention that South Korea must *conquer* the North before the North Korean Army invades, he thought the South Korean people should wield military force at any moment of crisis as the Hebrew Bible commanded.

(B) Contextual Reflection

Given this paper's argument up to this point, Kim's reception of חרם in Deuteronomic texts is not considered within the aspect of its ancient Near Eastern relationship, the context of the Deuteronomistic literature, and multiple layers of conquest narratives. This way of thinking, however, has been very popular in the Korean

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[140] Kim, "The Bible and War," 55ff. Given broad and detailed research, which is mentioned and proposed in the previous sections in this paper, one should acknowledge that Kim's premise and argument is based on incorrect and insufficient information about the exact context of biblical חרם.

[141] Kim, "The Bible and War," 60ff. Kim reveals his misunderstanding about the New Testament verses.

Church since the early 1970s. After 2006, the first nuclear weapon testing in North Korea, this way of interpretation has generally remained, accusing the North Korean government and their insane nuclear policies. Still, many Christians are exposed to these kinds of sermons every Sunday, and moreover, they are willing to show their agreement with this way of reception of the theme of חרם. This case reflects a very specific situation in South Korea. At some points, it shares similarities with the error of Cotton Mather: using force to conquer the adversary, the Amalekites or the heretics, reading the *ḥēremic* texts literally.[142] The South Korean context, however, is overtly different from the context of colonialism in America or Australia. First, the conflicts are not finished yet; and second, the power balance and tension between the North and the South is very taut. Interpreting חרם, like Kim, in the South Korean context, will not stop at just "justification" of conquest, but will even lead to international combats and nuclear devastation, causing not only agony for the conquered people, but also suffering worldwide.

For this case, the Korean Church must be more responsible in their interpretation of the biblical חרם. If Korean Christians are viewing the North Korean people as the Canaanites who deserve to be conquered in times of conflicts and while preparing for actual warfare based on the חרם text and the conquest narratives, the consequence of this naïve interpretation may be irrevocable. Bearing on this first case, this paper proceeds to the second example of חרם in the Korean war context: viewing the חרם texts and conquest narratives as a source of Korean military tactics.

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[142] See § V. B. 1.

2. Sa-Moon Kang: Tactical Usages of חרם and the Conquest Narratives

(A) Argument

Sa-Moon Kang (강 사문) is a professor emeritus at Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Seoul, a first generation scholar of the Hebrew Bible, and a minister of the Korean Presbyterian Church. Recently, Kang extracted a lesson of tactical usages from the texts of חרם and the conquest narratives. In his article,[143] "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," Kang emphasized Joshua's tactical strategies: siege warfare, ambush, and surprise attack.[144] His thesis is interesting: "Although the assistance of YHWH gives him a victory, Joshua also showed us how to use tactical strategies under adverse geographical conditions."[145] Using the conquest narrative (Josh 6) based on חרם (cf., § IV. B. 1. 2.), Kang's article broadly emphasizes the importance of military tactics to actual leaders of the Korean Army. Kang's interpretation of the book of Joshua as a tactical usage has two specific aspects: First, Kang focused on tactics and methods in war strategies in the conquest narratives, and extracted very pragmatic applications (e.g., siege warfare, ambush, and surprise attack) for actual military leaders to suggest efficient tactical *lessons* that the Bible supports. Second, Kang also connected the biblical war narrative to the actual war situation in the Korean peninsula. His frequent quote, "This method can be efficiently applied in today's war," reveals the clear purpose

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[143] Although "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament" was written in the form of a scholarly article, its contents were researched in order to provide exhortation to Christian military leaders who belong to the Military Evangelical/Theological Association of Korea. This article reveals a very distinctive understanding of חרם text.

[144] Sa-Moon Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," *Mission in Military and Youth* 16 (2017): 126.

