**“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying…”: An ideological comparative research study of the prophetic books attributed to the eighth century BCE**

**Abstract**

The proposed research will present a comparative ideological discussion of four biblical prophetic books attributed to the eighth century BCE: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, and Micah. The study will introduce the worldview of the four prophetic books and the main themes that characterized the periods of their compilation, offering a foundation for a new definition of basic concepts in biblical prophecy. The nature of the study and its methodology will encourage biblical scholars and students to reexamine basic assumptions about the Bible in general and prophetic literature in particular. It therefore has the potential to influence both methods of biblical text study and its conclusions.

There are a number of objectives to the research presented here: First, the study is intended to introduce the ideological and theological world of the four prophetic books. Abstract worldviews are expressed by means of the content of the prophetic units, their design and formulation. Analysis of these indicators in central relevant prophetic units in the four books will help to clarify those worldviews. The ideological study of these four books will help us understand the issues that preoccupied Israel during the periods documented in the books. Furthermore, it will shed light on the varied positions prevalent during these periods, and will help us appreciate the fundamental and practical debates that took place among the different thinkers of those periods.

Secondly, the study aims to define the unique intellectual approach that is characterized in each individual prophetic book. These definitions will help clarify distinctions between the books, and will also help to offer an ideal definition of the worldviews expressed in each individual book.

The third purpose of this research is the outcome of the two previous aims: a discussion of fundamental issues relating to prophetic literature, the world of the prophets, and basic questions concerning the establishment and formation of the Bible. Consideration of these fundamental issues will be based on the textual analysis, and thus it differs from the way these issues are dealt with in other studies.

In order to achieve the three goals detailed above, a number of steps will be required: a. Publication of articles dealing with specific units within the four prophetic books. These articles will analyze each unit in depth from a literary point of view and present the major research disputes relating to the unit in a clear manner [see the list of units in Appendix 1]. With this background, I will be able to present my understanding of the basic worldview expressed in each unit on the subject in which it deals;

b. Publication of a book that offers a comparative analysis of the texts. The focus of this book will be an examination of the central themes that appear repeatedly in the four prophetic books. The book will present the positions expressed regarding each specific theme as they appear in each of the prophetic books, making use of the central relevant units. The analysis of the units in the book will be based on the contents of the articles and will therefore not be very detailed. The book will serve as a vehicle for me to present both the differences and the similarities that appear in these prophetic books in relation to the recurring themes. In addition, it will allow me to present similarities and differences in the way each book relates to the different themes;

c. A number of sessions in scientific conferences in Israel and abroad, as will be detailed in the proposal. These sessions, which I will arrange, will present an opportunity to discuss the conclusions of the research on a methodological and practical level, with prominent scholars of biblical prophecy. These sessions will focus on the main themes that appear in the books, the worldviews expressed in them, and the methodological implications of the research for attitudes toward biblical prophecy.

The integration of the different parts of the research will offer a complete and thorough picture of the *weltanschauung* of the period. Each individual step is essential to achieve the best result.

**Research Program**

**Scientific Background**

The biblical corpus contains the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the book of the Twelve, which contains twelve smaller books of prophecy, attributed to the periods between the eighth century BCE and the return to Zion in the sixth century BCE. In the Christian biblical canon, based on the Septuagint, the books of Lamentations and Daniel are also seen as part of the category of prophetic works. Of all these, my proposed research will be based on the four biblical prophetic books attributed to the eighth century BCE: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, and Micah, and will discuss them from an ideological point of view. I will not mention here the full range of studies conducted regarding prophetic literature in general and these books in particular. (Excellent surveys can be found, for example, in Sweeny 2005, 2015, where prevailing research trends are presented). Comparative studies of these four books have been conducted in the past (e.g., Robertson 1968; Uffenheimer 1973; Boogaart 1981; Hunter 1982; Bjorndalen 1986; Stansell 1988; Cha 1996; Sweeney 2010), as have ideological discussions of the prophetic books generally and these four prophetic books, specifically (e.g. Gowan 1998; Kapeirud 1971; Lemche 1992; Glenny 2009; Goldingay 2009; Barton 2010). However, no comparative research study from an ideological point of view has been undertaken on this collection of books.

