

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Introduction to the Literature and Thought

of the Bible

A Study Guide for College Students

Old Testament

by

Geo. Douglas Straton

For the exclusive use of students of the University of Oregon

To Jacks! -
with great admiration
and deep affection!
- Dad
March 29, 1982

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FOREWORD

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The purpose of this textbook is to present a study of the Bible for use primarily by college undergraduate students. It is designed for a full academic year's course of nine months, and covers both the main story of Old and New Testaments. It is written to meet teaching needs in courses on Biblical history, literature, and thought in undergraduate departments of religion. We believe it will also be a useful tool in courses in "The Bible as Literature" that are frequently offered in college departments of English. In this latter service it will assist teachers of English particularly, who have not been especially trained in modern Biblical criticism, to acquaint their students with the principal findings of modern scholarship regarding the literary origin, composition, and religious messages of the Biblical books.

In the standard three-term college year, from late September through early June, we have found that the account of the Old Testament literature and its varied thought can be presented in approximately a term and a half, to a term and two thirds. Accordingly, approximately one third of the academic year is reserved for New Testament study. These are not fully adequate periods of time, of course, relative to some ideal treatment of such a large literary, historic, and philosophic subject matter, but we have found that this program can be fairly successfully met for the purpose of introducing college students to the field. With their crowded academic programs, undergraduates who are not majoring in religious studies are inclined usually to enroll in no more than a one-year course in religion. If they elect the Bible course, it is then the duty of the department and the teacher to organize the study in some way that will present the principal story of both Old and New Testaments in one academic year. We believe that this book accomplishes this purpose with reasonable success.

Accordingly, the scope with which it treats the Biblical materials is limited. Not all of the Bible in its every nook and cranny is discussed. In view of the designed time limitation above described, as well as considering the major interests of college students in taking a "survey course", some of the books of the Old and New Testaments are omitted, or only referred to briefly in cross reference. Furthermore, not all of the content of a given Biblical book is analyzed in our commentary, or assigned as reading for the student. An examination of the tables of contents for both the Old and New Testament sections, and a glance at the pages of Biblical assignments, heading each major division, will convey to the reviewer the extent, purpose, and general adequacy for the study of a given book, of the passages assigned from the Bible. Undergraduate students cannot ordinarily read all of the Bible -- along with taking sufficient time for historical and evaluative reflection to make the reading meaningful and important -- successfully in one year (nor, to be sure, in one semester, as was the teaching assignment for a former course in the experience of the present teacher!). Our experience has been that students move along in their Bible study courses more happily as well as more profitably with a decided limit to the amount of the Biblical text they are asked to read, and to consider for historic and philosophic significance. It is therefore with this in mind that our Biblical assignments are organized as they appear in the assignment sections of our chapters. Usually they tell the main "story" of a book, or of the principal Biblical figure with which a book is concerned, such as Exodus with Moses.

An examination of the tables of contents will also suggest our mode of coverage of principal historic themes within the Old and New Testaments. We have found that most of the New Testament study, given the time limits above suggested will be devoted to the problem of chief interest to most college students, namely, the "life" and "teachings" of Jesus, with a consideration of the larger theological themes concerning the Messiahship, Death, and Resurrection. We have included, however, brief discussions of the other major sections of the New Testament material, that is, the Pauline and Johannine literature and thought. Indeed the experience of the individual teacher may be that the latter areas have to be left to the students themselves for independent study, report and testing.

A further point leading from the above statement of purpose and scope concerns the materials used, and the methods of organizing and presenting them in this study. In brief, we have relied on many of the best sources of modern Biblical scholarship, drawing from works and points of view of earlier as well as more recent scholars. Our aim has been to introduce the new student to modern historical Biblical investigation in its most constructive terms. Naturally not all aspects or points of view of any given problem are aired. We have indicated variant consideration, however, of major issues, so that the student may become cognizant of the "open character" of Biblical scholarship as it has developed in contemporary times, in contrast to the classic "dogmatic", "literalist", or "fundamentalist" perspective.

We approach the subject as student of philosophy and philosophy of religion, and as teacher in undergraduate departments where the assignment of the Biblical course has been a provocative, delightful, and we believe, a crucially important teaching area in the education of young Americans. We are obviously and extensively in debt to the primary scholars and sources in the field. Many of these we have quoted -- sometimes at length -- to indicate to the introductory student how an aptly phrased insight from more detailed levels of scholarship throw special light, or raise particularly important questions, on points of history or on literary or theological criticism. For example, we have quoted and paraphrased extensively from Kaufman Kohler's article on the Pharisees from the Jewish Encyclopedia. A review of that particular issue from a scholarly non-Christian source we regard as especially pertinent to the section of our study on the historical background of Jesus life and thought.

Our effort has been to review discussion and thought from scholarly sources which seem best to us to meet the pressing questions of college young people in the area of their religious interests, particularly, for our present purpose, concerning the Bible. We have attempted to distill this material for use by sophomore, junior, and senior student in a way that will make him historically aware of the Judaeo-Christian philosophy of life as rooted in the Biblical texts. In this task we have hoped that he may become personally appreciative of its contemporary significance. Our hope has been to stimulate his interest in the high themes or questions of reflective life concerning God, Man, Human Duty, and Destiny as study of the Bible brings them to mind, with the trust that this discipline would encourage the student in the construction of a value system or faith of his own.

We have done this recognizing parallel values from the other great religious traditions of the world, and have appended an essay on this subject. The problem of the relation of the Judaeo-

Christian faith to other religions has now become of paramount interest to the present generation of college students. Accordingly a book of our kind would appropriately end with a discussion of this crucial issue.

We have endeavored to fulfill the larger purposes of this book, as above outlined, in the liberal and the rational spirit. The classic Conservative-Fundamentalist position is presented at a number of points by way of contrast to our own perspective. Undergraduate students, we have often found, where they bring some religious stance to a class in the Bible, are frequently fighting "religion" within themselves, if they are fighting it at all, in terms of the major Conservative-Liberal issues that have enlivened the debate about the Bible in our century. If they come with blank backgrounds, but inquiring minds, a rational, liberal introduction gives them we believe, a constructive type of start in the appreciation of the Bible as literature, or thought, and as relevant to our day.

At least, many students are still asking such classic questions as, "Is it science or religion for me? Or perhaps more currently, 'is it Christianity or Zen?'. 'Must I believe in the miracle stories of the Bible?' Or 'in man's 'original' and 'universal' sinfulness'? What about the 'myths' of Geneses?" "What about 'reason' in contrast to 'revelation' -- must we believe that God spoke to men only through supernatural auditions and visions which we read about in some parts of the Bible?" Did the prophets predict historic events hundreds of years before their occurrence?" "Is Christianity the exclusively true religion and all others false -- what does the Bible say?" "What relevance does the ethics of the prophets or the parables of Jesus -- who lived in ancient and rural times -- have for our modern problems of war, or racial conflict, or corporate industrial practice?" "When Jesus said that he who looks at a woman to commit adultery, already does the act, did he mean that every sexual thought we have condemns us as sinful beings?" "Did Jesus believe in a literal and eternal hell?" "How may Christians value Christ as their leader today, if he said he was coming back on the clouds?" and so on. Beyond his more obvious task of presenting the basic history and discussing the origins of the literature, the teacher of Bible today begins his work with the attempt to meet such elementary questions as these in the students' minds.

To be sure, in discussing the high problems of "the historical Jesus" -- and whether we can find him in the New Testament beneath that book's over-all stress on the Divine Kerygma, or the theme of man's salvation through the Resurrected Christ, we are pressed into the more tertiary levels of Biblical scholarship, even with introductory students. At such places we have tried to leave the student with several options, as various modes of scholarship have suggested them, including reference to the presently fashionable Bultmann-Neo-Orthodox type.

On the whole, we have found that contemporary students respond creatively to a reinterpretation of religion, in terms of a rational historical study, rational psychology, and a common sense philosophy. They want to keep religion as a "reality", if they can, in their lives, and the Bible as a meaningful source of religious insight. But they can only do so, we believe, when they reformulate their religion, or construct it anew, by reading the Biblical inspiration on which it may be founded, in realistic and humane terms that relate to their scientific understanding of the world.

A final word concerning our method of notation. The older, standard form of notes at the foot of a page -- many of them explanatory and extended discussion -- we deem an important type of arrangement for a study of this kind. Rather than fumble at the rear of the chapter, or the rear of the entire book, the student may be encouraged to find answers to further questions on the page in which they come up. Our Biblical notations are usually in the main text at the end of a sentence, rather than in the footnotes. Such arrangement suggests the main purpose of this textbook, namely, as a guide which will give the student incentive to read the Biblical material itself.

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PART ONE

Hebraic Philosophy of Religion: the Ideas of God, Man, and Destiny.
Sources and Characteristics of the Pentateuchal Literature

GENESIS
Chs. 1-11

Assignment:

1. RSV GENESIS
Chs. 1-11

2. Study Guide, Part One, I-VI

- I. The Two Accounts of Creation
- II. The Modern Criticism of the Creation Story

Study questions on I-II

- III. Composite Nature of the Literature: Evidence Supporting the Theory of Multiple Authorship of GENESIS and the Pentateuch.
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GENESIS

Chs. 1-11

I The Two Accounts of Creation

As we read the two ancient stories of creation in Chapters 1 and 2 we observe that there is a significant difference between them in the order of things created:

Gen. 1-2:4a

- 1st day: Light
- 2nd " : Firmament/sky
- 3rd " : Dry land, seas and
 vegetation
- 4th " : Specific lights: sun,
 moon, stars
- 5th " : Marine life and birds
- 6th " : Animals and man, i.e.,
 the human race --
 male and female together
- 7th " : Rest/Sabbath. This emphasis
 suggests a priestly origin
 for this account. Called
 by scholars the P source
 (see below).

Gen. 2:4bf

Original condition: no rain, desert.
Mist arises and waters the ground.
Man

Garden and plants and rivers
Animals
Woman

This order of creation suggests
a desert and patriarchal origin
(e.g. woman as created last
suggests her subordinate
status to man, as in the
patriarchal home)
Called by scholars the J source
(see below).

We note the following teachings in the account of creation in Genesis, chapter 1.

1. As modern readers we may be struck by the suggestion of the story that the world came by stages. In contemporary terms we might say "by growth". This story is cast, of course, in the setting of ancient Hebrew cosmography, like that of other ancient peoples, depicting the idea of an earth centrally located in the cosmic order, a crystalline dome of sky, or firmament, above, and with waters above the sky and beneath the earth, etc. Yet the orderly account of "creative days", with the suggestion of first things first, geologically speaking -- the light of the sidereal universe; then the formless "void" of an original earth, as we would say today, in its nebulous or molten condition; the distinctive formation next of land masses and seas; with the correct appearance of the forms of life, vegetable matter, marine creatures, land animals, and finally men -- has often inspired modern interpreters to note a resemblance to the evolutionary conception of the stages in which life came. Among ancient creation stories the Hebrew account of Genesis 1 is outstanding in literary solemnity and in scientific and philosophic suggestibility.

2. Male and female are mentioned as created together -- suggests the creation of the race as a whole.

3. Nature or material creation is designated as good; here we have the implication that God brings the world into being out of divine love.

4. Man is to have dominion -- creation is for the sake of man, whose personal

existence is a reflection or "image" of the highest form of being in God's personal existence.

Points three and four affirm that there is basic meaning to finite existence; that it is worthwhile and has a divine purpose.

5. God is the ultimate factor, or reality, source and ground of being, omnipotent, transcendent, omnipresent, personal, simply speaks and the world is. God is an invisible Spirit.

6. The chapter as a whole is an explanation of why the Hebrews have a sabbath day. Such a primitive explanation scholars call an "aetiological story", that is, one that purports to explain a basic human custom, trait, or institution. You will find many other aetiological stories in these early chapters of GENESIS.

Its style characteristics have been designated as formal, precise, systematic, sweeping, majestic, abstract, philosophical, sophisticated.

As we study the second account in Gen. 2:4b and following, we notice significant differences from the story in Gen. 1.:

- Order of things created, e.g. Man is created before animals and Woman.
- Its style is pictorial, graphic, picturesque, more primitive, "naive".
- God is anthropomorphic, or man-like, molds Adam of the dust, breathes into his nostrils, plants a garden, etc.
- It is local in outlook: Tigris and Euphrates region; whereas Gen. 1 seems more universal.
- Perhaps the main aetiological point is to explain the origin of human marriage.

We presently observe how the two stories agree in several important ethical, philosophical, and religious ways.

II Modern Criticism of the Creation Story:¹

1. From natural science: Critics have pointed out that the stories of creation do not agree with modern astronomy, geology, or biology. Undoubtedly it is true that Gen. 1 implies an ancient cosmography, as we have seen, with the concept of the earth as the fixed center of the universe, with waters above the sky and beneath the earth, etc. Although we are impressed that the ancient authors conceived of the world as having come by orderly stages, this is hardly the concept of evolution in the full modern sense. Indeed, a little later than the time the Genesis account was in the final process of composition (c. 4th century B.C.), the rational philosophers of Greece, Plato and Aristotle, speculated about the evolution of life in terms remarkably anticipatory of modern concepts of natural selection and mutation.

To evaluate Gen. 1 and 2, however, strictly from a sophisticated, scientific point of view is to miss the main purpose of these ancient accounts of creation: they have not set forth a scientific description in intimate detail of the origin of our world, life, and man; but their purpose, rather, was to make an ultimate philosophic or religious evaluation of life and existence. The achievement of the

¹Suggested by a presentation of Professor Millar Burrows, Yale Divinity School, 1938-39.

ancient author was not to depict the scientific method God used, the how of creation; but he does explain the why of creation, its ultimate purpose and meaning. It is most remarkable, however, that these ancient Hebrew sages, (the P source) had, as we might say, such a relatively scientific understanding of the way the world came to be in their idea of the orderly stages of creation. If we transliterate this idea into the modern one of growth, of evolution, Charles F. Wishart, former president of the College of Wooster, has said "that God used the method of growth to create the world is an infinitely more dignified conception than that it came by magic". We suggest presently the larger philosophical teaching of Gen. 1 and 2.