[145] Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," 126.

of his article.[146]

Explaining Joshua's tactical strategies, Kang also mentioned the relationship between חרם in Joshua 6:17 and war in today's context in detail. Unlike Kim, Kang's interpretation of חרם included the information about a larger context of biblical literature, the meaning from the religious reformation in the era of Josiah, and its symbolic intention to maintain religious piety.[147] Obviously, his point does not focus on conducting the exact חרם tradition in today's context against a specific enemy, but only to follow the broad war strategies of חרם that Joshua used in the siege warfare at Jericho. In Kang's war perspective, if military commanders in the Korean Army consider and actively import Joshua's tactics from the conquest narrative with sincere religious belief in YHWH, they can establish their leadership on a strong foundation and achieve ultimate victory in *their* war (i.e., the actual war against North Korea).[148]

(B) Contextual Reflection

In the history of reception of חרם, Kang's subject—tactical lessons from the conquest narrative—is a very distinctive topic solely belonging to the South Korean context. Now, this work carefully suggests the reason why a social demand for Kang's interpretation from the Korean Army has emerged. First, since the Armistice between the North and South has been very long, the situation seems like the end of the war, not a ceasefire. Currently, soldiers belonging to the Korean Army are increasing, and the headquarters and government are ceaselessly finding ways to keep tension in the system

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[146] Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," 125, 126, 175, 176.

[147] Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," 144–150. As I mentioned, Kang is one of the pioneers who suggested a historical-critical, archeological, contextual reading of חרם (See n. 35).

[148] Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," 154–155.

and to develop personal ability and commanders' leadership. Second, in this situation, the major religious associations in the army, such as Military Evangelical Association of Korea, requires a series of leadership education programs for Christian soldiers and commanders.[149] Kang's interpretation of חרם and the conquest narratives in his article merged the concept of war in the Christian Bible and the need for a necessary interpretation for those who are working in the army. It generated a very specific and integrated form of reception: tactical usages of *ḥēremic* texts.

Up to this point, this thesis has carefully argued against literal interpretations and simplistic reception of חרם and the conquest narratives. Through listening to the multifaceted voices of reception history of חרם, this work calls attention to the direct approach to חרם without a concern for the ancient Near Eastern parallels, the religious and reforming feature of the Deuteronomistic literature, some differences between the commandments in Deuteronomy 7 and 20, and its application in the following conquest narratives, and also the important archeological discoveries of the 20th century. Both its problematic outward look and further multilayered aspects of the text itself have generated various cases of reception, sometimes, very problematic and questionable, but sometimes inspiring. In the case of Kang, however, although he acknowledged the religious aspect of the *ḥēremic* passages and their context, it is still problematic to directly connect the concept of חרם and the conquest narrative to the Korean ceasefire situation in reality.[150] According to this paper's concerns about the danger of simplistic

[149] For this analysis, this paper compared and adduced the statistical data from "Korean Population and Housing Census in 2010–2015" and the data from Military Evangelical Association of Korea annual examination of percentage of Christian soldiers. From 2011–2015, the percentage of Christian soldiers had increased from 53.9% to 55.7%. Christian chaplain numbers are also the largest.

[150] Also, in the structure of his article, explaining חרם and its contextual meaning is not congruent with the overall tactical application. Kang added his explanation of חרם in the context of analyzing the strategy of siege warfare. In this structure, he did not mention the relationship between the

readings of חרם through a focus on its reception history, interpreters should put some distance between biblical חרם and the actual war situation today. This paper carefully asserts that Kang's approach has potential dangers: applying חרם and its surrounding conquest narratives to conflicts between the North and South. When Kang's article is read and understood by many Christian soldiers in the field army, this practical lesson must connect *ḥēremic* conduct in the conquest of Jericho in Joshua with the actual war situation on the border between the North and South.