Biblical prophecy is a poetic text, which provides a moral perspective, by means of a critical analysis of the historical and behavioral characteristics of the prophetic period (for example, Gowan 1998). Biblical prophecies are formulated as a conveying a Divine analysis of these events and circumstances, and they also appear to have been understood this way by those who heard them (Ross 1962; Gilad 2011). In any event, the prophets believed that they were serving God by means of their teachings and they acted as the moral compass of their times. Biblical prophecies are widely understood to contain not only predictions for the future and statements of rebuke, but also as expressing ideologies (Barton 2007). This is true for every biblical text, as I have demonstrated in the past. In I Samuel 15, for example, not only is the story of King Saul presented, but a fundamental discussion of the issue of the ideal monarchy is exemplified (Zimran 2014). Nevertheless, it is especially pronounced in relation to prophecy. When I speak of ‘ideology’, I do not mean a search for concepts in theology in its Christian or Jewish sense, that is, dealing with religious attitudes as expressed in post-biblical writings toward the biblical text (Sommer 2009; Ben Zvi 2012; Sweeney 2016). Nor is it my intention to discuss only the concept of God, which is one of the modern definitions of the term 'theology' (Gowan 1998; Rom-Shiloni 2009). My intention is to discuss various abstract and fundamental concepts that appear in the Bible itself (Schmid 2015). I will focus on the text and expose the different concepts that it expresses.

Various critiques of ideological research on prophetic books have been raised over the years: Some scholars assumed that the prophets had personal interests or represented the interests of the kings in whose court they operated. According to these scholars, it is impossible to discern any ideology behind the words of the prophets. However, this position, as a general approach to prophetic literature, is no longer accepted today (Reimer 2009).

A complete rejection of the ideological discussion emerges from another direction by scholars such as Weiss (1992). These scholars deny the very possibility of understanding the worldviews as they appear in the biblical verses or the possibility of understanding the world of the author and his intentions. According to this approach, the discussion can only be in the text as it appears before us and in its components that form a single unity.

Scholars like Knohl (2007) assume that it is possible to discern worldviews that are reflected in biblical text in general and prophetic units in particular, but we should not assume that one writer or book has a unified world view. The author may have different positions even in relation to the same theme, which are influenced by the circumstances of his life and major historical events that occurred in his time. He demonstrates his approach, for example, regarding the prophecies of Isaiah ben Amoz and Hosea.

Others accept the opposite view. They suggest that the prophecies do represent worldviews, and that not only can one see a coherent position of one writer, but there are ideological similarities between different prophets. Thus, for example, we often find suggested that the later prophets present an identical position regarding the precarious social situation of their generation (e.g. Kaufman 1960, and see also Garbbe 1995).

Another critique comes from a different popular scholarly approach, which argues that the distinction between different textual layers in a given prophetic book, which are attributed to different periods of composition, prevents scholars from grasping the worldview of a single prophet. These assumptions sometimes even undermine the possibility of seeking a coherent world view of a biblical book (e.g. Goldstein 2005; Barton 2010).

The proposed research is committed to dealing with these approaches that deny the possibility of conducting ideological research. This will be done by means of a textual and ideological discussion, involving the various units in the articles and book which are included in the research .

In my research, I will focus on the four biblical prophetic books attributed to the eighth century BCE. I chose this group for two reasons: First, the fact that the books are attributed to contemporaneous prophets provides fertile ground for ideological discussion and illuminates some of the fundamental issues of the research topic: The parallel prophetic activity offers unique insight into questions about the relationship between God and His prophets, the influence of the prophets on the content of the books, the relationship between the prophecies that were spoken and those committed to writing, the degree of influence of the prophets on their counterparts, and the extent of the circulation of the prophecies (further questions will be raised and discussed in section on Research Objectives & Expected Significance).

Secondly, we have much information on the eighth century BCE, both from other biblical books and from archaeological findings (e.g. Faust 2011). This information helps us understand the contents of the books and topics discussed by the prophets. They also raise questions regarding the reliability of the words of the prophets and, again, the relationship between what was spoken and what was written in the prophetic books. The subject of the study can serve as an example for possible future studies that may be conducted on other collections of books that will be influenced by the conclusions of the present research and the general and particular clarification that it will offer.

