adaptation of the biblical metaphor of "trial," Israel's own testimony about Yнwн. Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997); John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 3 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 2006, and 2009). Neither, however, has adequately addressed the intentionality of God's self-disclosure to Israel's ancestors in Genesis. Brueggemann explores God as the subject of Israel's utterance, which is (metaphorically) stated in the sentence as the unity of testimony, having an active and transformative verb (which we may think of as causative Hiphils), and a direct object, the one transformed by the action, constituting the full sentence of Israel's testimony, which then *becomes* or is *taken as* revelation. (We cannot address here the problem of historicity or ontology in Brueggemann's approach, which raises altogether different sets of questions.) Yet surprisingly, even when he specifically addresses the verbs used in Israel's predicative theologizing about God, Brueggemann fails to take up the significance of Yнwн's "appearance" to the ancestors. Israel's core theologizing is marked by verbs of transformation; God "creates," "promises," "delivers," "commands," and "leads" (145-202). In Brueggemann's model, "testimony becomes revelation," by which he means that the "testimony that Israel bears to the character of God is taken by the ecclesial community of the text as a reliable disclosure about the true character of God" (121-22). To his categories, I propose adding "Yнwн, the God Who Reveals (Himself)," and without denying entirely his "transportation from testimony to revelation," I also believe the concept of revelation itself was more central to Israel's core theologizing, and that this can be seen by observing the use of another verb in the books of Genesis and Exodus, as we shall see. Goldingay helpfully focuses on the narrative sequence, following the order of God's acts: God began, started over, promised, delivered, sealed, gave, accommodated, wrestled, preserved, and sent. Although he takes up the topic of Yнwн's appearances to the ancestors, he too fails to capture the degree to which the text characterizes self-revelation in Genesis as paradigmatic for later Israel. He seems to equate the collocation under discussion here as literally "visual" in some way, although he does not explain what he has in mind (1:247). He also mistakenly avers that Gen 17:1 (treated below) "is the first report of Yнwн's appearing to anyone" (1:247). In some ways, this investigation is intended to supplement their work. The closest I have found to the approach advocated here was fifty years ago in a book by J. Kenneth Kuntz, who emphasized both the "visual and audible aspects of divine manifestation" in the Old Testament; *The Self-revelation of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967: 40-41, and see further 52-56, 62-65, and 120-21).

⁵ Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, SBLWAW 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013: 363).

⁶ Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings*, 342-43. On the concept of "theophany" or the appearance of God, Jörg Jeremias has investigated certain Old Testament texts as representative of a distinct literary genre (Judg 5:4-5; Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3; Ps 68:8-11; Mic 1:3-4; Amos 1:2; Ps 46:7, and Isa 19:1); Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*, WMANT 10 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965). Jeremias describes such appearances as intrusions into the life of Israel, exhibiting Yнwн's ferocious power; the divine presence "comes" (*bw*) from a specific place, with disruptive and cataclysmic intrusions in nature, and leaves a changed situation. The ancestral appearances covered here are related, although "come" is not part of the formula. See Bill T. Arnold, "בוא," *NIDOTTE* 1:615-18; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "Theophany, Theology of," *NIDOTTE* 4:1247-50.

[7] For this metaphor, see David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005: 4-5); and John Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon*, Hulsean Lectures 1990 (London: SPCK, 1997: 129).

[8] Some have proposed "plain" or "valley"; *DCH* 5:188; and see Yoel Elitzur, "Moreh," *NIDB* 4:140. On the other hand, the evergreen Kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*) covered large areas of the central hill country in antiquity, and the oak "of the valley" is unlikely. We know that trees held religious significance throughout the ancient Near East as physical symbols of divine presence; Othmar Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh: Ancient Near Eastern Art and The Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 261 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998: 20-48).

[9] All translations are the author's, unless otherwise designated.

[10] The so-called "tolerative" variation of the reflexive N-stem; Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018: §3.1.2,c); Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990: 390-91).

[11] Arnold and Choi, *Guide*, §3.5.1,d; Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 551-52; Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed., SubBi 27 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006: 364).

[12] Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 551.

[13] One is also reminded that Yʜwʜ does not see as mortals see because he looks upon the heart; 1 Sam 16:7.

[14] Ernst Axel Knauf, "Shadday," *DDD²*, 749-53; Ernst Axel Knauf, "El Šaddai - der Gott Abrahams?" *BZ* 29 (1985: 97-103). This predicate nominative (or, copular-complement) for identification is paralleled by similar syntax for divine disclosure at 15:1 and 15:7, showing the variety of speech possible for unique divine revelation; Arnold and Choi, *Guide*, §2.1.2 and 5.1.1,a.