Kim and Kang's interpretations of חרם deeply concern the real threats by the North Korean Army and actual military conflict. As this paper mentioned before, this characteristic of reception fundamentally shows an earlier tradition of reading the texts of חרם in Korea—focusing on an actual war situation with a literal approach. These are distinctive approaches in the South Korean context, but also contain many potential problems which might cause the reader to understand the text blindly. This way of reception has been very strong in the history of reception in the Korean church context, however.

3. A Group of Christians: "Circling" Bong-Eun Sa

(A) Interlude

Yet, understanding *ḥēremic* war in terms of the North Korean threats is not the

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initial commandment of חרם in Deuteronomy 7 and 20, and the inconsistent results in the conquest narrative in Joshua and Judges; he also did not introduce various thoughts about the conquest narratives and its historical, literary, and redactional contexts in history of biblical scholarship. See Kang, "The Military Leader and Leadership in the Old Testament," 126–150.

only aspect. Along with the active introduction of biblical scholarship, the Korean Church realized and understood the existence of multiple dimensions of the text of חרם. From the beginning of the twenty-first century, most sermons and homiletic interpretations about חרם have exposed another way of reading: revealing allegorical and typological interpretations, like Origen (§ V. A), and emblematic interpretations—reforming religious piety—for which the Deuteronomic Historian aims (§ IV. A. B.).[151] Therefore confronting "a large-scale massacre of an enemy…[which] causes gnashing of teeth, chills of the spine, and head-scratching bewilderment to many readers of the Bible,"[152] the Korean Church had gradually formed some consensus on the reception of the חרם texts: חרם, as a symbol, denotes a *spiritual* war in the religious lives of believers,[153] What Origen mentioned, "the Canaanites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. Where are they? These tribes and the following conflicts are within us!"[154] has been a foundation of this way of reading in the Korean Church.

This tendency of reading is not only a convenient way of avoiding the cruel images in the Hebrew Bible, but also a good chance for converting problematic texts and concepts to didactic resources for sermons. In the actual field of the Korean Church ministries, however, some of the symbolic understandings of the חרם texts (i.e., חרם as a symbol of spiritual war) has developed into a somewhat excessive or even arbitrary reading and caused practical *actions.* The case of "circling" Bong-Eun Sa[155] in 2010 was

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[151] Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, lxviii–lxix; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, xxiii–xxiv.

[152] Stern, *The Biblical Ḥērem*, ix.

[153] Here are some representative sermon lists: Yeom Huiseon, "Remember the Way of Holy People" (Good Shepherd Methodist Church, 2011); Hwang Gyugwan, "Destroying the Amalekites Again" (Harim Church, 2013); Lee Gwangeun, "The Meaning of Ḥērem war in Canaanites" (The Lord Presbyterian Church, 2012). Their interpretations also reveal the message of inner-spiritual conflicts from חרם.

[154] Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 34.

[155] In the Chinese and Korean languages, "Sa" means a Buddhist temple.

a sensational event, conducted by a group of protestant Christians. All members of Korean society were surprised at the way they understood and received the meaning of חרם and the conquest story of Jericho. This paper gives this example as an extreme reception case of חרם as a symbol of spiritual war. The following chapter will give detailed information about "circling" Bong-Eun Sa, explain how and why this way of reception has arisen, and compare it with previous cases that this thesis has mentioned.

(B) Situation

Bong-Eun Sa is a small Buddhist temple located in downtown Seoul, built in 794 CE. Since Buddhism was the official state religion from the Shilla Dynasty (57 BCE–935 CE) to the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392 CE), old Buddhist temples throughout the Koran peninsula are familiar places for Korean People. Still, Buddhism is the second religion among South Korean people followed by protestant Christianity. The existence of Bong-Eun Sa in the capital refreshes the Buddhist tradition of the old dynasties in history—this is a symbolic place for Korean Buddhism.