**Research Objectives & Expected Significance**

My research will deal with the prophetic books that are traditionally attributed to the eighth century BCE: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, and Micah. The primary purpose of the study is to define the various worldviews reflected in the books as they relate to the recurring themes in the four books, for example: idolatry, the flesh-and-blood king vs. the kingdom of God, social reproach, the universality of the God of Israel, and the relations between Israel and the Gentiles. This will lead to a deep familiarity with the books, but one whose understanding will be grounded in the study of repeated themes rather than a full chapter-by-chapter analysis of them.

The four biblical books that constitute the subject of the study belong to the biblical category of prophetic literature. As mentioned above, they are all associated with one historical period, the eighth century BCE. Amos and Hosea were active in the northern kingdom of Israel; Micah and Isaiah ben Amoz were active in the southern kingdom of Judea. This reality creates literary similarities and content between the books. The recurring themes found among the books attest to these similarities. We even find repetitive language such as the use of the image of the lion in the units of Hosea 5:14, Micah 7(8) and Isaiah 31:4 that support this. This similarity gives rise to two other goals of this research, which are mutually supportive. First, the emphasis on the differences between the worldviews expressed in the four books. The differences between the books will be discussed according to the attitude of each of the books to recurring themes such as those mentioned above. I expect to see differences in the attitudes of the different books, such as the difference I already hinted at in my article (Zimran 2017) between the perception of God and His involvement in military actions in Hosea and what can be deduced from the chapters in Isaiah, based on the discussion of the lion image in specific units in these books.

Second, defining a consistent conceptual position in each, individual, one of these prophetic books that corresponds to the attitude of that book to the various themes. What is the basic worldview of the book [if there is one], based upon which all the different themes in the book are considered? I am looking for a concept that unites the book's approach to the various themes. For example, in the Book of Isaiah, I expect that the description/conception of God as the God of Justice and the separation between God and man would be central concepts that dictate an attitude towards the different themes. This is the basis for Isaiah’s special treatment of idolatry, as well as for his position on the Divine King. On the other hand, in the Book of Micah, the emphasis on the importance of human action will constitute a fundamental concept that informs the various perspectives found in the book, beginning with the attitude towards God, continuing with political issues, and concluding with the view on idolatry. Even if I do not succeed in uncovering such a systematic conception, it will open the way to discussion of fundamental questions of prophetic literature relating to the world of the prophets and to the questions of the writing and editing of the books, as I discuss in further detail below.

**The importance of the study:** The importance of the study is not based solely on the material that constitutes the object of the research, but also on its trends – both the comparative ideological discussion and the fundamental issues raised in the course of the above discussion.

By means of this research, I will be able to present the worldviews that emerge from these four books of prophecy – each one individually and in comparison to one-another. In addition, I will be able to present the variety of positions towards the central and repetitive themes of concern in the biblical period. The study will demonstrate the assertion that there is no single, definitive opinion in the Bible on issues that are considered basic, rather the biblical corpus reflects different – and even contradictory – views on these issues. For example, it is possible to mention that even in the question of monotheistic faith, namely, whether the God of Israel is the only God or one God among many, these four books of prophecy are not in agreement (Gnuse; 1997; McDonald 2003; Clements 2007).

In the formulation of the variety of different positions that I have taken earlier, there is another importance of this study – the diversity of positions is not only expressed in the interaction between the books, but is also documented in each one of the books themselves. Sometimes it is possible to learn from a prophecy about the worldview that the prophet opposed; sometimes the prophet directly quotes his opponents as background to his own teaching; sometimes the opponents of the prophet – in his own generation or in subsequent generations – appear explicitly in the text. There are cases in which one prophetic book offers different opinions regarding the same question. Did the prophet change his position in response to events that took place in that generation? Is it a later insertion? Might it be the position of the prophet’s opponents?