2. From archeology: The discovery of a Babylonian account of creation, which is very similar to Gen. 1 in certain broad respects, and prior to its final composition by possibly 1000 years, suggests that the GENESIS story may not be original, but is a borrowed account. The main archeological facts about the Babylonian version of creation, coming from the period of Hammurabi, c. 1800 B.C., are the following:

a) Fragments of the ancient epic were found on seven cuneiform tablets, dated about 7th century B.C., and found in the ruins of the palace of Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal.

b) The story centers around the rivalry between Marduk and Enki, two leading male gods. Marduk kills Tiamat. He forces the rest of the gods to swear allegiance to him. Enki had refused to fight Tiamat. Man was fashioned from the blood of a rebellious god (Tiamat?) and clay; thus man has divine blood in him. (Note the similarity between this and the GENESIS account of clay, and that man was made in the image of God, or that there is divine lineage in man). The purpose of the Babylonian gods in making man is to have him till the ground and raise food for them, feeding them by his sacrifices (a priestly note).

c) There was no moral purpose in creation in the Babylonian account. The universe was created simply as a result of the strife of the gods, or for selfish reasons on the gods' part. The Hebrew account contrasts to this, where God creates because of the inherent good in a finite creation itself.

Our conclusion: The Hebrew version of creation is original from the standpoint of philosophic and religious ideas and it is nearer our modern, scientific view than the Babylonian story. In contrast to the Babylonian story the Hebrew version's predominating idea is that of one God as the author of being -- monotheism; whereas the Babylonian tale stresses many gods, polytheism. We noted above that the Hebrew account contains the highest moral purpose, whereas the Babylonian account contains little moral significance. If the Hebrews borrowed this story, they have completely transformed it; their version seems more realistic, and appeals more to a sense of truth.

3. From the standpoint of modern historical science or literary criticism, Biblical scholarship has discovered two stories of creation, Gen. 1 and Gen. 2, which, in significant ways, stand in marked contrast to each other. Thus we face the problem of inconsistency within the Bible, due to the fact that it has its origin in a number of separate sources. How are we to evaluate this circumstance? We may say at this time that, although there are two accounts, when we put them in broadest perspective, both have a number of moral, religious, and philosophic ideas which are similar:

a) The paramount teaching of both versions is that the world is the work of one God -- monotheism; that there is a creative, sustaining Mind or Person behind or within the universe. No ancient religious culture came forth more clearly with the idea that ultimate being is, or that existence goes back to, Loving Personal Mind than did the Hebrew. That God, or the ultimate ground and source of being is Unitary and Personal, was one of the most fundamental philosophical judgments ever made. Later on we will observe how the Hebrews grew away from an earlier polytheism, vestiges of which we can find in these prevailingly monotheistic scriptures.

In the history of Israel, monotheism attains its height in the 8th, 7th, and 6th century B.C. ethical prophets, from Amos to II Isaiah. These early chapters of Genesis, contained in our present Pentateuch, were finally compiled in the centuries

following these greater prophets and no doubt reflects their monotheism.

The Upanishads, the early scriptures of the Hindus (c. 6th century B.C.), stress the unity of God, and in some of these writings Deity or Brahman is described as Purusha or Personal Spirit. In others, however, he is depicted as a totality of being that transcends what we ordinarily mean by 'conscious personality'.

b) Another similar teaching is that the world was created as a home for man, as its primary good purpose, and that man has a peculiar relation to the world of nature by virtue of the fact that he stands above it. Man is creation's crown and glory, the special achievement of God. Man has a unique place, and is to have a unique role. This is summed up in the idea that man is made in God's own image, or that man, like God, is a being of rational freedom. Relative to this point note the similarity between the two stories:

Gen. 1-2:4a

Man is made in "the image of God"; that is, he differs from the rest of creation in his self-conscious, moral personality, in which he alone resembles God. Implied in this are the significant possibilities for man's growth, personally and historically, "multiply....and have dominion". Human life is good; it has a purpose and is to have a triumphant destiny.

Gen. 2:4bf

God breathes "the breath of life" into man, by which he becomes a "living soul" (Kg.J. or AV), v. 7, i.e. a higher moral or personal being, above the animals and rest of nature. In both stories God does this by a special act, or by special purpose. Again the main note is present that life is good and that man is to have a destiny.

c) The ethical relationship of man to woman is similar in both stories: though there is some element of the old patriarchal notion that woman is subordinate to man, the final effect of Gen. 2 is that woman is equal, as is true of Gen. 1. In Gen. 2 woman comes from a part of man, and in the marriage relationship they become "one" again. In both accounts we have the Hebrew concept of woman's status as equal to her husband, whereas in the rest of the ancient world her role was so often that of a slave. In both Hebrew accounts the largest implication is that man and woman are made for companionship for each other. The point is specifically brought out in the beautiful account of Gen. 2:23-24. Here we have the idea of monogamous marriage and romantic, equalitarian love. The philosophy suggested here is that sexuality is not solely for reproduction of the species, but also for the love and companionship of the married partners, and that sexual affection implies responsibility to one person.

What value, truth, or authority do these stories possess? When we ask, are they true may we not reply that in their deepest and most meaningful sense they are true? In their moral and philosophic sense they may be regarded as profoundly true, if one looks at the world as a whole from a philosophic perspective and in the light of an ultimate religious faith. Here we may profitably recognize a difference of degree between historically "factual" truth, and a fuller "moral" or "evaluative" truth. On factual or "scientific" grounds, it may be doubtful whether the world came in seven, literal days of a 'creative week'. Such would be the mythological element or aspect in these ancient accounts. But their moral and philosophic insights may remain as significantly true. To understand what the latter may be we ask the following questions about these stories:

- Is it true that the world as a whole, nature and life, are good?
- Is it true that man is superior to the beasts, at least in the potentialities of his life and history?
- Is it true that man's life should have a good purpose?
- Is it true that woman should be equal to men?

Is it true that behind the world there seems to be a larger divine intelligence, plan, and loving purpose?

How the student will answer such questions will, of course, effect his own sense of values. Both of these stories, however, answer these questions in the affirmative. In view of the fact that there is a similar moral and religious outlook in both of these accounts, religious faith has said that in a real sense one inspiration seems to stand behind them and flow through them. For the religious mind God has spoken in them in their moral and philosophic teaching. We return again to the problem of the evaluation of these stories as we consider special incidents and details.

Study Questions on:

GENESIS chs. 1-2
Study Guide, Part One, I-II

1. Why do many Biblical scholars believe that there are two stories of creation? In what main ways do the two stories of creation differ?
2. In what main ways do they agree?
3. What is your reaction to this discovery that there are two stories that both differ and agree?
4. What human group seems to be the source of Gen. 1? Of Gen. 2?
5. What is the concept of God in Gen. 1? In Gen. 2? Over-all in both?
6. What are the main differences in philosophic value between the more ancient, Babylonian and the GENESIS accounts of creation? Base your answer on a resume of the story in the Babylonian account.
7. In what main way does the first account (Gen. 1) agree with the modern evolutionary idea of the beginnings of life?
8. In what ways do the modern scientific and the ancient account of the Bible differ?
9. What are several philosophic purposes of the authors in telling the story as they do in Gen. 1 and 2?
10. Is there conflict in your mind between the modern evolutionary idea of creation and Gen. 1? If so, state and defend your position. How might you attempt to reconcile these views?

11. What is the main "aetiological purpose" (explanation of human trait or social custom) of Gen. 1? Of Gen. 2?
12. What is the ideal of human marriage in Gen. 2?
13. When you think of the world's being "created" by God, what do you mean?
14. Do you think that life is good? Do you think that there is a meaning or a purpose to life? In simplest terms, how would you define this meaning or purpose?

III Composite Nature of the Literature

Evidence Supporting the Theory of Multiple Authorship

I. Observe that there are multiple accounts of events and names, e.g.:

a) Two stories of creation:

J(older source)

Gen. 2:4bf

P(newer source)

Gen. 1:1-2:4a

b) Variations in the name of God:

Y HW H

Gen. 2:4bf: "Yahweh Elohim", translated "Lord God". See Gen. 4:26 where it says God was known as Yahweh from earliest times.

Gen. 1: "Elohim" translated "God". P does not use "Yahweh" until Ex. 6:2f, and says God was not known as Yahweh until Moses time.

c) Differing geneological accounts:

Gen. 4:17-24

Gen. 5:1-31

d) Two stories of the Flood interwoven:

Gen. 6:2f - seven of each clean species and two of each unclean species taken into the ark.

Gen. 6:19 - one pair only of every species taken in.

7:4, 17; 8:6-11 water remains 40-47 days

7:24 water remains 150 days

Note the repetitious character of the Flood story which seems to indicate two interwoven stories, e.g. read:

6:5-8

6:9-13

e) Multiple accounts of the patriarchal stories, e.g.:

J

E

P

Abraham Deceives:
Pharaoh
Gen. 12:10-20

Abimelech
Gen. 20

interwoven too.

Treatment of Hagar
Gen. 16:1-6

Gen. 21:9-14

J

E

P

Joseph Sold:

Gen. 37:25-26 to
Ishmaelites on
instigation of
Judah

Gen. 37:23 & 36
to Midianites.
Ruben prominent
in this account,
v. 29.

2. Main characteristics and relationships of the sources may be identified in the following way:

a) P and J alone are interwoven up through Gen. 13.

b) At Gen. 15, another main source appears, E, which is interwoven with J and very much like J.² It is difficult to unravel JE. For our purposes we may consider both together as "prophetic" sources in over-all outlook (see below) in contrast to P, the "priestly" source. Yet certain major distinctions between J and E are evident upon close examination (see below).

c) Main characteristics distinguishing these three sources:

JE

P

(1) Generally speaking there is in JE emphasis on practical ethical conduct, or human duty in terms of direct relationship with neighbor, rather than in terms of formal ceremonial law or ritual: e.g. Gen. 4(J) or, Ex. 20-24 (E). JE are in spirit very much like the later writing prophets, e.g. Amos, who emphasized practical ethical conduct rather than ceremonial law and ritual. (Though the "ceremonial decalogue" appears in J, Ex. 34:17f)

Is interested in matters of ritual: formal ritual law or man's ceremonial duties are prominent, as emphasis on Sabbath in Gen. 1 or Ex. 25-31, 35-40, and entire book of Leviticus.

(2) They have an anthropomorphic conception of God: a warm depiction; man and God are close friends, as in Gen. 2-3. God stoops down and literally molds man with His hands "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life". Uses Yahweh (J) for God, with Elohim (2:4b)

Presents a formal, sophisticated philosophic conception of God: God merely speaks and world and man are made, Gen. 1. God an invisible Spirit. Uses Elohim for God. (Gen. 1, 2:4a)

(3) Their style is vivid, picturesque, narrative, concrete.

Its style is sweeping, grandiose, systematic, abstract, statistical -- emphasis on geneologies and numbers.

²Oesterley and Robinson suggest that because of peculiarities of style and character, unlike the rest of the Pentateuch, Gen. Ch. 14 must be based on independent reminiscences of some kind, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, Macmillan, 1934, p. 34.

J

Is "Realistic" -- tells events as they happened, e.g. Gen. 12:10-20. Uses Yahweh (Lord) prevailing. Interest seems to center in south; hence called the Judean source -- another reason for J symbol. Preference for name "Canaanite" for pre-Israelite people of Palestine.

E

Is "Moralistic" -- tries to explain or rationalize the imperfect acts of the patriarchs, e.g. Gen. 20. Uses Elohim (God) prevailing. Interest seems to center in north; hence called the Ephraimite source (Ephraim was one of the tribes that settled in the north).
Preference for name "Amorite" for pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine.

d) Other sources are present in the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), such as D (Deuteronomist) and H (Holiness Code source).

3. In the formation of Genesis (and the Pentateuch) we may note five major stages of growth:

Prior to 9th century B.C.

- (1) Original mythological tales common to all Semetic peoples, such as creation, flood, etc. For example the ancient Babylonians have a flood story and a creation story similar to the Hebrews.³
The word "mythological" would not cause difficulty. "Myths" are the imaginative stories ancient peoples told in order to account for origins, such as the Greek myth about Prometheus explaining the origin of man's use of fire. Myths may not be true in scientific or historic fact, but they are often true in moral or philosophic point. Thus note the evaluation of these Genesis stories of creation, etc., as true in fundamental philosophic teaching.
- (2) Distinctive Hebrew folk-epics such as Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, etc., early laws, war and march songs, fables, proverbs.

9th - 8th centuries

- (3) Independent writing of J and E, about 850 B.C. and 750 B.C. respectively, with J incorporating the above materials with his version of Abraham and the patriarchs. Many modern scholars believe that this literature existed in the form of oral folk-epics prior to the work of J and E.

8th - 5th centuries

- (4) Combining of these into JE and rise of the priestly tradition P.

³See G. A. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, Part II, Chs. 1-2 for the Babylonian texts.

- (5) Final combining of P and JE into our present Genesis (and with other sources D and H) into Pentateuch as a whole, the work of the Priestly school, about 300 B.C.^{3a}

This process covers a stretch of time from prior to 11th century through Post-Exilic times.

IV The Purpose of the Priestly School:

Covenant and Torah

We have seen that the priestly author or editors were responsible for the first majestic chapter of Genesis. P has combined J and E with his own priestly tradition into our present Pentateuch, which tells the story of God's covenant with the nation of Israel. This story has its climax in the account of Moses and the Exodus.

We may trace the Priestly authorship, or editorship of the Pentateuch, according to an unfolding emphasis on the ceremonial aspect of the Covenant. The priestly story begins with the establishment of the Sabbath (Gen. 1, the covenant with Man); Sacrifice (Gen. 9, the covenant with Noah); Circumcision (Gen. 17, the covenant with Abraham); Passover (E. 12:43); and further ritual requirements presented in the story of Moses as found in Exodus and the subsequent books of the Pentateuch.⁴

Also important in all of the sources is the moral aspect of the Nation's covenant with God. In addition to ceremonial duties, the people of Israel are to fulfill basic moral obligations in their personal and social relationships, if they are to stand in fellowship with God. This ethical aspect has its climax in the Mosaic Commandments, Exodus 20f (E). Both ceremonial and ethical sides of the covenant are summarized as Torah, God's Law. In observing moral and ritual laws, God will establish the Nation and vouchsafe to it an influential destiny among the nations.

In review, though the two stories of creation -- P (Gen. 1) and J (Gen. 2:4b-f) -- differ in a number of interesting details, they enshrine a similar philosophic, ethical, or religious interpretation of the origin of the world and its purpose and meaning. They teach that the world is the work of one Divine Intelligence, as its ultimate cause; that God brings it into being out of love; that man is a creature of superior spiritual endowment relative to the animal and inanimate levels of

^{3a}Oesterley & Robinson, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴See e.g. excellent account in B. W. Anderson: Understanding the Old Testament, Prentice-Hall, 1957, p. 384-390.

nature; and that he is to have "dominion", or a positive destiny in his struggle with evil. In general teaching, all of the sources of the Pentateuch have one underlying moral message. It is that all history is subject to the moral laws of God; who requires moral righteousness of men; and that God's purpose is "to bring all nations to a true knowledge of Himself"⁵ through the labors and ministry of Israel.