On October 25, 2010, ten Christian youths (college students), members of "Worship Leader Ministry,"[156] visited Bong-Eun Sa at midnight. They circled the temple several times, went inside of the temple, worshiped YHWH, and prayed aloud with imposing hands on statues of Buddha in the inner chamber (i.e., Buddhist version of holy of holies). After this ceremony, each member shared their purpose and feelings as a form of interview. All processes were recorded and broadcasted via YouTube.[157] The video

[156] The Worship Leader Ministry is a protestant non-denominational group in South Korea, which belonging to EZ 37 and Young 2080 ministry. The Rev. Jiho Choi has been in charge of this group since 2008.

[157] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGA7qq4ifA0

begins with a short announcement: “This temple is an idol made by humans. Vanity of vanities.” Immediately after, it shows the Leviticus passage, “You shall make for yourselves no idols and erect no carved images or pillars, and you shall not place figured stones in your land, to worship at them; for I am the LORD your God” (Lev 26:1). The first interviewee mentioned, “I was surprised. I did not know there was such a huge Buddhist temple in this important city—Seoul, the capital of South Korea. In the day of God, I believe this idol will be destroyed,” and “Amen” from the whole audience follows.[158] In the video, all members ceaselessly uttered the promised “destruction” and “victory” from God. During the ceremony, members sang the Korean hymn, “When I Walk Step by Step Toward the Land that the Lord Gave Me”:

> When I walk step by step toward the land that the Lord gave me /
> A large number of enemies and fortified cities entangle me /
> But by trusting my Lord / But by relying on my Lord /
> By confidence that Lord gives me, I shall proceed with shouting loudly /
> Oh! Lord! Give me this hill country that Lord promised me that day /
> Now I shall take possession of the land by Lord’s name![159]

The video shows a clear action of “circling” around the whole temple, the statues of Buddha, and the temple pagoda with stretched hands.[160]

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[158] The first interviewee’s session: 0:17–0:41 in this video clip.

[159] “When I Walk Step by Toward the Land that the Lord Gave Me” (Josh 14:12), Song and lyrics by Jinho Hong, 2008. For song and lyrics video, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OT-ubkZlk.

[160] 4:10–14; 5:10–20 in the video clip.

FIGURE 3. “Circling” Bong-Eun Sa, 25 Oct 2010

This event in 2010 was not only surprising, but also revealed how some Christian extremists have exclusively understood the command of חרם in Deuteronomy and the conquest narratives. Almost all of the press and daily newspapers (including the Christian press and newspapers) claimed that these members imitated the circling at Jericho in the book of Joshua. Their hymn, “When I Walk Step by Step Toward the Land that the Lord Gave Me,” also supports the context and biblical foundation of their actions: the action of conquest conducted by Joshua and Caleb (Josh 14:12). Since this is a sensational scandal, this ceremony was named in Korean as “Ttang Bap Gi” (땅밟기, lit. circling and pressing the ground), which reminds one of the Israelites’ circling actions at the conquest of Jericho (Josh 6).

(C) Contextual Reflection

The reason this thesis introduces the "circling" Bong-Eun Sa is this "circling" ceremony conducted by Korean Christians has been considered one of the other ways of reception of חרם in the Korean Church. There are two specific structures in the ceremony revealing the color of חרם: First, according to the interviews of the circling members, the only purpose for their actions was calling for "destruction" of idolatrous building, statues, and places to the image of the divine warrior. Second, the *form*—not just hermeneutical speeches—of their actions was imported from the *ḥēremic* conquest narrative in Joshua 6: the aspect of circling. In his newspaper column, Byong-Ju Song claimed, "Incorrect reading of the command and practices of חרם makes this 'circling' possible," and added, "This is not the fault of each individual member, but the fault of the instructions of the whole Korean Church about the passage, which causes this extreme understanding of biblical חרם."[161]