A good example of these issues and questions is found in Micah 4:1-5. While verses 1-4 describe the Divine vision of a future time when the Gentiles will come on a pilgrimage to the Temple Mount, verse 5 presents a reality in which every nation worships its own god. I will not go into the extensive scholarly discussion of these verses and the relationship between them; I will only mention a number of opinions that are relevant to our case. Some assume both the body of prophecy and verse 5 were said by the prophet, with verse 5 responding to the previous prophecy, so that the unit as a whole teaches us about the prophet's mood and worldviews (Vargon 1994). Others assume that verses 1-4 are the words of Isaiah ben Amoz, and that Micah said verse 5, so the entire unit describes an ideological clash between different prophets (Uffenheimer 1967; Brin 2006). Let us not forget that both of them are seen as messengers of God, which intensifies the essence of their dispute. Some assume that the prophet Micah said verses 1-4 and it was his opponents – his contemporaries – who said verse 5 (Wessels 1999; Wagenaar 2001 responded). Finally, we will mention those who suggest that the prophet Micah said verses 1-4 and that verse 5 is the statement of members of a God-worshipping congregation that lived many years after Micah who use verse 5 to describe their attitude to the words of his prophecy (Mays 1976). Each of these approaches expresses a different approach to the biblical unit and the method of its editing, with each one extracting different ideological positions from the verses and offering alternative identifications of the speaker. From this example, the challenging nature of the type of study that I aim to undertake is illustrated, and I will elaborate on this below. Another example, about which I will not elaborate, may be found in Isaiah 31:4-5. The question of the relationship between the verses, the origin of each of them, how reading each of them affects the other, and what perception or concepts emerge from the unit, are well illustrated there (e.g. Sommer 2008).

From the fact that subjects such as opposition to idolatry, dealing with political and military questions or the relations between the God of Israel and the Gentiles, appear repeatedly in these four books of prophecy, we can conclude that these subjects apparently were matters of concern to different strata of the population of the two kingdoms in the period during which the books were written. In other words, dealing with ideological issues exposes another aspect of Jewish spiritual and social life in biblical times and expands on what we know from the historiographical books of the Bible. If I succeed in identifying units from different periods in the prophetic books that relate to these recurring themes, then I can conclude that these topics were matters of concern during different historical periods and I can examine whether change took place over the course of time regarding the central themes.

The study of the worldviews contained in these prophetic books is based on a number of basic assumptions that I will present below, but also can help clarify preliminary assumptions regarding biblical prophetic books. The fact that these are four prophetic books attributed to the same period broadens the circle of questions raised by the discussion and enables the discovery of other basic concepts relating to prophetic literature. For example, the discussion raises the question of how the books present the relationship between God and His prophets and the role that each of them plays in formulating the prophecies. What is the meaning of the parallel existence of four prophets at a given time? If we discover that the four books are more similar than they are different, we will need to ask why it was necessary to establish four prophets in the same generation. If, however, the differences outweigh the similarities, then we will need to search for the source of the differences and attempt to understand what this teaches about the relationship between the prophet and God and explain the prophet's place in the design and content of the prophecies. What was the relationship between the four prophets and what did they know about each other? How successful was each of the prophets in publicizing his words and how did this affect the formulation of prophecies and the relations between the prophets? What is the relationship between the words of the prophets whose teaching were spoken orally and the way that they have been preserved to our day? What factors influenced the formulation of the prophecies? How did the people perceive the prophets and their words? Do all the prophets reflect the same stage of the development of thought and if not, what does it mean? These are only some of the questions that must be raised.

Even if all the questions do not receive unequivocal answers, raising the questions and trying to answer them will help clarify the period and the literary and historical phenomenon of prophecy in ancient Israel. These questions, which emerge as ancillary to the central theme of the study, also indicate the importance of the subject and its impact on general biblical research and basic questions related to its study. These issues have been discussed in the past as independent questions, but in this study they will be based on the textual and ideological discussion and will therefore appear in a different light. There is a tremendous advantage to discussing fundamental questions in the context of a substantive discussion of text, as it is more substantiated and comprehensible.

**Challenges:**

Biblical scholarship attributes different writing and editing periods to the different units making up the prophetic books. When I use the phrase, "books attributed to the eighth century BCE," I am acknowledging the main challenge regarding the proposed research: In light of the accepted attitude in modern Bible scholarship toward these prophetic books, it is difficult to accept what I have called the "worldview of the prophet," because there is no agreement regarding what was stated by the prophet in the eighth century BCE and what was added to the text during a later period. Before discussing each unit, it will be necessary to discuss its time and original composition, and thus not only does the discussion become longer, but it encounters significant difficulties. Can I define a coherent world view in any of the books? Can I avoid methodological misuse of worldviews that I uncover?

