

Title 2:

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF מִקְוָה “HOPE” AND
בְּרִית “COVENANT” (EZRA 10:2-3) TO THE
COVENANTAL REFORM IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH:
A LITERARY AND GRAMMATICAL APPROACH**

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The study attempts to provide a perspective that takes covenant renewal (Ezra 9-10) and covenantal obedience (Ezra 10:2-3) as foundational to interpreting Ezra-Nehemiah (EN). The study observes that both the critical approach that attempt to reconstruct the text, and the traditional approach that endeavours to reorder history may not objectively discern the author's true message. Some scholars advance an approach that is contrary to the above propositions. They observe that the author used narrational and chiasmic designs to construct the EN text. This approach highlights Ezra 9-10 as both the climax of the discourse of the book of Ezra and

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the center of the macro chiasm of EN. This study agrees with this approach. However, the approach seems not to notice that the climactic and central position of the terms *מִקְוָה*, “hope” and *בְּרִית*, “covenant” renders them (the terms) to be primary to the interpretation of the EN corpus.

The study observes that Ezra’s calling might have endowed him with a point of view that informed his endeavour to record the postexilic events that were relevant to the rebuilding of the covenant community. In view of this, this study proposes that first, EN is a narrative of a community seeking to reorganize itself based on its identity as a covenant community. Second, the central section of the corpus (Ezra 9-10) is about a community undergoing a covenant renewal process focusing on removing the obstacle (foreign women). Third, Ezra 10:2-3 is set as the hub of Ezra 9-10 and exhibits hope-inspired covenantal obedience which impacts the rest of the reform procedure (Ezra 10:4-17). Fourth, the terms *מִקְוָה* and *בְּרִית*, embedded in this central spot, are crucial to the interpretation of the book of Ezra and the entire EN corpus.