The "circling" Bong-Eun Sa reveals another distinctive and problematic facet of the reception of חרם. This aspect is different from Kim and Kang's application. The action of "circling" paradoxically shows several stages of reception prevalent in the Korean Church, which is how these Korean recipients were able to understand biblical חרם in this way. First, their actions were primarily based on a popular understanding of חרם as a symbol of spiritual war. Second, according to Origen's interpretation and Jerome Creach's review, this spiritual war indicates believer's inner conflicts, and its purpose is "to unite the believer of Christ…the spiritual aspect was the key to the

[161] See scholar's columns in major Christian Newspapers which were written by Yoonsik Noh and Byongju Song. http://www.newsnjoy.us/news/articleView.html?idxno=2193; http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/243180

Christian life."[162] Their actions, however, ignored what "spiritual war—in believers' inside" means exactly in the reception history of חרם. Third, the members of the "circling" misunderstood the social and religious aspects of what the historical contexts of חרם carefully deliver: Josiah's reformation, using the ANE war concept of חרם to reform and unite the community, reestablishing pious Yahwism as a tool of unification against inner religious corruptions and impending Neo-Assyrian threats. They appropriated "religious impurity" in ancient Israel into today's context without concern for any biblical contexts and interpretative efforts in history; therefore, they easily substituted Baal, Asherah, and High Places for modern religions—Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and so on. Korean biblical scholars and pastors have pointed out the entrenched exclusivism in the Korean Church within this phenomenon. This "circling" is only "revealed" one of wrongdoings.[163] They mentioned that this event was exposed to the public because someone made the video clip and uploaded it to the web. In many hidden places, however, there is the strong possibility that some Christians still unconsciously follow these kinds of shameful ceremonies without any thoughts about what the Bible actually aims.

This form of reception—circling temples, symbols, and statutes of other religions, praying God destroys them—is a very rare pattern of reception outside of Korea. Considering it as another—although it is shocking—way of reception of חרם, this paper focused on how and why the purpose and form of the actions were initiated. This event revealed and integrated all side effects of the symbolic reading of חרם in the Korean context: Christian exclusivism, rooted Korean traditional shamanism, and prevalent

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[162] Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 102.

[163] Also, see the press article, http://christian.nocutnews.co.kr/news/4441083

abhorrence of other religions. Korean Christians now ask about what חרם, actually means biblically, theologically, and contextually. The good news is, after the "circling," biblical and theological research about חרם has exploded to answer these critical questions from the public. The last example on this journey of the reception history of חרם in this paper well represents some endeavors from these revisionists. The Rev. Jung-Min Cho read חרם as calling to remove idolatry in the church structure and system.

4. Jung-Min Cho: חרם as Removing Idolatry within the Church System

(A) Argument

The Rev. Jung-Min Cho is an associate pastor at Onnuri Church in Seoul. On May 8, 2011, Cho delivered his sermon titled, "Distinguish the Object of Battle." The sermon scripture was Deuteronomy 20:10–20. This sermon was presented on the web journal published by Onnuri Church Association. Quoting verses 16b–17a, "You must not let anything that breathes remain alive…You shall annihilate (*haḥărēm taḥărîmēm*) them." Cho interpreted this passage by saying, "We must cut off some unnecessary factors in our lives. How do we receive God's blessing unless we remove those unnecessary elements and situations?"[164] Also, he added:

> It is time for the Onnuri Chruch to change. Although we have strived to achieve a clear vision of ministry and calling—Acts 29—from God for 25 years, there have been some unnecessary and superfluous elements within our ministry and church system—e.g., laziness, mammonism, conflicts, mannerism, and so on. From now

[164] Jung-Min Cho, "Distinguish the Object of Battle," *The Onnuri Weekly,* May 2011. Cho's sermon—video and script—is also uploaded on the official website of Onnuri Church. See http://news.onnuri.org/the-word-and-prayer/cho.