⁵ James Anderson, et. al.: An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, College of Wooster, 1951, p. 143.

The purpose of the elaborate genealogical schemes found in the earlier parts of Genesis is to give an account of the origin of the Hebrews and neighboring tribes. Genesis moves toward the conclusion that the Hebrews are a distinctive people, with a distinctive moral and religious message for the world, with distinctive religious ceremonies and beliefs summarized in the covenant to Abraham, 12:1-3.

The Purpose of the Genealogies: to show the origin of the Hebrews in relation to neighboring tribes

Of the physical universe
and life in general,
Gen. 2:4a

Of Adam
Seth, Gen. 5:1

Of Noah

Shem

Terah

Of Abraham
11:10f
12:1-2
14:13

Ham

Canaanites
9:18; 10:6, 15-20

Egyptians
10:6

Ethiopians
(Sheba)
10:6-7

Japheth

Philistines:
"the coastland
prople" (i.e.
the Gentiles)
10:2-5

Sarah (wife 1)

Keturah (w. 2)

Hagar (c)

Haran,
Abraham's
brother

Isaac (or "Israel")
& Rebekah
25:19f

Ishmael
25:12f

Lot by
daughters
11:27f;
19:30f

Esau

Jacob & Rachel,
Leah and maids,
Billah & Zilpah

Edomites
36:1,43

Hebrews
Joseph and his
brothers: the
12 tribes
29:31f

Midianites
25:2

Arabs

Ammonites Moabites

V Evaluation of the Multiple Authorship
of Genesis and Pentateuch

The discovery that this early narrative and biographical literature is the work of many hands, minds and hearts increases the value of these records.

The discovery that more than one person wrote Genesis and the Pentateuch need not detract from the moral and religious significance or authority of these books in their main content and message. Rather these books are the more valuable by containing the insights of many men about God, human life, and human responsibilities. We have already observed a similar philosophic outlook and moral message in each of these sources. If several minds arrive at the same point of view, there is all the more reason to consider their views. If the multiple authorship of these books is a fact, it gives them greater interest and worth, greater authority, than if they had all been written by one man, e.g. by Moses (the traditional view of their authorship).

We may say that Moses and his generation might have had a hand in the formation of these books in the general sense that some of these ancient materials, the traditions about creation, the flood, Abraham, etc., as they were passed on by Moses and his generation (c. 1300 B.C.) would appear with the latter's outlook and stamp upon them. The basic monotheism of these traditions might well have a source in Moses.

VI The Unfolding Message

Though Genesis has several sources, it has a unity of message, a spiritual unity, as we read it as a whole. The central theme of its final authors, the priests, is the telling of God's good purpose in creating the world and of the beginning of God's plan of seeing this purpose fulfilled, through the Covenant, in spite of the human sins which tend to thwart the divine plan. The idea of the divine covenant with men begins in Genesis and runs throughout the Old Testament. Our study will continue to discuss the nature of this covenant on both its moral and ceremonial sides, as one of the important themes of the Old Testament, in the area of philosophy of history. The over-all aim of the book seems to be to tell how, when the first human generations fail to live up to God's moral plan, His purpose is to be carried on by a special people, the Hebrews. Thus the Patriarchs, as the fathers of the Hebrews, come to have the most prominent space from Chapter 12 and following. Leading up to their story (which is itself the fifth great stage of the message) there are four steps that unfold the theme:

1. Chapters 1 and 2, as we have already seen, set forth the nature of God, the basic nature of man as created in God's image, and the nature and status of the physical and finite world in general. To review that message briefly: God is Personal Mind and Intelligence, author of the universe. God is moral in nature, a God of love -- He brings the world into being out of desire to do so, out of love. Man, as finite personal being, is the crown of creation. He has an intermediate status between God and nature; man is derived from a divine source transcendent to himself. All levels of finite being -- physical nature, lower life, and human life -- are designated as good. Thus we see how the early Hebrews were fundamentally optimistic about existence; the world and the finite processes of life express good purpose. History is meaningful and purposive: man is to have a significant destiny.

2. Gen. 3 and 4 continue the story of man and his fundamental nature in further detail. These significant chapters explain in depth what is meant by man as a personal or moral being, that is, a being made in God's image.

In their aspect as primitive stories, these early chapters of Genesis were first told to explain the origin of fundamental or characteristic human traits and institutions, which we have called aetiological tales. Thus the origin of the Sabbath is explained by Genesis 1; marriage by Genesis 2; in Genesis 3 we have the account of why man came to have a sense of higher values and conscience in distinction to animals. In addition to this main aetiological point there are others in Gen. 3 and 4: why women suffer in child birth; why human beings have been characteristically afraid of snakes and stomp on them when startled by them in the grass; the origin of the human sense of modesty and why human beings wear clothes, unlike the animals; why man has to labor hard for his living and why nature seems to resist his efforts. Among other aetiological points in Chapter 4 we have the origin of the immemorial enmity between the nomad cattle herder (Abel) and the dirt farmer (Cain), and so on.

The deeper or timeless message in these chapters, however, is to tell how and why man is a moral being, and at these levels we find essential truth and value in them. These chapters suggest that man's freedom is the deepest meaning of the image of God in him, to borrow the phrase from Chapter 1. Adam and Eve freely choose to eat of the forbidden tree. Man, accordingly, is moral being because he is free being; his freedom defines his essential nature as moral. Automatic and determined process is not moral -- it is mechanical. But a moral process is

activity that is freely understood or chosen.. (This is a definition of moral, of course, anterior to its commoner meaning as specific ethical acts.)

Another element of man's moral nature concomitant with his freedom, and a facet of it, is intelligence. The story of Chapter 3 deeply reveals man's capacity for intelligence in Adam's and Eve's curiosity about the effects of eating the forbidden fruit. Because of a high endowment of curiosity, man has, by and large, developed his intelligence. Related to this, human freedom, or the power to direct thought at will to the problems of life, has been the source of reason and intelligence. Thus to say, as some might do, that this old account proclaims the sanctity of man's freedom but not his intelligence, seems to us to be a foreshortened type of exegesis.

The deepest level of free, imaginative intelligence is to come into a knowledge of values, to sense the difference between good and evil (announced in the chapter as the very quality of the gods). As a moral being comes to know good and evil, he develops moral conscience.

A further point of Genesis 3 is to state that a free, moral being can do wrong, and is responsible for his acts. This old story does not teach, in our view, that all men are sinners, but rather that men can, or may sin, and sometimes do. Essentially the story of the Garden of Eden describes man as a moral being in his freedom and intelligence, capacities that are fundamentally good and God-given, but with which he can do evil. Contrary to the traditional view (and its revival in neo-orthodox theology), the story need not be interpreted as teaching the inevitability of human sinfulness, or that men tend toward waywardness or depravity or selfishness by nature, or toward disobedience to God and the good ordained for them. Rather it suggests that in his freedom man may express such negative qualities or actions. The old story teaches, doubtless, the possibility of human sinfulness as an inherent meaning of freedom, not the inevitability or necessity of sin. Indeed, in its quaint naivete, the source of evil, in the symbol of the serpent, is placed by the story in an object external to man, not within him!

The greatest puzzle, however, of the Garden story is the nature of the wrong or the "sin" that Adam and Eve commit. And we do not believe the question can be meaningfully answered until Genesis 4, or the Cain and Abel story is reviewed. Why would the Lord God not want man to have a knowledge of higher value -- i.e. to be truly human, rather than to remain in a state of pre-human, animal innocence? The account in Genesis 3 is that the human pair were forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and of the tree of "life" or immortality, lest, it says, they "become like one of us, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:22) But this seems an arbitrary prohibition, reflecting, no doubt, the primitive concept of deity as harboring jealousy concerning its superior status, and not wishing man to encroach too near, or appropriate the divine prerogatives.

At the most for Genesis 3 all we can say is that it implies there may be a "theological" dimension or meaning of "sin", namely, disobedience against a divine command. Gen. 3 may set forth such a fundamental idea, but it does not explain it -- it does not present the reason why man is not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil -- except a kind of selfish reason on the gods' part! All we find there is the divine prohibition not to encroach on the divine status. In its best light the message is that man is not to overreach himself. We should recognize the finite plane on which we are made, and our limits. The idea of man's acknowledgement of a divine reality above and beyond him, which he should reverence and not attempt to gain or become, may indeed, by interpretation, have profound significance, but we have to search Chapter 4 for further insight or a clue.

The Cain and Abel story suggests an ethical definition of sin, which by implication has a theological dimension. In Chapter 4 sin is set forth as aggression on other human life, and in the character of Cain we have depicted an inordinate pride of self that lay behind the aggression. Cain put himself in the place of God in arrogating to himself absolute command over the life of his brother. Furthermore, in taking Abel's life he showed fundamental disrespect for God's highest work of creation in man, the man Abel. Thus Cain sinned against God in the murder of his brother. Together, therefore, the two stories, the Garden

and Cain and Able, may teach that a pride which tends to put itself in the place of God in a dominating and aggressive relation to other human life is sin

Both stories teach that consequences of judgment follow transgressive acts. Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden and Cain must wander the earth. Man suffers because of sin. At a further symbolical level of interpretation of the Garden story for modern use, we may ask, from what is mankind banished? As men we are banished forever from a state of animal innocence, i.e. from the Garden. In the story of the "fall" and the banishment we may see an allegory of the actual and continuing human reality. Our impulse toward the perfecting of life is not to return to a state of animal innocence, but to move forward in the growth of moral freedom and responsibility.

Man is to win out victoriously over sin and evil in the course of his history: he is to bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent is the symbol of evil. There will be salvation or redemption for the seed of the woman, that is, for the coming human generations. God's grace and salvation are assured. The mark on the contrite Cain teaches that man, even after sin, remains the child of God and is never outside the love of God.

Once again, in what sense are these stories true? Gen. 3 contains much psychological, moral and religious truth. It need not be factual truth, if one finds it hard to accept the idea of a literal Adam and Eve. Compare Jesus's parables: for example, the story of the Good Samaritan was not true in fact, in the sense that Jesus had some specific man in mind when he told the story, but Jesus rather meant it to be true in moral. Gen. 3 is a parable on life, deeply true of all life. As we have already noted, these ancient stories of Genesis are sometimes called myth; if however this word is used in connection with them, we do not imply the popular negative connotation. The story of Adam and Eve is not a myth in the sense of something entirely primitive, childish, untrue, and therefore of no value. The great "myths" of all peoples are accounts of ancient worthies or heroes which purport to teach some important moral and religious truth. The philosophic teachings about human nature and existence, reviewed above, suggest the way Gen. 3 may be indeed true, whether Adam and Eve were real people or not.

3. The Cain and Abel story, and with it we will here cite the Tower of Babel (Ch. 11), further depict basic problems of social relationships. If Gen. 2 and 3 concern individual human nature, chs. 4 and 11 relate to society and civilization: We discussed above the ethical definition of sin as aggression on other life, which the story of Cain and Abel brings out. The largest teaching of the story is the fact of human interdependence; men must uphold each other -- this is the implied answer to the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" Concern for other men in their need is the basis of a wholesome and happy human society. The story of Cain is an account of individual sin and the relationship of neighbor to neighbor. The Tower of Babel in its way suggests collective sin: whole groups and nations can sin in their pride against God, which is symbolized by the tower men try to build to heaven. Men in their collective life often try to put themselves in the place of God in their attempts to lord it over other men, e.g. the Nazis attempt to enslave Europe; or the Soviet rulers domination of the Hungarians; or the traditional attitude of the white majority toward the black minority in the United States. The Babel or confusion of tongues (basically an aetiological tale of the origin of languages) teaches that great confusion follows action based on inordinate, collective sinful pride. Social unrest results from racial discrimination. In our recent history as Americans a civil war took place over slavery. Two world wars resulted from the collective coveting by nations of weaker neighbors' territory.

Note other aetiological tales in ch. 4, such as how ironworking began, etc. Also note the primitive ethics of the blood-thirsty war song of Lamech, ch. 4:23-24. This comes from an age with ancient man when regulatory law or justice did not exist; a man could take unlimited vengeance on his enemies. As we progress with the Old Testament story, we shall see how the concept of law or justice in human

relationships rises away from this early barbaric code of Lamech.

4. Gen. 6-8: The Flood. The theme in these chapters is that collective human sinfulness is followed by judgment. Individual and collective wrong doing bring, in the long run, collective ruin. The Flood is symbolical of history's greater judgments, e.g. war. Imagine an Atomic war -- what a Flood that would be!

Was there a real excessively large flood in pre-historic times in the southern Mesopotamian region? In 1929 British and American archaeologists found a layer of mud ten feet thick beneath the rubbish at Ur, near the Persian Gulf. Below the layer they discovered artifacts of the stone age. Surrounding areas showed that the clay was widespread, suggesting the possibility of a great deluge that may have occurred about 4000 B.C.⁶ Many peoples and cultures have a tradition of a great flood in ancient times. Like their creation story, the Babylonians also have a flood story, which resembles the Hebrew account.

Why does collective ruin follow collective sin? The flood story suggests that a moral cause-effect principle is inherent in the universe. Genesis implies that moral law is founded in the sacredness to God of personal life, a major theme progressively unfolded in the Biblical story. If men continue in aggressive and unneighborly deeds, judgment follows. We have to wait to hear from later Biblical voices such a moral law of history stated in a more hopeful or positive mood, to the effect that neighborliness and love tend to make for peace and security in human affairs.

God's blessing of Noah's righteous and obedient conduct teaches that God will not forget us in our judgments. Note the primitive idea of God at this place, 8:21, where the Lord "smells" the sacrifice. In the Babylonian flood story it says that the gods swarmed around the sacrifice of the Babylonian Noah "like flies".

Gen. 12f begins the larger portion of the book and tells how permanent human betterment and uplift may be secured. In general, the teaching is that God's redemptive work begins in the lives of individual men of good will and through them affects others and society. We turn now to the Patriarchs.

⁶Cited in Time, Oct. 29, 1956, from Werner Keller: The Bible as History, William Morrow and Co.