[15] The two here are likely hendiadic, "walk blamelessly before me"; Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 169).

[16] For details, see Arnold, *Genesis*, 169.

[17] For the significance of the occurrence at 22:14 in wordplay on the name "Yʜwʜ will provide," see Arnold, *Genesis*, 207-8. The N-stem of **r'h* occurs a total of 14 times in Genesis, 6 in the past narrative and 4 in other forms, all in theophanic contexts, and an additional 4 times in non-theophanic contexts listed above. By contrast, Jacob's dream of God's ziggurat (Gen 28:10-22), like a highway to and from heaven, does not use N-stem **r'h* for "appearance," but includes a theatrical display. Perhaps the literary intent here is precisely to draw such a contrast with Abram, for initial revelation to Jacob comes as a dream, and included pyrotechnic effects made possible because it was only a dream. Again, much can be explained by way of divine accommodation, and especially to the would-be patriarch, Jacob. See Arnold, *Genesis*, 251-56.

[18] God's revelation to us is not always straightforward. On Calvin's view of accommodation, see Jones, *Practicing Christian Doctrine*, 32: As one cares for an infant, God's revelation is something like the lisping way we speak to small children; that is, "God is wont in a measure to 'lisp' in speaking to us," and that "such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity."

[19] In the rest of the OT, we have only one instance of God's form appearing, and that to none other than Moses himself (Exod 33:12–34:9). Elsewhere, in contexts in which God appears to humans, a form of the "messenger/angel" of Yнwн/God appears; for example, Gen 16:7; 21:17; 22:11; Judg 13:3.

[20] Israel had a priestly tradition on "seeing God," which likewise never stressed what was actually seen. This may be the tradition's way of guarding against iconic tendencies, although some have assumed a "primitive" associative experience or a mediated presence through the cultic apparatus; Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 428-29, n.32. However, in our examples, the ancestor often built an altar immediately following the appearance, so that we have a different tradition with different assumptions at work. The cult apparently had nothing to do with these appearances, at least not initially. One should also note that, in Genesis, "a divine revelation engendered faith in the first Patriarchs"; Herbert C. Brichto, "On Faith and Revelation in the Bible," *HUCA* 39 (1968: 35-53, esp. 44).

[21] R. W. L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[22] Note the recurrence of *$*r'h$ five times in Exod 3:2-4, plus one occurrence of the noun *mar'eh*, "appearance."

[23] The *mal'ak Yнwн/Elohim* occurs 66 times in the Old Testament, not only as a messenger delivering God's words but also as an agent authorized to perform them. As in this text, the messenger is often indistinguishable from God himself; see D. N. Freedman and B. E. Willoughby, "מַלְאָךְ," *TDOT* 8:308-25, esp. 317-20.

[24] Perhaps a multicolored bramble bush, *Cassia obovate*; *HALOT* 2:760; *DCH* 6:172.

[25] In addition, we have four occurrences in the perfect, third person, masculine, singular, in which cases Yнwн, or the glory of Yнwн, is said to have *appeared* (Exod 3:16; 4:1,5; 16:10), and one occasion in which Yнwн declares that his face will not *be seen* (Exod 33:23). Thus the N-stem of *$*r'h$ in revelatory contexts occurs seven times in Exodus, in addition to eight additional occurrences in non-theophanic settings: Exod 13:7[2x]; 23:15,17; 34:3,20,23,24 (and cf. 1 Sam 3:21).

[26] Arnold, *Genesis*, 135-36. It seems entirely possible that earliest Israelite perceptions thought of Yнwн as having human form, although von Rad says this is the wrong way of thinking about it, as though ancient Israel "regarded God anthropomorphically" when in reality the reverse is true; Israel "considered man as theomorphic"; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper, 1962: 1.145, and see 219).

²⁷ Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009: 432-35); John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987: 258-60); William Henry C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2A (New York: Doubleday, 2006: 141-54).

²⁸ The mountain "trembled" (v. 18, *wayyeḥĕrad*; G-stem past narrative of *ḥrd*) exceedingly (NRSV's "violently"), which creates wordplay on the trembling of the people at the crescendo of trumpet blast (*wayyeḥĕrad*; v. 16).

²⁹ And the specific phraseology here is critical, as Yʜᴡʜ asserts in Deut 4:10 that the moment is one in which he will cause Israel to hear the words; *wəʾašmiʿēm*, H-stem of *šmʿ.

