NEIL J. MORRISON

Retribution in Chronicles

Forschungen
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Mohr Siebeck

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Neil J. Morrison

Retribution in Chronicles

Ideology and Reality

Mohr Siebeck

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For mum, dad and Louise

Preface

This book is a revised version of my doctoral thesis which was originally submitted to Queen's University, Belfast in 2018.

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to many people for making it possible for me to write and publish this thesis. In the first instance, I offer sincere thanks to the board of Belfast Bible College, now Belfast School of Theology, for granting me a scholarship, without which I could not have contemplated doctoral research. I am most grateful to the staff of the College who encouraged me to pursue post-graduate study. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to my PhD supervisor, Dr Charlie Hadjiev, who guided me through the process with unerring charm and good nature. His scholarly acumen and careful scrutiny of my papers undoubtedly harnessed the best in my research.

I would also like to thank my viva voca examiners Professor Emeritus H.G.M. Williamson and Dr William Ford for their detailed feedback and helpful suggestions for improvement.

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I am immensely grateful to Prof. David Shepherd for encouraging me to press on with the publication of my manuscript at a time when the routine pressures of academic work and family life seemed all-consuming.

In equal measure, I would like to thank the editors of *FAT II* for accepting my manuscript into this series. Tobias Weiss and the publishing team at Mohr Siebeck were most patient and supportive as I got to grips with the intricacies of running headers, tab stops and hanging indents.

Above all, I am indebted to my family, especially my children, Grace, Tobin and Judah, who remained unstinting in their support and encouragement despite all the time daddy spent holed up in his study. Ultimately, however, I am most indebted to the innumerable sacrifices of my mum, dad and wife, Louise, and it is to them that I dedicate this work with sincere gratitude.

As the Latin motto on the Belfast City coat of arms asks (drawing on Psalm 116:12; Vg. 115:12): Pro tanto quid retribuamus: "What shall we give back in return for so much?"

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List of Abbreviations

BDB	Brown, Francis, Samuel R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002.
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ESV	English Standard Version
HALOT	Köehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner and Johann J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
LXX	Septuagint
LXX^{L}	Lucianic Recension of the LXX
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Syr	Syriac
Tg	Targum
Vg	Vulgate

Chapter 1

A Survey of Scholarly Approaches to Retribution

I. Introduction

Within the study of Chronicles, the term retribution, which derives from the Latin verb *retribuo* (to give back), has been adopted by biblical scholars to delineate the way in which God responds to human behaviour with either blessing or punishment. It has long been recognized that in Chronicles there is a particular concern to establish a close correspondence between human actions and divinely-determined outcomes. This observation has given rise to various theories regarding the Chronicler's 'dogma' or 'theology' of retribution. Nevertheless, despite widespread recognition that this theme represents one of the most distinctive features of the Chronicler's work, scholarly consensus on the historical provenance and the didactic purpose of this theme has proven elusive.[1] The particular contribution of the present study is to draw attention to the range of texts where the Chronicler's scheme of retribution is not followed through and to explain how divergent aspects of the text can exist side-by-side. This initial chapter will review and evaluate the most influential theories about the nature of retribution in Chronicles from the late nineteenth century until the present day. This survey will help to frame the study by highlighting the disparate nature of many of these theories and the considerable ambiguity regarding retribution which continues to exist within contemporary scholarship.

II. Retribution as a Means of Reinforcing the Mosaic Law

During the nineteenth century considerable scholarly attention was devoted to ascertaining how the configuration of the law in Chronicles could be used to shed light on the historical development of the Pentateuch.[2] The view which

[1] In keeping with scholarly convention, the epithet 'the Chronicler' is used throughout to refer to the author of Chronicles along with male pronouns. The use of these terms is not intended to imply that the book is the work of a single individual or represents exclusively male voices.