Study Questions on:

Genesis chs. 3-11
Study Guide, Part One, III-VI

1. In what over-all ways may these Genesis stories of creation be true? Are you troubled by the distinction between "factual" or "scientific" truth and "moral" or "philosophic" truth? How far may the distinction between these two orders of "truth" be taken, in your view?
2. What is the main evidence for the multiple authorship of Genesis?
3. What are the distinguishing characteristics of JE in contrast to P?
4. How may this discovery of multiple authorship be evaluated? In your opinion does it detract or add to the significance of Genesis?
5. What is the purpose of the genealogies? On the map locate the territories of neighboring and kindred tribes to the Hebrews, i.e. Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Midianites, and Arabs.
6. Trace the steps of the Genesis account of the human story. What is the main teaching of the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3; of Cain and Abel, Gen. 4; of the Flood, Gen. 6-8; of Babel, Gen. 11?
7. In what sense and to what degree are these stories true?
8. Are human beings "free" or "determined"? or both?
9. If free, what is meant by, and to what extent is there human freedom?
10. Why is freedom basic to our "moral nature"?
11. What is meant by the "ethical" and a possible "theological" meaning of "sin"? How are these two aspects related? Is either more primary than the other in your opinion?
12. To what extent does our modern life and society fail in the ideal of being our "brother's keeper"? Can you cite examples? Should we always be our brother's keeper?
13. Do historical judgments inevitably follow collective and social sins?
14. What do you think about the possibility of there being a moral law? In simplest terms how would you define it? Where would such law be?
15. Can you give examples today of what may seem to you to be the presence and work of moral law in human affairs?
16. What is your evaluation of Gen. 4:23-24 -- the Song of Lamech -- as morality?
17. Gen. 8:20-21: do you think of God as a being who would literally "smell" a sacrifice? What is your conception of God?

PART TWO

The Patriarchal Period and Sojourn in Egypt

GENESIS Chs. 12f

Reading Assignment:

1. RSV GENESIS

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Ch. 11:31-12:20 | -- Abram's departure from Ur of the Chaldees: the covenant; deceives Pharoah - J account |
| 20:1-18 | -- Abraham deceives Abimelech - E account |
| 13:14-18; | |
| 15:1-18:21 | -- The covenant continued; divine appearances to Abraham; promise of son; treatment of Hagar - J account |
| 21:1-21 | -- Birth of Isaac; E account of treatment of Hagar |
| 22:1-19 | -- Offering of Isaac |
| 25:19-34 | -- Birth of Esau and Jacob; selling of the birthright |
| 27:1-41 | -- Jacob's guile in receiving father's blessing |
| 29:30-30:1-24 | -- The Twelve Tribes |
| 32:2-33:21 | -- Reconciliation with Esau; wrestling with the angel |
| Chs. 37; 39-45; | -- The story of Joseph |
| 48; 50 | |

2. Study Guide, Part Two, I-IV

- I. The Historic Basis of the Stories of the Patriarchs
- II. The Patriarchs as Types of Human Character
 - Vestiges of Primitive Religion
 - Conclusion on the Significance of the Patriarchs and Genesis as a whole

THE PATRIARCHS

I. The Historic Basis

With chapter 12 we notice a major break in the theme of Genesis. Chapters 1-11 contain vast epic, mythological material. Chapters 12 and following are more intimate, personal, and realistic. Is the material they cover actually historical? We believe that in substance they are. The names of the patriarchs are not just allegorical symbols of entire tribes, as some of the material suggests, e.g.

"Jacob" is equivalent to "Israel", the national name, 32:28

"Esau" is equivalent to "Edom", the name of a tribe, 25:30

The following evidence supports the view that the patriarchs were real persons:

There are two independent accounts of their lives, J and E, both of which imply that they were real persons.

These narratives have an impressive reserve, moderation, and life-likeness. They depict the patriarchs not as semi-divine heroes like Hector or Achilles of Homer's Illiad. No incredible marvels, other than the communications of the Deity, are reported. The abundance of personal incident and detail suggests that we are reading about real persons. The realism of the account is convincing: e.g. in Chapter 24 Abraham is not reported as exercising superiority over the native princes of Canaan with whom he allied himself, but is rather depicted as their equal. For the most part the account is that the patriarchs live at peace with the Canaanites. How could this have been the case had the "patriarchs" been great in-moving tribes. (We will notice a contrast in the situation at a later time in Joshua and Judges.) The commentator Driver asks, How could we imagine "Joseph" as a whole tribe rising to power in the court of Egypt? When we consider these things it becomes rather evident that the material in Genesis 12 and following is based on the lives of actual men, who were heads of nomadic families.

The Patriarchs lived sometime earlier or later during the second thousand year period B.C. The sojourn in Egypt (following the Joseph story) ended, according to one reckoning, about 1300 B.C., which we discuss presently in the account of Moses.

II. The Patriarchs as Types of Human Character

As we read their histories the Patriarchs seem to be examples of how God's spirit may work in imperfect human lives, and, by transforming them, bring uplift and advance. The main points in their story as a whole are the following:

1. The patriarchs were not supermen, but ordinary, erring mortals, who came, nevertheless, to live triumphantly, and who blessed other lives they touched, as they let God's spirit work through them. Abraham leaves Ur, with its polytheism, doubtless human sacrifice and other base modes of religious rite and belief, to seek a higher and finer meaning of religion and way of life. Ottley has commented: "Abraham...is the prototype of all that is highest in the old Semetic religion -- of all that was best fitted to serve as a foundation for a great moral and religious development. Abraham is in fact a representative of Semitism in two points especially:

(1) in his strong consciousness of God, and (2) in the impulse which moved him to separate himself from an alien and more highly developed civilization. He is the pastoral chief whose life of wandering in the desert has imbued him with a sense of the irresistible power which lies behind the rugged and stern phenomena of nature amidst which his lot is cast. In a spirit of awe, of receptivity, of submission to the leadings of his God, he passes from land to land, dwelling intents, rearing his altar for sacrifice beneath the open sky, shunning the tumult of the cities, and sojourning in the broad and silent spaces of the wilderness...Such deliberate abandonment of the idolatrous and highly developed culture of Babylon is typical of the moral intensity of the pastoral Semite. It marked them out as a people of revelation. It separated them from the corruption of polytheism..."⁷

The separation of the Jew from the corruption of polytheism is expressed by the covenant with Abraham. The covenant contains both a moral and a ceremonial side. Here we observe that the J source stresses the moral side of this covenant, a call to righteousness of life (12:13; 18:19), while P emphasizes the ceremonial requirement of circumcision (17:1-2, 8-10).⁸ Elaboration of the ceremonial and ethical aspects reaches its height in the story of Moses and the Exodus.

2. The story of Jacob probably best typifies the truth that salvation is possible when human life, aware of its ability to sin out of pride and stubbornness, yields in humility and contrition. These are characteristics with which God's Spirit can deal. The young Jacob is cocky, crafty, deceitful; the elderly Jacob is repentant and humble. Commencing with a typical interest in worldly position in a desire to be chief heir; willing to deceive his neighbor and brother to attain his ambition, he continues restless and dissatisfied, as he fails to experience and possess the deep values of life. His wrestling with the angel, or his personal encounter with God, is the turning point, Gen. 32:24.

The story of the selling of the birthright indicates the national or sociological characteristics differentiating Israel and Edom, typified in Jacob and Esau. In this story "We have...an explanation of the fact that, though Edom came to its national heritage earlier than Israel, it nevertheless had to take second place."⁹ The Esau-Jacob stories explain why Edom and Israel were always at odds; why Israel regarded itself as more favored in God's eyes; and why frequently she had the upper hand in the border conflicts with her southern neighbor.

3. The spirit of forgiveness and service are immortalized in the Joseph story. The charming, brilliant ambition of the young Joseph becomes the steadfast integrity, the sympathy for others sufferings, the life of service to one's adopted country and one's kin, which characterized the prime minister of Pharaoh. Personal interest in other's needs lies at the foundations of man's chance to better his life. The story also emphasizes the idea of Providence in a life that is dedicated and devout.

A larger Divine purpose may enter life through the free decisions of men when motivated by a high ideal and sense of good will, 45:8; 50:20. Through Joseph's good will blessing came to Egypt, and, eventually, even to the brothers who had originally rejected him. The story suggests that free decision, acting in good will, in and upon circumstance, is the way Providence may exercise its purpose in history.

⁷R. L. Ottley, The Religion of Israel, Cambridge University Press, 1905, p. 23.

⁸Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

⁹The Abingdon Bible Commentary, Abingdon Press, 1929, p. 230., Theodore H. Robinson

Some scholars have believed that the following associations are vestiges of a primitive semetic religion of a time prior to the over-all monotheistic interpretation of Genesis. That proper names often meant animals, e.g. Rachel, "ewe" -- Leah, "wild cow" -- Simeon, "hyaena" (Gen. 29:31f) suggests a totemistic belief among primitive semites; that the cave of Machpelah where Abraham buried Sarah (Gen. 23:17-20) was associated with the oak of Mamre, a sanctuary (Gen. 18:1,35:8), may suggest ancestor reverence or whoship; that "household gods" are mentioned several times in Gen. 31:19, 30,34 (compare Gen. 18:2; 1:26; Ex. 20:3) clearly indicates an early polytheistic belief; that oaks, springs of water, stones were associated with appearances of the deity suggests primitive animism as characterizing early Hebrew religion. In our study of the Exodus period we will return to this evidence of primitive religion in ancient Israel.

The fact that GENESIS has many parts, duplicate accounts, and sources is a cause for wonder and admiration. It is the work of many centuries and many minds, yet inspired by a similar religious and moral ideal. Its over-all message is to portray how God's spirit moved in men of high character and profound conviction. Creation, human nature and redemption are its great themes. We may define redemption as the devotion of a thing from its merely natural uses or tendencies to a higher purpose or usefulness, by a higher power. The stories of the patriarchs, to the ancient compiler of GENESIS, were the beginnings of God's redemption or lifting up of human life and history; and the promise was that through Abraham, in the heritage of life and faith he would bequeath, all men would be blessed. If men would fulfill their side of the covenant, the Divine Spirit would faithfully fulfill His.

Study Questions on:

GENESIS Chs. 12f
(selected passages indicated in the assignment)

Study Guide, Part Two, I-IV.

1. Why may we believe that the Patriarchs were historical persons?
2. The theory that they may have been abstract names for various semetic tribes was based upon what suggestion in GENESIS?
3. Give a gist of the purpose of the Patriarch stories from the over-all view of GENESIS and its final writers or editors.
4. What in general terms does the life of Abraham teach? Of Jacob? Of Joseph?
5. Relative to the story of Joseph, how do "circumstance" and "free decision" alternate to suggest a philosophy of providence? What is the balance between the idea of God in external circumstance, and God in the mind and character of Joseph, Gen. 45:8; 50:19? What is your philosophy of providence or God's guidance of personal life?
6. What moral difference do you find in the two accounts of Abraham's deception of a foreign prince about his wife? Would Abraham's explanation in Gen. 20:12 that Sarah was really "his sister" make any difference in the situation? What do you conclude as to the sanctity of marriage among ancient semetic peoples?
7. In the two accounts of the treatment of Hagar what difference do you find in Abraham's attitude toward the slave girl, Hagar, Gen. 16:6f; 21:11f? And in the description of Ishmael's character? Judging from this, and the two accounts of Abraham's deception of a foreign prince, how would you classify the two sources as to type of writing, in terms of such expressions as "realistic" or "moralistic"? What problem of polygamous marriage is disclosed by these stories?
8. Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-14; 18:16-19: the Covenant. What is promised or obligated by God on the divine side of the covenant? What two conditions, one ceremonial, one moral, must Abraham and his descendants fulfill?
9. Gen. 12:6-7; 15:1, 12-13; 16:7, 14; 18:1f, 20-21; 20:6. In what ways did deity make itself known to Abraham and others? What are your conclusions as to the conception of deity at that time? What would you judge is the significance of the tree in the appearances of deity by certain oaks? Or of wells and springs in the same connection? or of stones, Gen. 28:22?
10. What may such references as the following possibly indicate about primitive semetic religion (of a time prior to the over-all monotheistic interpretation of GENESIS): that proper names often meant animals, e.g. Rachel, "ewe" -- Leah, "wild cow" -- Simeon, "hyaena", Gen. 29:31f; that the cave of Machpelah where Abraham buried Sarah, Gen. 23:17-20, was associated with the oak of Mamre, a sanctuary, Gen. 18:1 (compare Gen. 35:8); that "household gods" are mentioned several times in Gen. 31:19, 30, 34 (compare Gen. 18:2; 1:26; Ex. 20:3); that oaks, springs of water, stones were associated with appearances of the deity?

11. What ancient custom is suggested by the account of the offering of Isaac in Gen. 22? What is the significance, then, of this story in the history of religion? What purpose does the author of GENESIS give to God's command in Ch. 22? Are we sometimes required to make sacrifices in life that test our faith?
12. What relationship between the two peoples, Hebrews and Edomites (descendants of Esau) does the birth of Esau and Jacob explain, Gen. 25:23? Reading this verse, and others, such as 12:6, what do you conclude as to time lapse between the writing of these accounts and the original events themselves?
13. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament says "By faith Abraham...sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8f). What is "faith"? What kind of faith does the scientist express in his investigation of nature? What kind of faith does the religious sage express in his affirmation of God and moral law?

Questions on the assignment from JOSHUA, JUDGES, I SAMUEL
Study Guide, Three, V-VIII

I. Biography of Moses:

1. Once again note the two primary, interwoven sources, extending now to the life of Moses and the events of the Exodus:

	J	&	E
Revel given as name of Kenite leader in.....	2:18,		
Jethro in			3:1
Moses depicted as taking his family back with him to Egypt in			4:20
whereas another account suggests that the family had stayed behind with Jethro when Moses returned to Egypt.....			18:5
Scholars believe that these two sources have been interwoven to give us the present account of the plagues.			
Two versions of the Decalogue.....	34:17-38.....		20:3f

Scholars have also found the hand of P, the final priestly editor of the Pentateuch, in these stories; e.g. there seem to be two accounts of the crossing of the sea: in one the east wind blows back the water, 14:21b (J); in the other the water is as a wall on either side, 14:29 (P).