This obstacle, however, can also serve as the basis to further broaden the results of the study. The findings regarding the central theme of the study will allow me to examine other questions related to the field of the editing of the prophetic books, which makes up part of the basic concepts of the prophecy literature. For example, this may allow me to determine a position regarding the composition of the books and the extent to which they were edited. It opens the discussion of whether it is indeed possible to construct a coherent line of thought within each one of the prophetic books or whether it is possible to recognize similarities between prophetic books that indicate when they were written or if they had a common editor. Is there significance to the fact that units from different historical periods appear in one book? Is there a difference between the worldview of the prophet and the worldview of the book bearing his name? Based on the worldview that arises from the units of a given book, is it possible to determine who wrote them and when? Can such a question be answered while avoiding the concern of a “circular argument”? Some of these questions impact on the most basic assumptions of my research, as I will present below, so that my research may undermine those basic assumptions. For this reason I recognize that changes in my positions may be required.

In order to minimize the challenge that I presented above, in my research I will usually use the formulation “the worldview of the book” rather than “the worldview of the prophet.” In addition, in the course of the study itself I will discuss the editing and composition of the book, but I will usually refer to the current state of the book without devoting much attention to its diachronic development. In addition, at the beginning of the discussion I will not attempt to determine which of the verses belongs to the eighth century BCE prophet and what is the result of the later editing, rather I will leave such determinations to the concluding stages of the study.

**Detailed Description of the Proposed Research**

1. **Working Hypothesis**

The prophets to whom the books of prophecy are attributed are presented in the Bible as the messengers of God. Their words are understood as the words of the Lord placed in their mouths, as reflected, *inter alia,* in the repetitive expression: “Thus saith the Lord…” (Crips 1969). Even if this claim is not entirely rejected, it is clear that the prophet plays a role in formulating the prophecies. In my research I do not intend to negate the prophet's prophetic abilities, as it is my intention to examine the manner in which the prophets perceived themselves and were perceived by their listeners. Nevertheless, my working assumption is that the formulation of the words of prophecy and the manner in which they are presented to the listeners and readers are influenced by human beings (Greenberg 2012).

Prophetic statements are influenced by the prophet's abilities, his power of articulation, and the circumstances of his life (although these are not stated explicitly, nor are they fully apparent in the prophetic books). Given that the role of the prophet was to convey his abstract messages to the people, it is possible to see both rhetorical and didactic considerations as decisive elements in the way the prophecies were presented (Mӧller 2003). In addition to these – and perhaps no less important than them – the design of prophetic teachings is influenced by the principles that the prophet wishes to convey. In other words, although the prophet is perceived as conveying a concrete message regarding the present and future of the object of prophecy – be it the people or its leaders – more than anything, his words reflect abstract principles. In the later prophets, foretelling the future constitutes a negligible element in their prophecies and their main responsibility was to convey certain principles by means of their teachings. In Isaiah 2:2-5, for example, the prophet describes a vision of the end of days in which all the nations will ascend to the God of Israel on the Temple Mount. The prophet is not necessarily predicting a concrete future event, but rather is expressing the ideal manner in which the relationship between God of Israel and all of the nations of the world – among them the nation of Israel – is realized. The prophet expresses his principles by describing concrete occurrences. For this reason, discussion of prophetic units may reveal the worldviews of the authors of those teachings. Generally speaking, biblical texts do not present abstract worldviews in a forthright manner but they can be uncovered by means of study of the written text.

As a result of these assumptions, I expect to find fundamental differences between prophetic units that appear in various prophetic books, even though they are perceived in the Bible as the result of connections between a single God and several different prophets (Uffenheimer 1972; Rum-Shiloni 2006; Sweeney 2016A, 2016B). The differences between the prophetic books stand out most clearly when there are references in several different books to the same theme. I expect, for example, that the way idolatry is perceived in the Book of Isaiah (2:6-8, 9-22) will be different than the way it is perceived in the Book of Micah (1:7, 5:9-14).