[2] For a helpful survey of the various theories which were being postulated during this period see M. Patrick Graham, *The Utilization of 1 and 2 Chronicles in the Reconstruction*

came to predominate, that the Priestly Code was the final source to be added to the Pentateuch during the post-exilic period, had significant implications for the interpretation of Chronicles. This approach found its fullest expression in the work of Julius Wellhausen who argued that whereas Israel's earlier historical traditions used the legislation in Deuteronomy as their standard for religious practice, Chronicles utilized the completed version of the Torah which included the Priestly Code.[3] Wellhausen proposed that Chronicles sought to bring Judah's history into conformity with the Priestly legislation which had become authoritative during the Persian period and which undergirded the religious practices of post-exilic Judaism. For example, Wellhausen notes that the reason offered for Uzzah's demise in Chronicles is that the Levites did not carry the ark as the law prescribed (1 Chr 15:2, 14–15 cf. Num 4:15). Similarly, in the account of the successful transfer of the ark (1 Chr 15–16) the priests and the Levites are given a prominent role despite the fact their involvement is unattested in the parallel account (2 Sam 6:12–15).[4] Wellhausen posited that the priority of the law was reinforced by the operation of "a divine pragmatism"[5] throughout the course of Judah's history. This pragmatism required that breaches of the law be swiftly punished through direct divine intervention.[6] This schematic view of history was underscored by the role of the prophets who set "before their hearers prosperity and adversity in conformity with the stencil pattern, just as the law is faithfully fulfilled or neglected".[7] Wellhausen illustrated the outworking of this principle in the accounts of Judah's post-Solomonic monarchs through comparison with the parallel accounts in Kings.[8] He demonstrated how the Chronicler made the connection between sin and punishment more direct by hastening or exacerbating the punishment which a disobedient monarch receives, as can be seen in the reigns of Asa, Jehoram and Ahaz, or by supplying the rationale for some adversity recounted in the earlier history, as is evident in the case of Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah and Uzziah.

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of Israelite History in the Nineteenth Century (SBLDS 116; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990).

[3] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies, with preface by W. Robertson Smith; Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885; repr., *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*; New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 170–171, 189–190, 294.

[4] Ibid., 176.

[5] Ibid., 203.

[6] This correspondence had already been perceived by Wilhelm M. L. de Wette, *A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament* (vol. 2; trans. and enl. Theodore Parker; New York: Appleton, 1864; repr. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 2005), 253–316, who discerned a number of instances where the Chronicler supplemented the narrative of Kings in order to reinforce the connection between religious apostasy and divine punishment.

[7] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, 203.

[8] Ibid., 203–207.

Wellhausen also perceived the correlation which exists between righteousness and prosperity in Chronicles. His most frequently cited comment in this connection – "merit is always the obverse of success"[9] – is substantiated by the fact that only pious kings are rewarded with tokens of divine blessing: the building of fortresses, the acquisition of large armies and copious progeny. For Wellhausen the major significance of these observations was the contribution they made to the contemporary debate about the reliability of Chronicles as a source for the reconstruction of Israel's history.[10] Wellhausen argued that the Chronicler's method of drawing connections between a monarch's piety and his outward circumstances, often in ways that patently contradicted the existing historical narrative, amounted to a distortion of the historical facts. He cites Chronicles' most significant departures from Samuel-Kings, such as the repentance of Manasseh (2 Chr 33:12) as evidence of "how inventions of the most circumstantial kind have arisen out of this plan of writing history, as it is euphemistically called".[11]

Despite Wellhausen's preoccupation with historical questions his treatment of Chronicles implied that the recurring cycles of divine intervention in either blessing or punishment served a didactic purpose in encouraging faithfulness to the law in the Chronicler's own time. This implication was made more explicit in the commentary of Curtis and Madsen who affirmed that the Chronicler's interest in divine rule derived from a concern to interpret Israel's life "after the pattern in the Priest's Code of its national beginning under Moses, as that of a church with constant rewards and punishments through signal divine intervention".[12] Based on this pattern the Chronicler modified the earlier history to make "more universal the connection between piety and prosperity, and wickedness and adversity".[13] Although Curtis and Madsen shared Wellhausen's assessment of the historical value of Chronicles they averred that the law of retribution, which reinforced outward forms of religion, played an integral role in preserving post-exilic religious institutions from external influences.[14] They also placed a strong emphasis on the hortatory value of this theme in encouraging and admonishing the book's original hearers.

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[9] Ibid., 209.

[10] As well as Graham, *Utilization of 1 and 2 Chronicles*, see also Kai Peltonen, *History Debated: The Historical Reliability of Chronicles in Pre-Critical and Critical Research* (vol. 1; PFES 64; Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society, 1996), for another detailed survey of how this debate developed throughout the nineteenth century.