> on, to achieve a new vision from God, Onnuri Church should "give up" and "destroy (חרם)" all of these, and solely focus on God and God's vision."[165]

Cho followed the overall structure of the prevalent symbolic interpretation of חרם regarding spiritual war in believers. While the usual object of spiritual war is considered to be within believers' lives in a largely individual dimension—"the spiritual battles in one's faith and souls"[166]—Cho's "object of battle" points out church ministry compromised with greed and laziness.

(B) Contextual Reflection

One of the most distinctive cultures of the Korean Church is the phenomena of "Megachurch."[167] Onnuri Church, where the Rev. Cho is serving, is also one of the biggest megachurches in South Korea. Each megachurch usually has more than five thousand church members and offers "24/7/365" services, including: official worship, early morning prayer meeting (usually at 5 A.M.), Bible study sessions, volunteer activities in the local area and worldwide, supporting missionaries, and numerous pastoral counseling and pastoral visitations. There has been much research about why a lot of megachurches have developed in South Korea, and the answers are diverse: the collectivistic culture of Korean people, rapid growth of Protestant Christianity and the quantity of the church within a short period, favoritism of Korean people toward systematized and franchised "brand," or geographical aspect; over 30% of people live in

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[165] Cho, "Distinguish the Object of Battle."

[166] Cf., Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 34; Creach, *Violence in Scripture*, 101–102.

[167] A "Megachurch" in South Korea is a protestant church which has more than 1,000 attendees in Sunday services. Over 40 to 50 percent of Korean Christians (about three million laypeople) are attending megachurches. The biggest, Yoido Full Gospel Church, announced they have 780,000 in attendance, including "sub-chapels." These wealthy and powerful megachurches have even established official franchised churches.

one city, Seoul. Cho's interpretation and reception of חרם should be understood in this cultural background. For Cho, the purpose of his comment about removing "unnecessary and superfluous elements within our ministry and church system,"[168] was to call large and systematized churches to a self-examination process. It can also appeal to religious reformation in the Korean Church community. In recent decades, the Korean Church—not only megachurches, but also mid-size churches—has suffered from financial corruption, sexual intemperance, and privatization of church. This corruption of the largest religious community, which is supposed to be separated from secular desires, has generated huge public resentment. Cho's concern reflects this socio-religious aspect in South Korea. Given the reformation of King Hezekiah and Josiah, who solely sought to build and reform the community by understanding and applying חרם to resist both inner religious corruption of idolatry and outer threats from the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Cho's reception in the Korean Church context proclaimed the need for the established and most wealthy religion in the nation to turn back from its inner deviation and corruption.

Cho's interpretation is also a distinctive approach, which can be seen in the Korean Church context. Since the rigid church system and intrinsic corruption have been a deeply entrenched problem in the Korean megachurches during their short history, the interpretation of חרם in this direction has generated sensational reactions in the Korean Church communities. Even, some critical reformism pastors now resist the phenomenon of "megachurch" per se, and the small church movement is growing. In this way of reception, חרם in the Korean Church finally shares some constructive common denominators with the biblical understanding, particularly with the understanding in relation to the possible historical context of Deuteronomistic literature (i.e., around 7th

[168] Cho, "Distinguish the Object of Battle."

century B.C.E.): reforming the community.

5. Summary

In an earlier paragraph, this paper mentioned the reception history of חרם in the Korean Church has formed a microcosm of the whole reception tradition of חרם in the history of biblical scholarship. As this work observed, on one hand, some reception seems very problematic; on the other hand, other cases sound constructive and insightful. Until now, the Korean Church has been going through a difficult time in finding their best way of reading. Everything cannot be successful at the first step. Within their short history, the Korean Church has struggled to narrow the gap between a scanty foundation of theological/biblical scholarship and exponential growth in the number of members in the church. In this situation, almost all seminaries, denominations, and field churches have suffered from a "Theological Lag."[169] Understanding חרם in the Korean context is one of the most obvious subjects that divulge these inconsistencies between theory and practice. Moreover, researching the reception history of חרם can be the best way to observe how these inconsistencies have developed in a very indigenous way. This thesis acknowledged the overall reception phenomena in the Korean Church are largely problematic. All these cases, however, have been gathered and harmonized to establish a more correct way of reading to prevent any more blunders. In this process, recognizing the importance of the reception history in South Korea can support the progression of biblical scholarship. All these cases that this paper suggested in this chapter are very