2. As one standard estimate of the time of the Exodus, modern research has suggested reigns of the Egyptian Pharaohs Seti I (1319-1301 B.C.) and Ramses II (c. 1301-1234 B.C.), to whose reigns the allusions in Ex. 1:11 and 2:23 may refer. The "store city", "Rameses", certainly suggests the period of the Pharaohs of that name. Egyptian records bear out some of the detail of the Exodus account. For example in five Egyptian inscriptions, from Thothmes III (1503-1449 B.C.) to Ramses IV (1171-1165 B.C.), a people called the Aperu are mentioned, and are indicated as foreigners who are settled in colonies in the land with menial and slave occupations. Scholars generally believe that the name Aperu is correctly translated "Hebrew". Sunbaked bricks made without straw have been found dating from this general period. Natural occurrences which fit the description of the plagues have been common in Egypt. Excavations have disclosed that Rameses II either built, or rebuilt, a city by the name of Pi-Tum, situated about sixty miles northeast of Cairo in the general vicinity of the "land of Goshen", where Gen. 45:10 says the children of Israel settled at the time of Joseph. The similarity between "Pi-Tum" and the "Pithom" of Exodus is evident. Abingdon Commentary says, "The ruins show it to have been a city about two hundred and twenty yards square, enclosed by immense brick walls, and containing many chambers built of brick which were probably used for the storing of grain."¹⁰ The death of the Pharaoh mentioned in Ex. 2:23 probably refers, then, either to Seti or Ramses II as the Pharaoh of the oppression. If Seti, then Ramses II was the Pharaoh with whom Moses had to deal. If Ramses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression, then his successor, Merneptah (1234-1214 B.C.) was the Egyptian ruler at the time of the Exodus plagues. At the present stage of archaeological knowledge this matter cannot be settled exactly. There is some suggestion, both archaeological and Biblical, that the Exodus might have occurred at an earlier date, during the 14th century B.C.¹¹

¹⁰op. cit., p. 250., J. F. McLaughlin

¹¹Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 251.

3. According to EXODUS, Moses was reared as an Egyptian prince. He would therefore have been educated in all the life and culture of the Egyptians. As Acts 7:22 says, "And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds." He might have been influenced by the famous monotheistic, Aton cult of Pharaoh Ikhnaton (1375-1358 B.C.). It is reasonable to suppose that he would have been acquainted with the priest-craft of the Egyptians. This knowledge might have helped him when he returns later to free his people. The Egyptian magicians and sorcerers couldn't fool him; he could use their tricks! As an Egyptian prince he would have developed qualities of leadership. To give up the luxury and power of the Egyptian court in order to free a minority group indicates the greatness of Moses' character.

4. We note his keen sense of justice, Ex. 2:11f., which was to flower later in the great commandments which bear his name.

5. After his flight from Egypt he learns more about the ancestral God, Yahweh, through Jethro, Ex. 2:16f; 3:1f; 18:1-12, Kenite chief in the wilderness of Midian.

6. The burning bush experience. Bear in mind that what happened to Moses was more important than what happened to the bush. Whether we explain this occurrence supernaturally, or in some more natural way, the deeper fact remains that Moses had been thinking about the situation of his people, when an extraordinary experience stimulated and crystallized his thought and determination. Whether volatile oil or sunlight on colorful leaves accounts for the "burning" bush, it would have been natural for Moses, an ancient person, to regard the phenomenon as a divine sign. In any case, God's voice "called to him out of the bush", Ex. 3:4, out of the midst of the experience, and spoke to him, precipitating in his mind a few primary truths that would guide him. These were:

a) That God is a single spirit, 3:14, with "no family connections".¹² With this insight Moses repudiates the polytheism he had known in Egypt. This single divine Spirit is the great power behind the forces of nature.

b) That God is against tyranny and slavery. God is interested "in the welfare of the people; not in maintaining the power of the ruler".¹³ (In Egypt the Pharaohs had been regarded as demi-gods, ruling by divine right). God rather was on the side of oppressed people, and was interested in seeing justice done for the oppressed, Ex. 3:7,9. For Moses, belief in God and religion carries with it a social responsibility. This alliance of religion with humane justice and the democratic impulse was to prove of utmost significance.

c) The idea of moral law: the Ten Commandments (see below in III)

¹² James Anderson, et. al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, College of Wooster, 1951, p. 7.

¹³ Ibid.

II. The Plagues and Crossing of the Sea

How are we to interpret the miraculous aspects of the deliverance?

1. It is possible to see natural events behind these accounts. Such plagues were common occurrences in Egypt. Some students have suggested the following sequence of events as the basis of the story of the plagues:

- (1) "Nile turned into blood," and dying fish -- water is usually reddened with marl and infusoria (c. August).
- (2) Frogs -- they multiply after a flood (c. September).
- (3) and 4. Mosquitoes and gnats -- they breed in stagnant pools (c. September).
- (5) and 6. Disease sores -- mosquitoes produce distressing forms of skin disease (c. September).
- (7) Thunderstorms accompanied by hail -- rare but not unknown in the Nile Valley (c. January).
- (8) Locusts -- they eat green crops (c. February).
- (9) 'Thick darkness' -- great sandstorm (c. March-April).¹⁴

(10) The tenth plague suggests an epidemic of some kind.^{14a} And perhaps here we have one reason why Moses was able to accomplish the escape of his people -- against the military might of Egypt. Perhaps the plague was attributed to the Israelites as the source of infection in some way, so that Egyptians became quite anxious to gettthem out of the land. We read in 12:13: "And the Egyptians were urgent with the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, 'We are all dead men!'"

It is often pointed out that the reference to "Red Sea", as in 13:18, may better be translated "Reed Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" in Hebrew (Yam Suph),¹⁵ that is, a marshy place. It is conceivable that "a strong east wind" (14:21) might have dried such a marsh sufficiently for a group of people to have crossed successfully.¹⁶ Lake Timash, north of the Gulf of Suez, is indeed surrounded by reedy marshes and in ancient times was connected by a shallow channel with the Gulf.¹⁷

Of course, the overall account of the plagues and crossing is depicted as miraculous from the standpoint of the ancient authorship. Some passages are less subject to a "naturalistic" interpretation than others, as e.g. P's version that as the people crossed, the waters were a "wall to them on their right hand and on their left" (14:22,29). In the tenth plague, or "pestilence", a miraculous passing-over of the houses of the Hebrews by the avenging angel of death occurred, so that the visitation struck only the children of the Egyptians, and so on.

¹⁴James Anderson, et. al., op. cit., p. 4. (mimeographed version)

^{14a}Ex. 9:15 says the Lord "could have...struck" Pharaoh's "people with pestilence", but that He did not do so in order to prove his power further and to humble their hearts. Then follow the plagues of hail, locusts, darkness, and finally death of the first born, which seems to fulfill the threat of "pestilence" announced in 9:15.¹⁵

¹⁵Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 264.

¹⁶See 10:19,30 where it says that a strong east wind initially brought and finally lifted the plague of locusts.

¹⁷Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 264. See other curious reports in the story: the Egyptian sorcerers, as does Moses, turn rods into snakes, 7:11; Egyptian magicians also turn the Nile into "blood", 7:22, and make frogs come up on the land, 8:7.

2. We may also say that God was in this great event, this deliverance. Our problem is: in what aspect or phase was the Divine Spirit present?¹⁸ We offer the following type of reply -- which is reverent, theistic, and realistic.

We may say that God acted mainly through the personal side of these events, and that they may best be interpreted as a coincidence of natural phenomena with awakened conscience and spiritual meaning that the personal side of the equation gives them. Actually all historical events are of this two-fold character; outward happening plus personal and human content. Accordingly God may fill the event with His purposes through the personal side or channel. This is one way in which we may think of this deliverance as divine, or "miraculous". There had, no doubt, been plagues previously, thick darkness of sand storm, disease, locusts, etc., things which are common in Egypt. But this particular cycle of plagues took on new significance in the light of Moses's historic opportunity, when touched and directed by the personal factor and filled with good purpose. We may say that God was in these events through Moses. The plagues by themselves could not have delivered the people; but God's Spirit working through Moses's sense of values and purposes, within the opportunities which the historic time and circumstances afforded, did deliver them.

¹⁸The more traditional interpretation would be to say that God was in both the human and the natural side of these events; that God, as Lord of nature, acting on the side of His immanence directly caused the multiplication of frogs, and the other miraculous phenomena described. In any case, the human side of the equation, as a channel through which the Divine Spirit might work, seems the more important aspect; had Moses not been there a miraculous multiplication of frogs would have been an isolated, meaningless event.

III Covenant and Commandments

The Torah

The two things that establish the greatness of Moses are the actual achievement of the deliverance and the promulgation of the Covenant or Commandments. In Moses laws the moral side of the Covenant comes to full definition. Note the passages where Moses may have learned about Yahweh through Jethro, priest of Midian, and Kenite chief, Ex. 2:16-22; 3:1; 18:1-2.

1. The Covenant is a contract; it is voluntary, or moral, Ex. 19:5-8; 24:1-9; 32:1f. It is not biological or totemic; the people are not God's people by physical descent, but by adoption. A disinherited people find and ally themselves with a new God, new for their generation, at least. This God adopts them. This being the situation, neither party can be coerced. God cannot be forced or manipulated in any mechanical way. He is a free party to the contract. This was unlike the usual tribal gods of primitive or ancient peoples, gods who were tied to, and bound to help, the tribe through tribal loyalty. In this new situation, possibly unique in the history of religion, if the people fill their side of the bargain, God will bless them; if not, he will chastise them, perhaps even look for others to adopt in their place. Watch out, then, this Yahweh would not be trifled with! This fluid, contractual situation made for the possibility of growth in the Hebrew religion as successive generations reinterpreted the meaning of the Covenant. What was the bargain, or the content of the Covenant?

2. The Commandments of Moses, Ex. 20, contain basic moral laws or principles of conduct which human societies must observe, if men are to live together in harmonious relationship. Their universality, or relevance for all men and peoples, was not fully understood until later times in the history of Israel. But the absoluteness with which Moses promulgated them in the name of God opened the way for growth in the conception of their significance.

a) The foundation principle of the Commandments is respect for persons, based on the idea of the sacredness or worth of personality. The last five, the particularly moral commandments, express reverence for personality as their underlying thought.

b) All high civilizations have something corresponding to Moses 10 Commandments. Human experience teaches that observance of such rules is necessary, if men are to live happily and harmoniously together. The Commandments have universal significance.

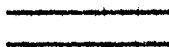
c) Commandments I-III present the cardinal Hebrew idea of Ultimate Reality, God, as Personal Being. In substance they affirm that personality is basic in the universe. Laws VI-X are related to Laws I-V. The Commandments as a whole suggest that to honor and respect God is basic to honoring and respecting our fellow men, or that human personality is sacred because the ultimate creative source of all being, God, is personal. Since personality is ultimate in being, it is ultimate in value. Here at least is one philosophic way to understand the significance that the Commandments eventually come to have in the highest thought of Israel.

The Deuteronomist source summarized this reverence for the Divine Being in those words which Jews expressly, and Christians by acknowledgment, proclaim as their central and foremost doctrine -- the Shema of Israel which announces

monotheistic faith: "Hear (Shema), O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deut. 6:4)

In all three Synoptic Gospels Jesus is reported to have repeated the Shema and designated it as the First Commandment in connection with the Golden Rule as the Second Commandment, and "like unto" the First, also found in the Pentateuch, "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:17-18)

3. The ceremonial covenant, e.g. Ex. 12; 25:1-9; 20:8; 34:17-28. As presented in Exodus the covenant with God has two sides, a ceremonial aspect as well as the ethical emphasis. We have already observed these two aspects in previous mention of the growing idea of the covenant in the Pentateuch. The compilers of that document attributed the ceremonial of the Passover to Moses, Ch. 12. In Ex. 20:8 we find again the emphasis on the keeping of the Sabbath; and Ex. 34:17-28 stressed other ritualistic observances, in what is sometimes called the Ceremonial Decalogue. The books of Leviticus and Numbers (traditionally attributed to Moses) contain numerous ceremonial commandments, including the enjoining of various kinds of sacrifice, observing the feast days, and so on.



The combination of ethical teaching and ritualistic requirement constituted in the heart of Judaism the meaning of Torah, or Law of God.

As the story of the Old Testament unfolds we will see how the ritualistic or "legalistic" side of Torah becomes submerged, perilously to the point of its nearly total condemnation in the 8th century prophets. Amos particularly believed that the ancient traditions did not teach that Moses had instituted the "sacrifices". This reference in Amos and a similar one in Jeremiah¹⁹ suggests that some of the Pentateuchal material was an elaboration of the later Priestly school that authored it. The prophets, however, were clear that the moral virtues to which they were attempting to recall the people were the express will of Yahweh when He had led them up out of Egypt under Moses.²⁰ In the developments with Ezekiel (6th century B.C.) ceremonial Torah is restored to a place of dignity beside ethical Torah as the guiding inspiration for Judaism.

¹⁹Amos 5:25; Jer. 7:22.

²⁰e. g. Hosea 11:1f.

IV The Democratic Spirit

The Moses story is a towering milestone in the history of the democratic outlook on life and society.

We have just reviewed the story of the successful deliverance from slavery and injustice. We note a type of representative government into which Moses organized his community, Ex. 18:21. We have observed that the ethical Commandments VI-X are the basis of any stable society. The fundamental idea of respect for persons enshrined in them lies at the heart of all democratic constitutions. Finally, moving further along in our text now, we observe the relatively advanced, humane laws of early Hebrew society in Ex. Chs. 21-23. This part of Exodus may come from a time somewhat later than Moses, but if so, it reveals how the basic principles of his commandments came to be embodied into concrete statutes in the early history of Israel. For example:

Laws limiting the authority of masters relative to the rights of slaves. Slavery is permitted, but is carefully regulated. A master does not have absolute authority over his slave, Ex. 21:2, 7-11, 20-21, 26-27.

Law against murder, recognizes first and second degree murder, 21:12-14.

Law against kidnapping, 21:16.

Law to safeguard property, 22:1f. (The reference to fields and vineyards presupposes a later time than the nomadic, wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel in the time of Moses.)

Law against rape, 22:16.

Law of hospitality, 22:21.

Law to protect widows and orphans and the poor, 22:22-27.

Law regulating lending of money, 22:25.

Law against perjury, 23:1.

Law against lynching and mob violence, 23:2.

Law against perversion of justice by the taking of bribes, 23:6-8.

Law limiting hours of work for the working group, 23:12.

As we might express it in the vernacular today, Israel, at an early time, was out front in significant social legislation.