[11] Ibid., 207.

[12] Edward L. Curtis and Albert A. Madsen, *The Books of Chronicles: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 9.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 16–17. Cf. William A. L. Elmslie, *The Books of Chronicles with Maps, Notes and Introduction* (2nd ed.; CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), liv–lvi.

III. Retribution as a Corollary of Divine Justice

Wellhausen's view that retribution in Chronicles was a pervasive theme which served a tendentious purpose proved influential well into the twentieth century.[15] However, his theory that this schematic approach to history was designed to fortify the law and the religious institutions of the Chronicler's own day, hinged upon his theory regarding the composition of the Pentateuch. Wellhausen's premise about Chronicles' dependence on the Priestly Code came under scrutiny during the early part of the twentieth century. In particular, the work of Gerhard von Rad helped to demonstrate that the influence of Deuteronomistic tradition in Chronicles was just as prevalent as that of the Priestly Code.[16] Von Rad traced aspects of Chronicles which seemed to stand in tension with the theological outlook of the Priestly tradition.[17] Following von Rad, Adam Welch further substantiated the case for Chronicles' dependence upon Deuteronomy.[18] He revised the priority of the Priestly Code in Chronicles by suggesting that the original version of the Chronicler's work was founded upon Deuteronomy and was later supplemented. The process of revision occurred after the final form of the Torah had been formulated in order to take account of innovations reflected in the Priestly Code.[19] Since such redactional theories were difficult to substantiate, these insights helped to moderate the significance which subsequent scholars attached to the Priestly Code in seeking to understand the distinctive emphases of Chronicles.

For von Rad, Chronicles' interest in divine retribution was motivated by the author's belief in the absolute consistency of divine justice. Theodical questions had been raised during the post-exilic era, both from human experience and from a theoretical point of view owing to the difficulty of explaining the tumultuous course of Israel's history. In contrast to Job where this problem is addressed from the perspective of human experience, von Rad postulated that

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[15] Artur Weiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. D. M. Barton from 4th German ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 324–328; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction, The History of the Formation of the Old Testament* (trans. Peter R. Ackroyd from 3rd German ed.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 535–537.

[16] Gerhard von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (BWANT 4.3; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930).

[17] For example, von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 10, asserts that the role which supernatural agents play in Chronicles (1 Chr 21:1, 12, 15–16, 18; 2 Chr 14:12; 20:22) betrays the influence of the Deuteronomistic-Yahwistic tradition rather than the Priestly Code which tended to deny the involvement of such intermediary powers in human affairs.

[18] Adam C. Welch, *The Work of the Chronicler: Its Purpose and Its Date* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 122–148.

[19] Ibid., 149–160. Cf. William A. L. Elmslie, 'The First and Second Books of Chronicles,' in vol. 3 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (ed. George A. Buttrick; New York: Abingdon, 1954), 339–548 (345–347).

Chronicles set out to resolve this problem from a theoretical standpoint.[20] He proposed that the Chronicler started out with a commitment to divine justice and reworked the historical record where the Deuteronomistic History appeared to call this foundational principle into question. Consequently, the Chronicler eschewed the collective view of judgment which was evident in the earlier historical work in favour a scheme of retribution which was orientated towards the actions of the individual and each individual generation.[21] Von Rad posited that this novel approach is particularly evident in the contrasting explanations the two works provide for the Babylonian exile. Whereas in Kings the exiles of both Israel and Judah represent Yahweh's response to "constantly mounting guilt"[22] it is characteristic of the Chronicler's outlook "that before the account of the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Chr 36) he speaks only of the sins of the last living generation".[23] Although von Rad explained Chronicles' approach to retribution differently from Wellhausen, he affirmed the notion that the close correspondence between human merit and divine intervention in the reigns of Judah's monarchs was designed to counter deficiencies which the Chronicler perceived in the earlier history. One distinctive feature of von Rad's treatment was his observation that divine judgment was not automatic in Chronicles since God repeatedly sent prophets to warn Judah's kings about the prospect of impending judgment.[24] Von Rad also saw this theme as pertinent to the issue of divine justice since it demonstrated Yahweh's untiring patience and heightened the personal responsibility of the monarchs who spurned the opportunity of a reprieve.[25]

Von Rad's understanding of a more individualized form of retribution in Chronicles was endorsed by Martin Noth.[26] Noth affirmed that while the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles shared a similar methodological outlook regarding divine involvement in history, the doctrine of retribution in Chronicles "seems to be directed more pointedly towards the individual and the particular phases of his life".[27] Noth cited the accounts of Asa and Uzziah as examples where the Chronicler drew inferences from the Deuteronomistic History on the basis of his dogma of retribution. Nevertheless, other than drawing

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[20] Von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 11.