[169] The term, "Theological Lag," comes from "Cultural Lag." So, "Theological Lag" can mean, the lag caused because church and field pastors' sermons take time to catch up with the research inheritance from the Western scholarship, theological thoughts, and interpretative methodological innovations.

familiar to Korean Christians. They are starting to discuss this topic. With closing the reception history of חרם in the Korean context, this paper dreams of how this "history" can change in the future.

D. Synthesis: חרם, A Beginning of Reception

To the question, "What have the *ḥēremic* texts done in the living history of reception?" three major cases of reception history of חרם now offer distinctive evidence of how these cases reflect historical, textual, and literary context of the text of חרם; how they have engaged with actual receptive situations; and how these practices based on readings have triggered critical consequence. First, Origen's allegorical and spiritual reception of the texts of חרם and conquest narrative is closely related to the dimension of the early Christians' faith and spiritual health. The image of symbolic battle can not only solve the problem of violence from the Old Testament, but also suggests an alternative approach to the *ḥēremic* texts, which can function as consolidating early Christians. This way of reception may share commonality with the actual intention of the historical Deuteronomists in 7th century BCE (§ IV. A. 3.).

Second, in the context of colonialism, the passages of חרם were not only imported and appropriated to bolster imperial ideology and colonization, but also accelerated colonialization itself in the name of YHWH. Several European White Christians justified the conquest war in the land of "Canaanites," and their reception was formed as a kind of religious activity—such as, a sermon, liturgy, or mission activity. Cotton Mather's sermon in New England is one of the examples with which this thesis actively engages. Labeling Native Americans in New England as the Amalekites in the

Promised Land and identifying the invading soldiers as the New Israelites, who were chosen by God, Mather's reception of חרם supported and justified the American colonization. Lin Onus' painting, *And on the Eighth Day,* responds to this rooted violence, which has been justified by the name of God, through the eye of the aboriginal Australians. Onus draws a critical evaluation of the reception tradition of חרם in the imperialism era, and the painting contains the opposite perspective from how the indigenous people also received the texts of חרם and conquest: metaphorically, it depicts the Bible and angels with a gun, fence, and cloud. Through framing a conversation between Cotton Mather and Lin Onus, this paper finds a critical consequence of the reception history of חרם in modern history.

The reception of חרם in Korea, the nation which has remained divided for over 60 years, and which still struggles with fierce conflicts over ideology, reveals very important cases of reception because (1) the history of the nation itself, Korean Christianity, and its church is significantly distinct from any other states and ethnic groups in history, (2) although its history is very short (only about 70 years), the rate of development is incredibly rapid, and (3) the scale—i.e., size and number—of the Korean Church is one of the largest in the world. Because of this particularity, the reception history of חרם in the Korean Church has formed a *microcosm* of the whole reception tradition of חרם in the history of biblical interpretation. Through observing the reception history of חרם in the Korean Church, researchers can grasp not only some problematic appropriations of violent texts from the Hebrew Bible, but also several constructive contributions an the alternative approach for reading and interpreting problematic passages in the Bible.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The thesis, "Reception History of חרם in Deuteronomy 7:1–2 And 20:16–18: Case Studies in Reception History of חרם in Early Christianity, Colonialism Interpretation, and the Korean Church," includes both historical-critical research of ancient Near Eastern and biblical חרם and several important cases in reception history. The question that initially provoked this thesis was, "Do the plain texts of *ḥērem* themselves actually intend literal conduct of war and conquering in their contemporary situations?" Based on this problematic issue, the thesis draws concern on the role of biblical interpreters in the current context, the cases of literal interpretation of חרם and possible alternatives. The ultimate purpose of this thesis, therefore, is (1) reconsidering the text itself and its historical, literary, and cultural context; (2) surveying important cases of interpretation through the method of reception history; (3) evaluating these cases based on the historical-critical and contextual research; and (4) extracting hermeneutical meanings of חרם through overall conversations with these data—while reconsidering simplistic-literal application of the texts of חרם and *ḥēremic* narratives. The significance of this research is not only in observing important cases of reception, but also in seeking a balanced study between reception history and contextual research.