Essential differences can be defined as a recurring feature of a book. I expect to find a conceptual connection between the attitudes recorded in a single book on different subjects, and to discern a coherent worldview in a single book. I will need to be very careful in defining the approach. On the one hand, it will need to be broad enough to be based upon as many units as possible; on the other hand, it will have to be accurate and reliable and unbiased so that it does not attempt to adapt the text to the theory. Are these worldviews of an historical prophet? Is the worldview the result of the way the book was formed in its editing stages? Or, perhaps, throughout the various stages, the editors chose to add units to the original core of the book, on the basis of similar worldviews (e.g. Cook 2004). I do not presume to know what part is that of the prophet and what part the editors inserted. As noted above, it is possible that after researching the biblical text, I will be able to formulate a firm position on this question.

**b. Research Design &Methods**

My research plan is made up of several stages, as follows:

1. Articles dealing with specific units, such as the attitude expressed in the Book of Micah to the political and military situation expressed in the units 4:9-10, 11-13, 5:4-5, 6-8, or the definition of the universal concept of God as it appears in Amos 1:3-2:16, 3:1-2, 9:7-10. In these articles I will discuss the analysis of key units in each of the books. This detailed analysis will enable me to present an overarching review of the scholarly disputes regarding these units. These include disputes relating to the questions of determining the boundaries of the unit, clarifying the language of the unit, dating of the unit's verses, defining the prophetic position expressed in the unit, and more. After presenting various research positions and discussing them, I will be able to present my position and provide proofs for it.

2. A book that will present the main themes in the various prophetic books from a comparative perspective. The book will present the relevant units for each of the themes, which will form the core of the book. The units will be presented in a comparative manner, which will help clarify the meaning of the units and the concepts that arise from them on the one hand, and emphasize the similarities and differences between them on the other. In the book I do not intend to present all of the scholarly disputes, but rather to emphasize my conclusions regarding each of the units, with a brief reference to the research background. The book will refer to the detailed articles dealing with these disputes. This approach will help clarify the fundamental positions of each of the prophetic books and clarify the differences between them. Based on this, in the concluding chapters of the book I will present a characterization of each of the books, tying together all of the various issues found in the books.

The articles, as well as the book, will require me to master common research languages, including English, German and French. Questions regarding the text will require a knowledge of Greek. Akkadian will be necessary for issues that involve ancient Near Eastern texts from the area in which the Bible developed, a reality that is indicative of the wide distribution of the biblical themes. This type of study will require a variety of research methods available to the researcher of biblical prophecy, including: a philological discussion in the wording of the verses (Joosten 1997; Waltke 2007); literary analysis that focuses on the forming of the prophecies, their structure, the literary means employed in them, dealing with the framework in which the text is placed and its poetic qualities (Exum 1981; Petrotta 1991; Weiss 1992; Shaw 1993; Seifert 1996; Morris 1996; Eidevall 1996; Hong 2006); a theological discussion in the contents of the units (see references above in Scientific Background); dealing with questions of dating and text layers (Yee 1987; Barr 2000; Wagenaar 2001; Jacobs 2001; Barton 2007; Hadjiev 2009); dealing with the historical background of the prophecies (Houston 2004, 2010; Faust 2011; Vargon 2015). The balance between the various research methods will be done in accordance with the needs of the discussions. However, the omission of any one of the methods will undermine the credibility and accuracy of the discussion of the units and will hinder its integrity.

3. I intend to teach a Masters Degree course in the Bible Department at Bar-Ilan University presenting the comparative analysis. The course will familiarize students with the main points of the worldview expressed in the various prophetic books, teach them to pay attention to the differences between them, to attain the ability to analyze prophetic units, and to discuss fundamental issues in prophetic literature.

4. For the past three years I have chaired the “Prophets and Prophecy” session at the EABS conference. In the coming two years (Summer 2018 and Summer 2019), I intend to hold sessions focusing on comparative theological discussions of the prophetic books of the eighth century BCE. The 2018 sessions are designated for lectures that discuss ideological and theological comparison between the books Micah and Isaiah. The 2019 sessions will focus on comparisons between Amos and Hosea.

Following these sessions, I intend to work on publishing the relevant articles from the conferences in a collection that will present the ideological focus in these books from the research perspectives of various scholars.