[21] Ibid., 13. However, later on in his work von Rad associates the outworking of retribution specifically with the Davidic kings and refutes a more generalized dogma of individual retribution (120, 135).

[22] Ibid., "unablässig häufende Schuld".

[23] Ibid., "daß er vor dem Bericht von der Zerstörung Jerusalems II Chr. 36 allein von den Sünden der letzten lebenden Generation spricht".

[24] Ibid., 11–12.

[25] Ibid., 12.

[26] Martin Noth, *The Chronicler's History* (trans. H. G. M. Williamson with an introduction; JSOTSup 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 97.

[27] Ibid., 98.

a connection with the individualized form of retribution articulated in Ezekiel 18,[28] Noth did not attempt to explain the origin of this development. When von Rad dealt with the subject of retribution in a later work he maintained the distinction between Chronicles and the Deuteronomistic History but also proffered the idea that the Chronicler's concern with individual or generational responsibility was influenced by post-exilic concerns about the "share of the individual in Jahweh".[29] Here he suggested that the view of retribution articulated in Chronicles was closely tied to the development of a more individual religious consciousness within Judaism.[30] Von Rad posited that the Chronicler's revised scheme of history helped to propagate the notion that "Yahweh confronted each generation quite immediately and with his whole revelation".[31] This signalled that divine blessing was attainable in the present day regardless of the failings of past generations or the expectation of divine intervention in the future. A related theory which was developed around this time was Robert North's view that the "short-range" outworking of retribution within an individual's lifetime was intended to bolster the ancient Old Testament tradition about the earth-bound nature of divine justice.[32] North averred that this corrective was necessary in response to the influence of ideas from Persia and Greece about the immortality of the soul which had infiltrated Jewish thinking and is evident in some Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.[33]

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[28] Ibid., 172 n.5.

[29] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; vol. 1; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 347–354. Cf. idem, *Geschichtsbild*, 120.

[30] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 349, cf. 443–46. Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. J. A. Baker; vol. 2; 5th ed.; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1967), 306–308, who argued that the doctrine of retribution in Chronicles was directed towards "the interior attitude of men to the God of Israel" (307). Eichrodt believed that God's vindication of individuals who demonstrated unreserved trust in Yahweh was designed to strengthen the post-exilic community in a context where it found itself surrounded by vastly superior powers. Rainer Albertz, *From the Exile to the Maccabees* (vol. 2 of *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; trans. John Bowden; OTL; Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 551–552, has connected this development to the cultic rivalry which was precipitated by the Samaritan schism and required individual members of the community to make a personal decision about where to worship.

[31] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 349.

[32] Robert North, 'The Theology of the Chronicler,' *JBL* 82 (1963): 369–381 (372–374).

[33] North (ibid., 373) suggests that this thinking is reflected in the books of Daniel, Wisdom and Maccabees. In a similar vein, Frank Michaeli, *Les Livres des Chroniques, d'Esdras et de Néhémie* (CAT 16; Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1967), 30, argues that the Chronicler's strict view of divine justice necessitates an earthly and temporal form of divine retribution "because nowhere is there any question of retribution beyond death" = "car il n'est nulle part question d'une rétribution au-delà de la mort".