Lying in her background here was a tradition of elemental justice, coming down from more ancient times in the Semetic Near East, such as expressed in the Code of Hammurabi, ruler of the Sumerian-Akkadian (Old Babylonian) kingdom (c. 1700 B.C.). Striking parallels appear between the Ex. 21-24 chapters and the older Babylonian code, revealing the possible dependence of some of the Hebrew laws upon the Sumerian. There is a harshness in some of the penalties of the Hammurabi Code, whereas the Hebrew seems less severe, in a number of its punishments. Also in the Hammurabi Laws, various classes are mentioned, with penalties more severe if a misdemeanor is committed against a member of the higher class. The Hebrew Laws refer to only two classes, slave and free; their system reveals an equalitarianism transcending what we find in the earlier Mesopotamian laws. Both codes, however, assume that the laws are divine commands and are designed to prevent arbitrary injustice and oppression. Both contain a number of humane rules not found in the other version.²¹

The ancient law of retaliation (lex talionis) has a prominent place in both the Hammurabi and Mosad codes (Ex. 21:23-25). The principle of injury for injury, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, etc., is a primitive, but positive type

²¹See The Code of Hammurabi, Lewis Browne, The World's Great Scriptures, Macmillan, 1961, p. 17.

of justice. Though based on the fear of reprisal, it is better than having no rule of justice at all. It equalizes and limits punishment and is a higher concept than that of unlimited vendetta or retaliation, as found in the barbaric code of the Song of Lamech, Gen. 4:23. In its primitive setting, in alley disputes among boys, in international relations where no superior rule of law exists, it has kept the peace in a rough and ready, albeit dangerous, way. Its principle of equal punishment has been the foundation of punitive justice in all advanced societies. Man's ethical and legal history looks toward its partial supercession by more humane, utilitarian modes of human cooperation or reciprocity, and ultimately to dynamic love and service as the highest regulatory principle or truth for human relationships.

Study Questions on:

Exodus assignment

Study Guide, Part Three, I-IV

1. Indicate why modern scholars believe there are two sources or more for the Moses story.
2. Give several salient suggestions, both archaeological and Biblical for placing the date of Moses and the Exodus about the time of Rameses II (1301-1234 B.C.)
3. How might his early training as an Egyptian prince be of value to him later as leader of his oppressed people?
4. What is the significance of Jethro and the Kenites in the Moses story?
5. As we may gather from the story as a whole, what was the content of Moses' experience of the burning bush? Is the interpretation of the Study Guide satisfactory to you? If not, why not?
6. Do you understand the two types of interpretation of the plagues in section II of the Study Guide? Which is more satisfactory to you and why? Through what main agency would God work in history?
7. Explain how the principle of respect for personality lies beneath Commandments VI-X of Ex. 20:13f. How does this principle connect the first five with the last five commandments?
8. What is the full moral significance of the Covenant as a contract, Ex. 19:5, and 20:3f? How does it leave its two parties free, and the subsequent history open to development?
9. Do you think there is universal moral law? How would you define it?
10. Would Moses' Commandments suffice as a constitution for the United States? What is the relationship between the Constitution and Moses' Commandments?
11. Explain in some detail the significance of Ex. chs. 21-23 and relate to Ch. 20.
12. What is the moral and historical significance of Ex. 21:23-25?
13. What is the main difference between the Commandments given in Ex. 34:17f and Ex. 20:3f? What kind of economy does the ceremonial Decalogue reflect?
14. What do you make of:
 - Moses argument with the Lord, Ex. 32:11-14?
 - Ex. 32:25-29?
 - Ex. 34:6-7 as to consistency?
 - Ex. 19:12, 21 as to the conception of God at that time?
 - Ex. 22:29 (See 13:2)?
15. Judging by the phrase "The God of the Hebrews", as in 5:3, repeated many times, and by 20:3, how many gods seem to be real in the belief of Moses' time? "How many gods were thought to be effective powers over the Hebrews?" (R & B p. 26)

V. Primitive Religion and Ethics in Ancient Israel

At the close of our study of Genesis we noted vestiges of a primitive semetic religion antedating the over-all monotheistic philosophy of Genesis (p. 21). As our story of the OT proceeds we will return again to the primitive qualities of Baalism, the religion of the people of Canaan, into whose land Moses and his successors were leading the Israelites. We must study Baalism as major historic background for an understanding of the greater prophets, who arose in the 8th century with Amos. In the meanwhile, we pause to glance at primitive elements of the religious belief and rite between the time of Moses and the writing prophets. Such vestiges are found, like historical paleontological remains, within the over-all setting of an advanced ethical monotheism reflecting the late priestly authorship of the Pentateuch.

A. Primitive Ideas of God

1. Yahweh was a tribal god. The implication of Exodus is that there were other gods than Yahweh, e.g. those of Egypt, but that Yahweh was the only God the Hebrews served. This type of belief is called henotheism. We may sense, however, the beginnings of a stricter monotheism (belief in, as well as service of, only one God) in Moses's time. Note the repeated phrase "the God of the Hebrews" Ex. 5:3; 20:3; and references to the power of other gods, e.g. Judges 3:6; 11:12, 23-24; I Sam 26:17, 19-20; II Kgs. 1:2-4, 3:26-27.

2. Yahweh was limited to a particular locality. Before the Israelites moved into Canaan there was a question as to whether Yahweh had jurisdiction there, Ex. 33:1-3. Rather Mt. Sinai (or Mt. Horeb) seemed to be his special abode, Ex. 19:3f, I Kgs. 19:3, 8. When David was a refugee in Philistia, hiding from King Saul, he wondered whether he could worship Yahweh in a foreign land, I Sam. 26:19-20.

Another conception was that Yahweh's special residence was the Ark, or sacred chest, Ex. 25:10f, in which the spirit of God traveled with his people, I Sam. 4:21. Its presence was necessary if victory in battle was to be expected, Num. 14:41-45. When the Ark was not present, the spirit of Yahweh was presumed to be absent. When the Ark was captured by the Philistines, it was believed that God's glory had departed from Israel, I Sam. 4:19-22. Relative to the Ark as God's special place see also II Sam. 6:2-5, 12-15; for Israel as God's special land see II Kgs. 5:17; Jonah 1:3, 10; Ruth 1:16; Jer. 16:13.

3. Yahweh was a God of war, Ex. 15:3; Joshua 5:13-14. He orders the massacre of people of captured cities, Joshua 6:17, 21, 8:24-27; I Sam. 15:3, 8; Es. 13:2, 12-13; 22:29; 34:19-20; Num. 2:11-13, 4f.

4. Yahweh commanded human sacrifice in most primitive times, Ex. 13:2, 12-13; 22:29; 34:19-20; Num. 3:11-13, 40f. Evidently Moses's period reflects the struggle to get away from this barbaric practice, suggested by the many places where the substitution of an animal for the human victim is announced. In any case, by the time of the final priestly editing of this material, human sacrifice was thoroughly condemned as barbarous, and contrary to the Divine Will--a point of ceremonial and ethical confusion which continued down through the era of the great prophets, whom we will hear denounce the practice in ringing metaphors.

5. Yahweh was aloof in his person or being; people could not deal directly with him. He was conceived as an anthropomorphic God, who dwelt on a particular mountain, and required an intermediary like Moses to officiate between the people and Himself, Ex. 19:12, 21.

6. Theophany was thought to be the characteristic mode of revelation of Yahweh, Ex. 33:11; Josh. 5:13f, the appearance of the angel to Joshua (recall such passages as Gen. 18:1f). We noted how he appeared and spoke to the Patriarchs in dreams.

7. At this early time belief in divination, or a magical way to find God's will was characteristic. See e.g. Ex. 22:9, where casting of lots is one way to decide judicial disputes; I Sam. 14:24-26, where lots are cast by "Urim and Thummim", evidently kinds of sacred dice, in order to ascertain a guilty party; I Sam. 23:9-14; 20:7-8, where David used "the ephod", evidently an instrument of divination, in order to discover Yahweh's will.

8. Reverence for God often meant the observance of some taboo as when Yahweh threatened Moses's life because he failed to perform the rite of circumcision upon his young son, Ex. 4:24-26; or, as is illustrated again, when it says the Lord warned the people not to trespass too close upon the precincts of the sacred mountain, Ex. 19:12, 21.

B. Primitive Ideas of Man and Ethics

1. In the story of Achan's loot, Josh. 6:18; 7:1, 22f we have the idea of the corporate nature of personality and guilt; Achan's entire family had to pay the death penalty along with him for his theft and sacrilege. Personality did not stand out in its own value and right distinctively from the group or tribe to which one belonged, as it came to do in later times. In order to appreciate this growth in the idea of man from the more primitive concept, we have but to contrast the story of Achan's loot with the ringing words of Ezekiel at a much later time, that the individual who commits a crime or sins is alone guilty, Ezek. chap. 18.²²

2. We have discussed Lex Talionis, Ex. 21:23-5 as an effective, but primitive mode of justice.

²² See the discussion of this and similar themes concerning growth in the idea of God, man, right and wrong, etc. in Fosdick's searching study A Guide to Understanding the Bible, Harper, 1938.

3. We noted above how the Israelites massacred whole enemy populations, women and children as well as men -- and this presumably at the command of God! See further I Sam. 15:2-3; 27:11. We also saw by way of contrast, the remarkably advanced humane laws that governed early Hebrew society, Ex. 21-24. How can we evaluate this report of primitive brutality along with the record of advanced humaneness?

One explanation is to be found, no doubt, in the difference between in-group and out-group relations -- the Israelites apparently were governed by two codes of law, one that applied to their own group, the more humane code, the other that applied to foreigners and enemies, the barbarous code. Recall that all ancient peoples were ruthless in their warfare; the fact that the Israelites participated in ruthlessness is not surprising; they were simply children of their rough age. We will note later how the great prophets condemn these barbaric practices of their ancestors, the slaughtering of women and children, enslaving of peoples; human sacrifice, as, e.g. in Amos ch. 1-2; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35. Another possible explanation, as we have already observed, is that the relatively humane laws found in Ex. 21-24 may come from a somewhat more settled, civilized period, than that of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and the "frontier days of Israel". Finally it may have been that a high and a low concept of God and morality existed side by side in these early days in Israel; we shall observe the struggle of her great minds to advance away from a crude and barbaric ethic.

VI. Joshua and Judges

We reserve the study of Deuteronomy, which tradition has called the fifth book of Moses, as background for understanding the times of Jeremiah, 7th century B.C., when in its major proportions this book had its origin. Scholars continue to trace the work of J, E, D (the Deuteronomist sources), and P in the book of Joshua. Judges comes from the hand of a Deuteronomic editor working on earlier sources.²³

What is the outlook of these books relative to the purposes of their final authors in writing them?

JOSHUA portrays the hope that Yahweh has in mind for his people. Everywhere the book anticipates early and complete victory. It projects the long-range plan of God as he foresees the destiny of his people. Joshua says that the whole land was captured and pacified promptly, 11:23.

JUDGES, on the other hand, gives the realistic picture. The author wished to tell how men in their sin and shortcomings thwart and delay God's plan; how God through adversity and judgment disciplines and teaches the people, and in the long run established the nation, through strong and devout leaders. Judges says that the conquest was incomplete, 3:1, 5, and that it was a long and arduous struggle. We note several interesting things about this book:

1. The period of the Judges marks the transition in Israel from nomadic to agricultural life, and begins the story of the severest struggle of ideas: namely, the higher ethical, political, and religious concepts of the desert religion of

²³Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 79.

of Yahweh as opposed to the lower ideas and practices of the agricultural Canaanite region.

Baalism, the nature-fertility religion of the Canaanites, the earlier inhabitants of ancient Palestine, against whom the Hebrews were now endeavoring to consolidate their rule, constituted the major ethical, religious, and social threat to the moral and democratic religion of Yahweh.

We shall see how this threat continues through the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries B.C. as a principal clue to understanding and evaluating the work of the great writing prophets from Amos to Ezekiel. The conflict comes to a head in the 8th century beginning with Amos. As a forecast of what we will review later on in greater detail, the major aspects of Baalistic (Canaanitic) culture which the prophets came to oppose were:

- a) The concept or meaning of Deity as solely subsumed within the fertility forces of nature, vegetable, animal, and human (personalized by the Baal - "owner" - gods of Canaan.)
- b) The worship of these deities (with whom Yahweh was confused) in manners appropriate to their functions as fertility gods, e.g. sacrifice of infant children, sacred or temple prostitution, and other superstitious modes of appeasement.
- c) Despotism social and political institutions.

In solving these problems the Hebrews had to do two things:

- (1) reinterpret the power and jurisdiction of Yahweh, and
- (2) reinterpret his moral nature and requirements -- i.e. reinterpret the meaning of the Covenant, or come to understand it more as God really meant it.

Progressively our story from this point forward becomes an enlargement of these two themes. We return now, however, to our immediate task of reviewing the content of Judges.

2. In Judges the theme or idea of a moral law in history is prominent, a point which the prophets will presently elaborate. The formula is that sin is followed by punishment, 2:11, 16; 3:5, 6, 7; 4:4. Prosperity is the reward of faithfulness; adversity is the wage of sin. The principle is over-simplified as presented in Judges, but the idea may be basically true, as we consider the life span of human groups as a whole, men and history in the mass.

3. Though Judges as a whole stresses the progress of the nation under its early dedicated leaders, it is subtly aware of the forces that give substance to its belief in a "moral law" of history. Those forces are found by and large in the characters of men, in the stronger characters of the greater Judges, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, and others; and in the weaker characters of some, like Samson. Upon individual persons impinges much of the historic success or failure of nations.

On the negative side we have the fascinating story of Samson, strong of body but weak in moral fiber. Samson was a man, if there ever were one, born for the Lord, and for great things. But his life as a whole typifies the struggle in a man between the desire to do God's higher and finer will and the tendency to yield to lower, more selfish impulses. The story closes with the poignant picture of a chastened and humbled Samson, who knew he had wasted his energies, 16:28.

4. Other facts about the book of JUDGES: the wars are interpreted as wars of defense that united the tribes, and sealed the national spirit, to the point where they wanted a king. "This book is a monument of that Divine Providence which sustained the people of Israel, so that they maintained their national

existence and...their religious and moral ideas²⁴ (Incidentally, their contact with the Philistines at this time gave the Hebrews iron, I Sam. 13:19, and very probably alphabetic writing.)

VII. The Books of SAMUEL and KINGS

1. Originally the four books were one whole, called the Book of Kingdoms, (so presented in the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Greek and Latin translations of the OT).

