

Joel B. Kemp

Ezekiel, Law, and Judahite Identity

A Case for Identity in Ezekiel 1-33

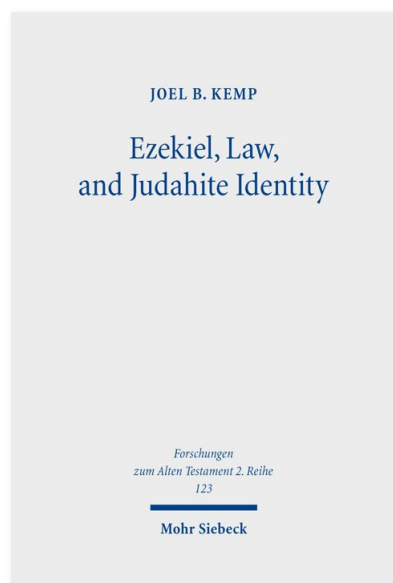
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The consistent presence of juridical diction, legal metaphors, and courtroom imagery reveals that Ezekiel 1-33 is set within a precise juridical framework. In this study, Joel B. Kemp argues that focusing upon these legal elements has two primary benefits for our understanding of the book. First, the juridical framework provides greater clarity and coherence to some passages within Ezekiel 1-33. Second, the book (especially Ezekiel 16) uses its legal elements to articulate a version of Judahite identity under Neo-Babylonian hegemony. To connect these legal elements to identity development, the author uses some insights from the works of Erik Erikson and Urie Bronfenbrenner. According to his analysis, Ezekiel 16 equates the *legal status* of the city with *Judahite identity* to prove that the experiences of Neo-Babylonian domination did not nullify or rescind the legal agreement (ברית) between the deity and Judahites. Rather, the punishment this chapter describes demonstrates the continuing validity of the contract and the version of Judahite identity rooted in it. Consequently, the Judahites' acceptance of the legal appropriateness of Neo-Babylonian domination is the *sine qua non* for remaining in the legal relationship that defines Judahite identity.

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