The most comprehensive attempt to understand the Chronicler's doctrine of retribution in relation to the theme of divine justice has been advanced by Sara Japhet.[34] Building upon von Rad's earlier work Japhet argues that the Chronicler was motivated by a desire to illustrate that Israel's past had been governed by an unalterable principle of divine justice. Japhet contends that both the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles are works of theodicy since they attempt to absolve God from any responsibility for the nation's calamitous past. However, she suggests that the two works approach this problem in diverging ways due to the different historical settings in which they were produced and because their authors upheld conflicting concepts of divine justice.[35] Japhet avers that attempts in the Deuteronomistic History to explain the destruction of Judah as the result of Manasseh's sins (2 Kgs 21:11–14; 23:26–27) and as an accumulation of the nation's sins (2 Kgs 21:15) prompted troubling questions about the nature of divine rule. The deferral of divine punishment from Manasseh's time implies that earlier generations escaped the fate which their sins deserved and entails that the people who experienced the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile suffered on account of previous generations.

Japhet avers that the Chronicler shared the same view of divine justice reflected in Ezekiel 18.[36] In response to the complaint of the exilic generation, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek 18:2), Ezekiel conveys the divine word that "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezek 18:20). Consequently, in the Chronicler's worldview Japhet posits, "Each generation is responsible for its deeds and for its own fate."[37] In contrast to the Deuteronomistic Historian who was attempting to justify events that took place in the recent past, Japhet maintains that the Chronicler set out to communicate a comprehensive belief system. According to this outlook it was necessary not only that individuals were rewarded and punished appropriately for their deeds but also that "each and every deed must be requited".[38] Japhet describes this principle as the "imperative of reward and punishment".[39] Since the sins of previous generations cannot go unpunished this also helps to explain why the actions of each generation are requited within the lifetime of

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[34] Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (trans. Anna Barber; BEATAJ 9; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989; repr., Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), esp. 98–155. This text, which was originally published in Hebrew in 1977, is a revised version of Japhet's doctoral thesis which had been submitted to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

[35] Ibid., 120.

[36] Ibid., 127.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 127.

[39] Ibid.

the ruling monarch and why Chronicler holds the final generation solely responsible for the exile. This principle also rules out collective retribution (i.e. where the people suffer for the actions of the monarch) although Japhet acknowledges that the individual dimension of retribution is worked out less consistently.[40]

Japhet supports her thesis by citing numerous examples of the way in which the Chronicler has revised the earlier history in order to bring it into line with this much more stringent concept of divine justice. At times this required the Chronicler to add a fitting punishment or reward to the account of a monarch's reign. At other times it necessitated the inclusion of a sin or a source of merit or drawing a causal link between two unrelated events.[41] Japhet avers that the Chronicler's comprehensive reworking of the earlier history is intended to demonstrate beyond doubt that divine justice had been realized throughout each period of Israel's history.[42] While the Chronicler's interest in retribution has a strong theoretical underpinning Japhet asserts that it also provides the post-exilic community with a basis for future hope as it affirms that outward circumstances are controlled by a principle of justice and that each generation have the decisive say in shaping their own destiny.[43]

Japhet acknowledges the possibility of repentance is an important factor which helps to moderate the outworking of retribution.[44] She highlights how prophetic warnings and the call to repentance prior to the onset of punishment is characteristic of the Chronicler's scheme of history.[45] She suggests that this feature of the text finds its origin within Israel's legal tradition where the concept of warning helped to establish "an unequivocal distinction between deliberate and unintentional transgression and thereby eliminates any possibility that a man might be punished for sin committed unawares".[46] However as well as clarifying beyond doubt that those who received judgment fully deserved their fate, Japhet also acknowledged that the repeated sending of prophets, even

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[40] Ibid., 128.

[41] See ibid., 130–131 esp. n.484–488 where Japhet lists five types of redactional changes which govern the Chronicler's reworking of the earlier narrative and provides examples of each type of change.

[42] Ibid., 128.

[43] Ibid., 392, cf. idem, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1993), 45.

[44] Japhet, *Ideology*, 149–155, also recognizes that instances of divine testing provide a further sub-category in which outward circumstances do not initially correspond with human merit.

[45] Ibid., 147–148. Here Japhet was developing the insights of von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 11–12, and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955), xx.