The present division into I & II Samuel and I & II Kings was made by Daniel Bomberg in 1517 in a publication of the Hebrew Bible; a division followed ever since in English Protestant translations.

First Samuel might better have been called the book of Saul; II Samuel the Book of David. (The figure of Samuel drops out half way through the book of I Sam.)

2. The main divisions of the books are:

I Sam. 1-5: Samuel and Saul, establishment of the monarchy.

I Sam. 16-31: Saul and David rivalry.

II Sam. 1-24: David as King.

I Kgs. 1-12: Solomon and the disruption of the united kingdom.

I Kgs. 13- II Kgs 17: Israel and Judah monarchies up to the capture of the northern kingdom of Samaria or Israel by the Assyrians, c. 721 B.C.

II Kgs. 18-25: Judah monarchy to the Babylonian Exile, 586 B.C.

3. The composite nature of these books -- that they are based on earlier sources -- is evident by the following facts:

a) Examples of dual, conflicting reports of events, e.g.:

I Sam. 31:4-6 where Saul commits suicide vs. II Sam. 1:8-10 where he is slain by an Amalekite. There is even a third account in II Sam. 21:12 where Saul is reported killed by the Philistines.

II Sam. 14:27 where Absalom is said to have had sons and daughters vs. II Sam. 18:18 where he is said to have no sons.

I Kgs. 5:13 and 11:28 where Solomon enslaves Hebrews vs. I Kgs. 9:20-22 where only the Canaanites were enslaved, or put to forced labor.

b) Specific mention of now extinct sources:

The book of Jashar or the Upright, II Sam. 1:18

The Acts of Solomon, I Kgs. 11:41

The books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel I Kgs. 14:19 and Judah 14:29

²⁴ Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 820.

We may be reasonably certain that the stories of David, I Sam. 1-20 and II Sam. 1-24; of Ahab, I Kgs. 20 & 22:1-40; of Elijah, I Kgs. 17, 19, & 21, are based on similar court chronicles or "acts". Note the reference to "the recorder", II Sam. 8:16. Observe the lifelikeness and detail of the David as king story suggesting the report of an eye-witness to these events, and giving them a sound of authenticity in their main features that historians have long acknowledged.

4. The dates of composition and editing of the books of Samuel and Kings into their present form, on the basis of such earlier court chronicles, range from c. 620 B.C. to c. 400 B.C.

To return now to our larger considerations: what is the purpose of the compiler in preserving these stories and editing them as he does?

VIII The Samuel and Saul Stories (I Samuel 1-15)

Main features and the over-all teaching of these stories are the following:

1. In addition to indicating his own personal pride as leader of the nation Samuel's reluctance to appoint a king reflects the democratic and independent spirit of the early Hebrews, I Sam. 8:1f, 10f.

2. The character of Samuel marks the transition in Israel from the religious leader as "judge" and "seer" into "prophet", I Sam. 3:30. Samuel was a patriotic defender of the country's political and religious independence. He was a strong mouthpiece for Yahweh, when he thought Yahweh's cause was jeopardized. He fostered and led prophetic societies whose main purpose was to defend the old virtues of the Hebrew nomadic religion, 10:5f; 19:20f. He was a defender of the lex talionis conception of justice, as explained in his reasons for slaying king Agag, 15:33. He was the last and possibly the greatest of the "Judges", I Sam. 7:15-17. An accurate appraiser of the dangers of kingship, he nevertheless assented to the popular will in anointing a king for the people, I Sam. 8:10f. He publishes a constitution of "the rights and duties of the kingship", 10:25, and warns in true prophetic fashion that the new king must do God's will, i.e. rule with the equanimity and sense of justice enshrined in the laws of Moses, 12:14-15; 12:3.

3. Once organized or centralized political power is established, however, a nation must not allow its earthly ruler unlimited power. Rather the temporal power of government or the state should be subject to the divine will, 10:1, 25; 12:14-15; 13:8f. We note in the conflict between Samuel and Saul, the priest-seer and the new king, something of the ancient conflict between "church" and "state". The representative of religion and the "church", Samuel, spoke as "the conscience" of the state. The main point of the authors of I Samuel Chapters 13 to 15 seems to be that the political authority should be subject to the religious authority, 15:11, 25. Observe Saul's suspicion of the religious group, the priests, 22:11-17.

IX The David and Saul Rivalry Stories (I Samuel 16-31)

1. Saul welds the tribes together in defense against the Philistines, the main enemy ~~now~~. We have the beginnings of that final military consolidation, completed under David, which would give the Hebrew nation opportunity at last for significant material and cultural expansion. We note the finer qualities of King Saul: physically fit, a brave soldier, skillful general, sometimes generous, simple in manner of life, democratic, religious according to his lights. David, his enemy, pays him a beautiful tribute, II Sam. 1:23.

2. Why does the Author side with Samuel and David against Saul? The author of I SAMUEL in the story of Saul wishes to teach the weakness of kingship when the ruler is not more completely dedicated to God. We note the tendency for a king to become too full of pride that power brings, and other unworthy qualities in the man Saul; he entertains an obstinate jealousy of David; he is ruthless, I Sam. 22:11f; he is superstitious, given to melancholia and madness, I Sam. 16:14. One account is that he finally takes his own life. The author thus wants to show the rise of David to power, I Sam. 16:13; how God aims to supplant a weaker ruler by one more staunchly devoted to His cause. We read of David's deep sense of Divine support and guidance, I Sam. 30:6, after his wives were captured by the Amalekites. We are impressed by David's continued loyalty to his obstinate king. The conflict of the house of David and the house of Saul continues into II Sam. ch. 4. Though David is to become Israel's greatest king, revered as exemplary in goodness of character, the record makes plain that he was a cruel warrior, like most soldiers of his crude age. I Sam. 27:8f describes how in one of his raids he slaughtered both men and women of the Amalekites.

Study Questions on:

JOSHUA, JUDGES, I SAMUEL
Study Guide, Part Three, V-IX

1. What indications of primitive ideas of deity do you find in the early days in Israel as reported by these books?
2. Of a primitive conception of ethics?
3. How may we account for the appearance side by side in the record of both primitive and advanced conceptions of God and morality?
4. How did Joshua become aware that an Israelite had broken faith by stealing some of the booty from Jericho?
5. Can you justify the punishment Joshua meted out to Achan and his tribe, Josh. 7:22f?
6. Read Josh. 11:23 and Judges 1:26-33; 3:1, 5-6. What do you make of this contrast?
7. Explain the theory of history in Judges 2:11-16. Do you think history has a law? How would you define such a general historical law? Where might the locus of such a law be?
8. What were the dangers concerning Baalism that the Hebrews faced in Canaan? Judges 1:27-33; 3:1-7.
9. What are several main things the author of I SAMUEL wishes to tell his readers? Summarize the character and contribution of Samuel.
10. What was the offense Saul committed in I Sam. 13 that turned Samuel against him? What was the offense in ch. 15?
11. What do you make of I Sam. 16:23 where it says that Saul's madness was an "evil spirit from God"? Or that his jealousy of David was due to "an evil spirit from the Lord", 19:9?

PART FOURThe United and Divided Monarchies

(c. 999-800 B.C.
10th to 9th Centuries)

II SAMUEL, I & II KINGS

Reading Assignment:

1. RSV II SAMUEL Ch. 1 -----Second account of Saul's death;
David's reaction
5; 6:12-19; 7:1-17 -----Coronation of David and the Hebrew
constitution; capture of Jerusalem;
Nathan's blessing.
8:1-18 -----Further military consolidation
9:11:1-12:25 -----David's kindness to Jonathan's son;
sin with Bathsheba and Nathan's
rebuke
15; 17:1-16; 18:1-15; 33; 19:1-15 Absalom's revolt
- I KINGS Chs. 1; 2:12-46 -----Rivalries in David's household over
the succession; Solomon's blood
purge
3 -----Solomon's marriages; prayer for
wisdom; a judicious decision
4:20-7:12 -----Solomon's prosperity; building
enterprises, Temple, Palace
9; 10:23-29 -----The divine condition of successful
monarchy; debt to Hiram of Tyre;
other enterprises of Solomon
11:1-12:33 -----Weaknesses of Solomon's reign; three
adversaries raised up; revolt of the
northern tribes from the oppressive
politics of Solomon, continued by
his son. Idolatry of northern realm.
14:17-33 -----Idolatry of southern kingdom
16:21-19:21; 21; 20; 22 -----Omri, Ahab, and the prophet Elijah
Israel vs. Syria. Elijah's mantle.
- II KINGS Chs. 1-2; 8:1-14 -----Elijah concluded; Elisha receives
Elijah's mantle
9-19 -----Jehu's purge of the house of Ahab.

2. Study Guide, Part Four; I-IV

- I. David as King: II SAMUEL
II. Solomon and the Disruption of the Unified Monarchy: I KINGS 1-12
III. Theme of I & II KINGS
IV. Elijah

Study Questions on Biblical assignment for reigns of David and Solomon from
II Sam. & I Kgs.

Study Guide, Part Four, I-II

Study Questions on Biblical assignment for Elijah from I & II Kgs.

Study Guide, Part Four, III-IV

I. David as King (c. 1004-965 B. C.):

II SAMUEL

1. II Sam. Chs. 1-10 give an account of David's reign in its successful, prosperous phases, "before his fall" (Kirkpatrick Cambridge Bible). Highlights of this part of the story are the following:

a) Review the Coronation of Saul by Samuel, and Samuel's constitution of kingship, I Sam. 10:1, 25; 12:14-15. Now David is appointed king by the elders and people. Note what is commonly called the triangular covenant of kingship or government, II Sam. 5:1-5, which embodies the idea of limited or responsible monarchy. David as king must be responsible to the people because he is responsible to God and His laws, founded in the Covenant and Commandments of Moses. The king cannot

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KING - PEOPLE

become an absolute monarch or tyrant. The coronation of David foreshadows the idea of constitutional monarchy, and the concept of sovereignty as lying in part with the people and their representatives, the "elders" of Israel, I II Sam. 3:17f; 5:3; 17:4, 15; 19:11. This is the basic democratic idea of government, more definitely articulated in Israel than anywhere else at so early a time in history. Also integral to the democratic ideal is the conception that there is the higher law of right and justice, of God, by which governments must rule and to which earthly sovereigns themselves are ultimately subject.

b) Establishment of Jerusalem as capital, II Sam. 5:6f. The city of Jerusalem became the focal point of Hebrew national aspiration. David makes it the religious capital, as well as the military headquarters, when he brings the Ark of the Covenant to it, II Sam. 6.

c) Final subduing of surrounding enemies, the Philistines, Moabites, etc., and consolidation of the empire, II Sam. 8. Kirkpatrick says about David's conquests, "It was no lust for conquest which led him into these wars; they were forced upon him by the necessities of his position in the struggle for national existence."²⁵

d) He is depicted as a king of justice, II Sam. 8:15; and of generosity, II Sam. 9, in his kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son.

e) A paramount point with the author of the story is the blessing of the prophet Nathan upon David's reign. It is a continuation of the idea of the Covenant begun with Abraham and Moses, and now looks toward the future in a special way. The establishment of the monarchy firmly under David, and Nathan's blessing upon it, contain the seeds of the messianic idea and ideal. Relative to this development Kirkpatrick says again, "The establishment of the Monarchy was far more than an event of political importance. The Monarchy turned the national thoughts to the hope of a king who should reign in righteousness, and 'have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth.'"

2. II Sam. Ch. 11f describes David's time of troubles. It begins with his great sin, the adultery with Bathsheba. "The book of II Samuel is written to point out the consequences of that sin. His sin is pardoned, because he sees his wrong and repents, but not left unpunished. The prophet-author is dwelling on the

²⁵Cambridge Bible, xlv, 1930.

consequences of David's sins, and therefore gives prominence to the calamities which punished them."²⁶ This part of the theme is presented in two scenes:

a) Nathan's rebuke, II Sam. 12:1-15. This dramatic incident shows that the party of the prophets was interested in the rights of the common man, in this case, Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba's husband. David tries to rationalize his act, 11:25, but actually he has been the tyrant in playing fast and loose with his neighbor's wife. He has broken the covenant of God and the government. Nathan says that evil is to come upon him out of his own house, 12:11.

b) David's bad example bears evil fruit in the vices and crimes of his sons, "whom a mistaken affection had treated with foolish indulgence."²⁷ We read of Amnon's rape of Tamar and Absalom's revenge, 13:1-14:33; Absalom's revolt and the miseries of civil war, chs. 15-20.

We may compare this development with the great Greek dramas of Aeschylus and Euripides, where Fate catches up with persons like Orestes for committing sin, and involves whole households. In this aspect of Hebrew thought it is the judgments of moral law that overtake the sinner.

While recognizing the human weaknesses of David as king, Kirkpatrick reminds us nevertheless, in a forceful way, of the strong side of David's reign: "...the noblest result of David's work was the harmonious union of all the highest influences for good which were at work in the nation. For once the religious and the secular powers acted in perfect cooperation, each contributing to the other's efficiency. The Theocratic Monarchy was to be no absolute despotism. Its king was representative of Jehovah, and his power was limited by this relation. He must therefore act in obedience to the will of Jehovah, communicated to him through the prophets. This was the ideal for which Samuel laboured. Saul was rejected for his proud endeavor to assert his own independence. David, though not without lapses and failures, on the whole realized the ideal, and is Israel's greatest, because truest king."²⁸

²⁶Ibid., p. xlv1.

²⁷Kirkpatrick, Cambridge Bible.

²⁸Ibid. xlix.

II. Solomon and the Disruption of the Unified Monarchy: (I KINGS 1-12)

The story of Solomon, like those of Saul and David, aims to teach a lesson. What are the main points that the editor or compiler of I KINGS brings out in the account of Solomon? Recall that Solomon is the son of the adulterous union of David with Bathsheba, I Kgs. 1:11. The themes of the author seem to be three:

1. That wisdom or an understanding and shrewd mind is a gift, power, or spirit that comes from God, I Kgs. 3:5-14. It will give its possessor, i.e., Solomon, success in various departments of human activity, e.g.: in the administration of justice, I Kgs. 3:16f; as a monarch of wide domain, 4:21; in culture, luxury, and refinement, 4:22f; in scholarship, 4:32; in diplomacy, 5:1f; in building enterprises, 6:1f.

Furthermore, true kingly wisdom reaffirms the covenant of kingship, or the social constitution of Israel based on Moses Laws, 9:1-9.