In this concluding chapter, this paper wishes to succinctly analyze the reception cases one more time and suggest some final concerns for further development. Through ancient Near Eastern and historical/literary research of the text of חרם, the plain text and textual background is hard to understand as just a simple and literal command of annihilation from the voice of the deity. Surveying the cases of reception in history,

however, reveal slight deviations from the plain meaning of the text itself, and the effect of this reception has been enormously critical in the colonial and Korean contexts. These cases of reception can sometimes be matched with historical and contextual research of the texts of חרם and the conquest narratives; at the same time, however, the other cases reveal some dangers and problematic justification of violence through the Hebrew Bible. Here is a summary table based on the thesis' research:

Reception Cases (● major, ○ secondary)	ANE	Historical	Literary	Literal
Origen		● (Piety)	● (Spiritual)	
Cotton Mather	○			● (Justification)
Lin Onus		●		● (Challenge)
Whal Kim		○		● (War)
Sa-Moon Kang		○	● (Tactical)	
"Circling"			● (Spiritual)	
Jung-Min Cho		●	● (Church)	

As demonstrated through the flow of the thesis, several cases in the reception history of חרם ironically reveal how the bible has justified violence in history. These cases, along with modern critical research, however, now stimulate how the interpretative and receptive principle should be constructively established and, simultaneously, suggest how some alternative approaches can be developed. To the question, "Does the text of חרם justify violence?" the thesis carefully affirms that the actual justification of war violence in the history of reception and its devastating consequences have clearly existed. The interpretations have literally mirrored and modeled the passages and the theme of conquest to the other/outsiders through religious exclusivism. If one looks at the surface of these cases of reception, the tradition and reception history of חרם would only be destructive and extremely limited in the power dynamic between the superior group and

"pagan" colonies.

This thesis, on the contrary, can shade light on the scholarly conversation between the challenging tendency of interpretation/reception and the current developments in the inheritance of biblical interpretation in depth. So called "alternative" approaches should emerge at least to reconsider why *ḥēremic* texts do exist and what its textual/contextual intention actually aims. For this purpose, observing the deepest level of textual exegesis and reception history altogether is definitely necessary. The thesis claims that the reception history of חרם in the Korean Church effectively discloses this transitional movement of interpretation and reception. Through the microcosm of the reception history of חרם in Korea, one can understand the explicit struggling between *ḥērem* as a source of literal justification of violence and *ḥērem* as a constructive source that should be reconsidered and researched. Although they do not clearly suggest *the* alternative and *the* solution yet, the developing process itself deserves to be noticed.

In conclusion, interpreting חרם means one should consider all the research and the cases of reception on the horizon of biblical studies. Rather than simply saying חרם is problematic, one must utter how and why it is problematic, what aspects of *ḥērem* and its subsequent narratives can be controversial, and how "we," as contemporary interpreters and receivers, suggest our own interpretation and active reception. After this process we also must evaluate how our interpretation of the text of חרם has acted with actual effect on the practical contexts of communities of faith. The model, to which this thesis clings, can be applied not only to the several violent texts in the Hebrew Bible, but also to larger issues of anachronism, authenticity, and the polyphonic nature of the Old Testament. This thesis expects active engagement of interpretative actions and research through the research and methods revealed in this work.

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