[46] Ibid., 144.

after their initial rejection, "is an outstanding expression of YHWH's compassion for His people".[47] Japhet avers that the trope of prophetic warning and the possibility of revoking punishment "obviates a mechanical concept of retribution".[48] However, while this feature of the text indicates that divine sanctions are not automatically applied, Japhet's system still hinges entirely on human merit as the fate of each monarch or each individual generation ultimately depends on their response to prophetic warnings.[49]

The strength of Japhet's thesis is that it provides a clear rationale for the patterns which exist in the Chronicler's reworking of the Deuteronomistic History. She demonstrates beyond doubt that the Chronicler is concerned to make the connection between human actions and divine recompense more direct in comparison with his *Vorlage*. However, the major difficulty with her theory is that it would seem to make the nexus between deed and consequence more systematized than the textual evidence will allow. The absolute requirement for justice makes her thesis prone to collapse when the principle of individual or generational responsibility is undercut by evidence which problematizes a straightforward relationship between merit and recompense. For example, although Japhet denies the existence of deferred punishment and ancestral merit in Chronicles there is substantial evidence to suggest that sinful human behaviour can have effects across generations (e.g. 2 Chr 29:9; 32:26; 34:21).[50] Numerous examples can also be cited where the people are made to bear the consequences of the sins of their leaders (e.g. 1 Chr 21:7–14; 2 Chr 22:7–8; 25:13; 32:25–26). There are further instances where the principle of retribution is set aside altogether. One obvious category is the cases where prophets suffer mistreatment for faithfully proclaiming the divine word (2 Chr 16:10; 18:25–26; 24:20–22).[51] All these instances call into question Japhet's premise that the Chronicler sought to apply a rigid theory of divine justice to the historical narrative.

At many points Japhet accepts the implications of the texts which do not conform with her understanding of the Chronicler's purpose. Nevertheless, because she argues that the author is committed to articulating a comprehensive belief system, she is forced to explain each of these texts as either irregular or exceptional in some way. At times she avers that inconsistencies emanate from source material which has been incorporated by the Chronicler en bloc (e.g. 2 Chr 25:13).[52] Another line of argument is that the Chronicler's commitment to

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[47] Ibid., 147.
[48] Ibid., 149.
[49] Ibid.
[50] These texts will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.
[51] See Appendix 2 for a fuller list of these difficulties.
[52] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 858–859. Cf. idem, *Ideology*, 121 n.453.

the historical facts, as he understood them, sometimes constrains the outworking of retribution (e.g. 2 Chr 32:24; 33:11).[53] Text-critical explanations are also utilized to explain conflicting evidence. For example, she contends that the omission of an evaluation of Jehoahaz's reign, which would justify his exile to Egypt (2 Chr 36:4), is the result of a scribal error.[54] On some occasions she simply concedes that certain texts have been carried over from Kings without being fully integrated into the Chronicler's scheme (2 Chr 10:5; 21:7; 34:21). Nevertheless, rather than considering these texts as atypical they ought to be allowed to shape how the Chronicler perceives the relationship between human actions and divine recompense. The prevalence of such texts, which cannot all be considered uncharacteristic of the Chronicler's outlook, undermines Japhet's thesis that the Chronicler was seeking to establish an inviolable principle which was rooted in a conviction about the outworking of divine justice in the world.

Japhet's influence can be most clearly seen in the work of Raymond Dillard[55] who argues that the Chronicler's adherence to a theology of immediate retribution represents "his dominant compositional technique".[56] Similarly to Japhet, he argues that questions around divine justice occasioned by the Babylonian exile prompted the Chronicler to review Israel's history. He opines that Chronicles' emphasis on immediate retribution provided a counterpoise to the concept of deferred punishment in Kings. He suggests that this doctrine provides a warning to the post-exilic community about the importance of their own decision-making as they cannot expect punishment to be deferred.[57] While Japhet's thesis has not been endorsed to the same degree by other commentators her perception that the Chronicler has attempted to resolve theological tensions within Deuteronomistic History, owing to a staunch belief in divine justice, continues to exert influence among more recent scholars.[58]

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[53] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 992, 1003.

[54] Ibid., 1063.

[55] Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC 15; Waco, TX.: Word Books, 1987) esp. 76–81; cf. idem, 'Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution,' *WTJ* 46 (1984): 164–172.

[56] Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 76; cf. Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco, TX.: Word Books, 1986), xxxvii–xxxix.

[57] Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 81.

[58] Steven L. McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles* (AOTC; Nashville, TN.: Abingdon, 2004), 46–47; Yigal Levin, *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah: 2 Chronicles 10–36: A New Translation and Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 177, 210–214, 246, 439–441.

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