5. I intend to organize a workshop based on my research method that will be held at Bar Ilan University, where it will be presented to both researchers and students. This will be an opportunity to share my findings, but more importantly it will expose the public to the research method and its advantages. The workshop will include two sessions. In the first, four different scholars will present the positions of the four books in relation to a single theme, which will illustrate the possibility of distinguishing different positions in relation to one theme. In the second, four researchers will present the way they understand the worldview of the prophet as reflected in a single unit. On the one hand, this will demonstrate the possibility of revealing a worldview through a prophetic unit; on the other hand, this will illustrate the challenge of ideological analysis of a prophetic book in general and in the Bible in particular.

**c. Preliminary Results**

To date, I have published two articles that present early research findings and also indicate the research goals and methods. The first article, “Isaiah b. Amoz’s Attitude towards the Faith of the Gentile Nations”, *SJOT* 30 (2016), pp. 69-90, deals with the definition of the relationship between the God of Israel and the Gentiles as they appear in the unit in Isaiah 2:2-5. The article presents different scholarly opinions on this issue and sets out my position and its methodological basis. My perspective is that the point of view from which the question is examined impacts on its conclusions, and therefore it is difficult to unequivocally determine the position that emerges from the unit. However, reading the unit in the context of Chapter 2 – and, perhaps, in all the chapters attributed to Isaiah ben Amoz – leads to the conclusion that according to Isaiah ben Amoz’s conception of idolatry, the Gentiles will abandon their pagan worship and will worship the God of Israel alone. This article is an adaptation and expansion of a lecture I gave at the 2004 EAJS conference in Paris, entitled “How Isaiah ben Amoz Relates to the Belief of the Gentiles.”

The second article, “The Notion of God Reflected in the Lion Imagery of the Book of Hosea” (forthcoming in VT), deals with a single issue in the Book of Hosea and illustrates it in several units (5:12-15, 11:10-11, 13:4-8). By means of a systematic discussion of the units, the positions of various scholars in relation to them, and by comparison to extra-biblical sources, the article sets out the political position that emerges from the units. According to my conclusion in this article, the units indicate a demand from humans to be passive with regard to political and military issues. The foundation of this requirement is equally important, and it is the attitude toward the God of Israel. According to these units – as I analyze them in the article – God is perceived as the God of Israel alone and has no influence on the surrounding peoples. For this reason, He is the cause of Israel's distress and He is the cause of its resolution. This article presents both the position of the book on the political issue and the attitude towards the universality of the God of Israel, which are two main topics that are systematically discussed in the various books.

In the summer of 2017 I participated in two conferences. The first was the 17th World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, where I gave a lecture entitled “Why will Jerusalem be destroyed? Micah 3: 9-12,” and the second was the EABS/SBL International Meeting in Berlin where I presented “Social Injustice in the Book of Micah.” I collected the materials from the lectures and expanded on them in the article “’What Does the Lord Require of You?’: The Attitude towards Zion and the Social Situation in the Book of Micah,” which is likely to be included in a collection of articles published by SBL, edited by Prof. M. Avioz and Prof. M.A. Sweeney. The lectures and the article discuss Micah 2:9-12 and present the prophet's attitude to social rebuke in particular and to the relations between man and God in general, reflecting the worldview that emerges from this unit. The discussion presents the importance attributed by the prophet to human action and offers a demonstration of this concept in other units in the Book of Micah.

In the summer of 2015 I lectured on “Structure, Rhetoric, and Meaning in the Vineyard Parable (Isa 5:1-7)” in the EABS conference in Cordoba, and again in Hebrew, as part of the annual Bar-Ilan University conference. The lecture demonstrated the prophet's attitude toward social rebuke and the way in which this unit exemplifies the prophet’s conception of God. I intend to develop that lecture into an article for publication. The results of the two studies mentioned above are good examples of comparing studies that deal with different book units but revolve around a common theme, and the way in which they can illustrate different fundamental concepts.

In the course that I taught at Bar-Ilan University in 2015, I presented the beginnings of my research about comparative discussion of the eighth-century prophets. Although these were undergraduate students and my research was still in its preliminary stages, the students' reactions and the discussion with them were fruitful and encouraged further study and clarification of the definitions that were raised.