³⁰ Not denoting a particular shape, but any shape or visible form at all; *HALOT* 4:1746; *DCH* 8:640; E.-J. Waschke, "תְּמוּנָה," *TDOT* 15:687-90.

³¹ The preposition *zûlâ* after a negated clause excludes the possibility of anything beyond the object of the preposition; *HALOT* 1:267; *DCH* 3:97.

³² Near the conclusion of Moses' discourse, we have the remarkable v. 36, emphasizing the two perspectives of the revelation: from heaven, Yʜᴡʜ made Israel hear his voice in order to instruct them, and upon earth, Yʜᴡʜ showed them (*rʾh*, H-stem) the fire and they heard his words.

³³ In Deuteronomy's version, Yʜᴡʜ spoke face-to-face with Israel from the midst of the fire, just as he had with Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3:4). Moses' experience of Yʜᴡʜ at Sinai had now become the experience of every Israelite. On the relational nature of divine revelation, see John N. Oswalt, "Discipleship and the Bible: Foundations," in *Discipleship: Essays in Honor of Dr. Allan Coppedge*, ed. Matt Friedeman (Wilmore, KY: Teleios and Francis Asbury Press, 2017: 1-11, esp. 2-3).

³⁴ Again, predicates nominative for identification, as we saw in Gen 15:1,7; 17:1, and elsewhere in the ancestral narratives.

³⁵ For a survey of the problem from Wellhausen to the present, see Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, 419-24 and 469-72; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 141-54. Childs assumed the Decalogue's great antiquity through oral tradition, despite its current literary location stemming from late redactional activity; Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974: 391-92).

³⁶ Dominik Markl, "The Ten Words Revealed and Revised: The Origins of Law and Legal Hermeneutics in the Pentateuch," in *The Decalogue and Its Cultural Influence*, ed. Dominik Markl, Hebrew Bible Monographs 58 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013: 13-27, esp. 14-19); Brichto, "Faith and Revelation," esp. 47-48.

³⁷ It may be true that the nature of Yʜᴡʜ cannot be understood by other means because of "His immaterial and spiritual essence," but that may not have been the ancestor's experience, who may have indeed seen a physical reflection of his nature. Shalom Albeck, "The Ten Commandments and The Essence of

Religious Life," in *Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, ed. Ben-Zion Segal (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990: 261-89, esp. 265). My point here is that the text has assiduously suppressed that aspect of divine revelation.

[38] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004: 463).

[39] James G. S. S. Thomson, *The Old Testament View of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960: 13).

[40] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994: 1); repr. of Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Enzies (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), trans. of Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 2d ed. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1883).

[41] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 425.

[42] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 405, n.1. For penetrating assessment of Wellhausen's view of Judaism as Israelite religion after it has died, see Jon Douglas Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox, 1993: 10-15).

[43] Bill T. Arnold and David B. Schreiner, "Graf and Wellhausen, and Their Legacy," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 3: The Enlightenment through the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017: 252-73, esp. 263-65); Moshe Weinfeld, *The Place of the Law in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, VTSup 100 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004).

[44] Jean-Pierre Sonnet, *The Book within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy*, Biblical Interpretation Series 14 (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997: 246-59).

[45] John N. Oswalt, *The Bible among The Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009: 12). We must therefore also reject the old classical liberalism and its understanding of revelation as "human insight into religious truth, or human discovery of religious truth," in which case the inspiration of the Bible is only its power to inspire religious experience; see Bernard L. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970: 64-65).

[46] The authors and final redactors of the Pentateuch envisioned a Torah that was literally closed at the time of Moses' death because there would be no divine revelation after Moses (Deut 4:2; 13:1 [Eng 12:32]). From that point forward, it was the task of priestly scribal scholars to interpret the Torah as the only divine basis for faith. It is also possible that prophetic circles of the postexilic period believed, to the contrary, that divine revelation continued into the days of the exilic and postexilic prophets. See Eckart Otto, "Scribal Scholarship in the Formation of Torah and Prophets: A Postexilic Scribal Debate between Priestly Scholarship and Literary Prophecy – The Example of the Book of Jeremiah and Its Relation to the Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding its Promulgation and Acceptance*, eds. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007: 171-84).

[47] γνωρίσας, aorist, active, participle of γνωρίζω, "make known, disclose; know."

[48] Cf. Rom 1:16-17; Heb 1:1-4, 2 Tim 3:16-17.