2. The compiler's second desire seems to be to center interest in the building of the Temple as the most important fruit of the Divine Wisdom given to Solomon, I Kgs. Chs. 6-8. The author aims to cement the reader's loyalty to the Temple as the central place of worship and sacrifice. The Temple is to play an even larger role after Solomon's day.

3. Finally the writer of I Kings tells what happens when a person, even of Solomon's stature, fails to follow consistently the inspiration of the Divine Wisdom. Accordingly the last part of the story deals with Solomon's predisposition to make shipwreck of his life and the kingdom, as he deviates from the constitution of Israel, and also dallies with idolatry.

a) Solomon's shortcomings are foreshadowed in the blood purge of his brother Adonijah and his followers, over the original contention for the throne, I Kgs. Chs. 1-2. (The author simply tells the story at this point without evaluating it).

b) Quite intentionally, however, the author singles out for sharp criticism Solomon's marriages to foreign women, who turn away his heart after their gods; i.e., he points to the corruption of Yahwism by the introduction of idolatrous cults, I Kgs. 3:1-2; 11:1-13.

c) Critically central is Solomon's corruption of elemental justice in enslaving his own people to accomplish his elaborate building enterprises, I Kgs. 5:13; 9:20-22; 11:28; 12:4, 14, 18. We read how he deeds twenty towns and their inhabitants to a tyrannous foreign power, I Kgs. 9:11, in payment of a debt. Finally we read of the disruption of the kingdom because of Solomon's oppressive policies and those of his upstart son, Rehoboam. The compiler of these narratives sides with the protest against oppression. He shows how the Lord raises up three adversaries, Hadad of Edom, 11:14; Rezon of Syria, 11:23-25; and Jereboam, who leads the northern tribes in revolt, 11:26-12:20.

Note the role of Ahijah, the prophet, 11:29f. The prophetic party is on the side of the people, against the oppressive policies of the kings. Compare Samuel's and Nathan's role at an earlier time; and Elijah's at a later

Study Questions on:

David and Solomon
Study Guide, Part Four, I-II

1. What seems to be the over-all theme of the author in telling the story of David in II Samuel? What is the significance of David's affair with Bathsheba?
2. What is the historical significance of Nathan's blessing, II Sam. 7:4f?
3. What is the political significance of the "constitution" of Israel as revealed by the coronation of David, II Sam. 5:1f?
4. In what sense may the ultimate source of justice be found in God and his law-- or how is democratic government derived from a divine source? What is the relation between God as "Sovereign" and the people as "sovereign"? (If you do not feel that justice needs a "divine source", state and defend your position.)
5. What good and bad does the compiler of I KINGS find in the reign of Solomon? What do you make of the fact that, although the compiler greatly praised Solomon's achievement in building the Temple, he was opposed to Solomon's conscription policy, which seemed necessary to the building enterprise?
6. What reasons are given for the breakdown of Solomon's reign and the incipient revolt in I Kgs. 11:29-33 and 12:1-5?
7. What activity of Jereboam as first northern king of Israel, (Ephraim, or Samaria, alternative names of the northern kingdom) does the compiler of the narrative in I Kgs. 12:25-33; 13:1-2 oppose?
8. What picture of the religious situation in Judah (the southern kingdom) do we have in I Kgs. 14:21-24? at the time of Rehoboam I? Of Israel at the later time of Omri and Ahab in I Kgs. 16:21-34? What obscene and cruel practices do you note were characteristic of these idolatrous cults? What is the attitude of the compiler toward them and their royal sponsors?
9. Explain, and state the significance, of each of the following items, places, paraphernalia, practices, gods, of the popular religion of this general period:
 - "high places", I Kgs. 12:31
 - Bethel: Dan, I Kgs. 12:29
 - Mazzebah and Asherah (or Asherim), I Kgs. 14:23
 - "calves of gold", I Kgs. 12:28
 - sacrifice, e.g. Ex. 29:10-18
 - festivals, e.g. Ex. 23:14-16
 - sacred dance, e.g. Ex. 15:20; Judges 21:20-21; II Sam. 6:14
 - "cult prostitution", I Kgs. 14:24; II Kgs 23:7
 - human sacrifice, I Kgs 16:34; II Kgs 3:26-27; 16:3; 17:17
 - Baal (s), I Kgs. 16:31-32, of the Canaanites
 - Ashtoreth, or Ashtaroth of Sidonians, I Kgs. 3:26-27
 - Milcom or Molech of Ammonites, I Kgs. 11:7, 33; Lev. 18:21; 20:2;
 - II Kgs. 23:10
10. What danger of "syncretism" did the Hebrews face?

III Theme of I and II Kings

The remainder of these books is an account of the fortunes of both kingdoms. The author wishes to emphasize two main things:

1. To point out why the kingdoms failed to survive. His reason is that the leaders of the two nations did not do right according to the word of the Lord, spoken by the prophets. You hear the refrain: and so-and-so did that which was evil (or right in a few cases) in the sight of the Lord, e.g. for Judah, I Kgs. 14:22-24; for Israel, I Kgs. 16:25-34.

2. Hence the books in their way are an account of the rise of the prophetic movement. The authors of the books of SAMUEL and KINGS judge the acts of the kings in the light of the teachings of the prophets. They trace, with increasing concern, the message and work of the prophets, e.g.:

Samuel: I Sam. chs. 13, 15-16

Nathan: II Sam. chs. 7, 12; I Kgs. 1:8-12

Ahijah: I Kgs. 11:29

Elijah: I Kgs. Ch. 17f, esp. 19:16

Elisha: II Kgs. 9:1f

Isaiah: II Kgs. Ch. 15f

Note that many of the prophet's names contained the particles "El" or "Jah", the ancient Canaanite and Hebrew names for Deity. For example "El-i-jah" means "Yahweh is God". Thus the prophets were the spokesmen for the pure religion of Yahweh against the syncretism and the idolatrous foreign cults of the popular religion. Later on we discuss the nature of prophetism in greater detail. Presently we discuss the work of Elijah, greatest of the earlier prophets, to whose life much space is devoted in I KINGS. At this point let us sum up the significance of I and II KINGS as a whole.

The books of SAMUEL and KINGS are basically historical accounts. The chronicle of David reported in II SAMUEL is one of the most trustworthy accounts historians have of events coming from such an ancient time. The detail and life-likeness of these events suggests that an eye-witness is responsible for the source material. Note the reference to the "recorder" in II Sam. 8:16. The final compilers of these eye-witness court chronicles, however, write the history from a religious point of view. Such are our books of SAMUEL and KINGS. The writers of these books "were inspired to discern the true significance of events, and to relate such parts of the national history as would truly set forth the gradual evolution of God's purposes towards His people."²⁹ They were interested in showing how God would lead them to a higher conception (or a deeper experience) of Himself, reflected in a better or more ethical way of life.

For the purposes of our study the following chart³⁰ indicates the more important kings and prophets of the two kingdoms, and important foreign kings that impinge on the fortunes of the Hebrew nations. Underscored names and dates should be kept in mind.

²⁹ Ibid., p. lii

³⁰ Based on The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, ed. G. E. Wright and F.V. Filson; Westminster Press, 1945, p. 15.

Moses and Exodus c. 1300 B.C.

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David as King c. 1004-965 B.C.

Solomon as King c. 965-926 B.C.

Foreign Kings	Prophets of Israel	Kings of Israel	Kings of Judah	Prophets of Judah
	Ahijah	JEREBEAM I 926	REHOBAM	
Ethbaal, King of Tyre	ELIJAH Micaiah	OMRI 882 AHAB and JEZEB EL 871 JEHU 845		
Era of Assyrian Power	ELISHA AMOS c. 760 HOSEA 750-737	JEREBEAM II 787 785	UZZIAH (Azariah) AHAZ	(I) ISAIAH 742-701
Pul, Tiglathpileser III invasions		Pekah 734 Hoshea 732		
		725	HEZEKIAH	MICAH 725-690
Shalmaneser	Fall of Israel (Samaria) 721 to Assyrians			
Sennacherib		690	MANASSEH	Zephaniah
		639	JOSIAH (Deuteronomic Reform)	JEREMIAH 625-585
Era of Chaldean power		612		Nahum Habakkuk c. 600
		598	Zedekiah	EZEKIEL 598-570
Nebuchadnezzar		587	Fall of Jerusalem to Chaldeans	
		545	?	(II) ISAIAH
Era of Persian power		538		
Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon, permits Zerubbabel to return to Jerusalem		532	End of classic Exile beginnings of Restoration under Zerubbabel	

IV. The Prophet Elijah: I Kgs. Ch. 17f

As you read this stirring account note the following three great events:

1. The Contest on Mt. Carmel, I Kgs. 17:1; 18 demonstrated that Yahweh was God of the forces of nature, and that He was the sole Lord in Israel.

Ever since the Hebrew conquest of Canaan a question in the popular mind had been, Was Yahweh, or Baal, the true God or gods of the land; was Yahweh the Lord of nature in an agricultural country as He had been leader in the desert? Was He God of the fertile valleys as well as God of the hills? In I Kgs. 20:23, 28 we have a reflection of the typical misunderstanding of Yahweh's power and scope. In this cycle of stories of Ahab's wars with Benhadad, king of Syria, we are told that the Syrians believed Yahweh could not fight against them because he was a god of the hills rather than of the plains! The Baals and Yahweh had been worshipped together on the high places, giving rise to the confusing and dangerous syncretism we have already studied, I Kgs. 18:30. Elijah's main work, which the victory on Mt. Carmel signified, checked the headlong course toward an a-moral syncretism of the base fertility cult of baalism and the sternly righteous religion of Yahweh. The prophets who followed Elijah call attention to this difference time and again.

What was the fire that fell from heaven? The story is written in terms of a supernatural bolt that fell from God. Could the story have originated about a great lightning storm and rain that broke a long and severe drought, the result of which would have been a nourishing revival of languishing crops, and of men's despairing spirits, associated in their minds as the breath and spirit of Yahweh blowing across a parched land and bringing restitution to life? We do know from the record itself that a great storm was brewing, I Kgs. 18:43-45. In any case, one way to evaluate this miraculous aspect of the story, as we did in the case of Moses and the burning bush, is to suggest that the Divine Spirit was present in the personality and character of Elijah, through whom God's work was done. Indeed, our very next scene, the event on Mt. Horeb, suggests this type of interpretative orientation.

2. Mt. Horeb, (which, according to one tradition, was the original abode of Yahweh), I Kgs. Ch. 19, teaches that God is found in the still, small voice of conscience within, rather than in the vast forces of nature outside, that is, in wind, earthquake, and fire. The point that God lay behind the forces of nature was mightily conceded on Carmel, but the main significance of the scene on Horeb is one of warning to Elijah not to identify God too closely with the phenomena of nature. The experience on Mt. Horeb marks the "transition from a nature form of religion to an ethical form, from a concept of God as a God of storm to one who works through the consciences of men and processes of history."³¹ Revelation and religious enlightenment come from within rather than from without, a point which Jeremiah and the other great prophets are to stress. In sum, the danger of a more primitive idea of God and religion is averted. The fertility concept of the divine as simply the mysterious generative forces of nature is replaced by a higher, more ethical and spiritual concept of God. Rather than being limited to the energies of physical conception or to the might of a lightning storm, God discloses Himself in the far more conscious and personal energy of moral conscience.

3. Naboth's vineyard, I Kgs. Ch. 21, marks a period of social change. In this story we see the beginnings of a transition from small peasant ownership.

³¹Anderson, James, et. al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, College of Wooster, 1953, p.

to that of large estates, lorded over by kings and powerful nobles; the dispossession of a free Hebrew yeomanry downward to the state of serfs. The background of Ahab's coveting the vineyard, and Jezebel's murder of its owner in order to get it, reflects the social philosophy of Baalism. Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Tyre, a center of the Baal cult. Baalism was a pure fertility religion which had no social conscience, I Kgs. 21:7. Elijah's work, in condemning the royal house for its dastardly act upholds the principle of democracy against political tyranny, in the name of a God who champions political and economic justice and the rights of the common man. This incident again reveals that Yahwism is not just another cult, but something new, a religion which demands ethical ideals and the exercise of just conduct in life. Note that Ahab repents and that God extends His compassion to him, 21:27-29.

Several further details should be pointed out:

The prophets whom Elijah led were a political party as well as a group of religious reformers; they made a combined political and religious attack on the national evils of the time, I Kgs. 19:15-18; II Kgs. Ch. 9. The general teaching here is that ethical progress of a nation depends on a righteous political administration; God is more interested in national righteousness than in national power and prosperity.

Note the growing conception that Yahweh's dominion is not confined to Israel, I Kgs. 17:25, where the heathen woman confesses that Yahweh is God. Similarly that God uses foreign nations, e.g. Syria and its king, Hazael, I Kgs. 19:15-17, as his instrument in punishing the House of Ahab. Yahweh is the Lord of history, as well as nature and moral conscience.

Note still the primitive idea of God as sending forth "lying spirits", I Kgs. 22:19-23.

Study the character of Elijah, I Kgs. 18:46; II Kgs. 1:8; 2:12 for physical strength, endurance, rough garb, etc.

We discussed above one of the miraculous aspects of the story. We continue here to remind the reader that these accounts were compiled after Elijah's time. This would give opportunity for legendary embellishment. In this respect we will soon contrast the great writing prophets, who tell us their own story, virtually at first hand, in a mood of sober realism largely free of incredible marvels. Though the tales of the miracles give these stories intense dramatic color, (who would wish to hurry over the account of the fiery chariot and horses that finally descend to transport Elijah to heaven, while his mantle falls on Elisha?) they are in their historical dimensions more to be remembered for their ethical or moral power.

As for the ruthless element (I Kgs. 18:40; II Kgs. 1:9f; 9-10), we should recall that Elijah's was a rough age at best. From Elijah's point of view the execution of the priests of Baal, the fifth-column of a tyrannous foreign power, seemed necessary, if the ethical religion of Yahweh with its relatively democratic outlook were to survive. Without intending to stretch the comparison too far, in some effort to justify Elijah's action, we dealt as roughly with the prophets of fascism/nazism at the Nurnburg trials and executed some of them. It has been suggested--and perhaps this is the best historic perspective--that Elijah's reprisal reflects the primitive, fanatical idea of 'holy war' against the enemies of one's god which may well have characterized the zealous attitude of the early nebi'im or school of the prophets.

The killing of the 100 soldiers by calling fire from heaven (II Kgs. 1:9f) seems out of character with Elijah's burning protest against Ahab's injustice toward Naboth.

Jehu's bloody purge of the house of Ahab, II Kgs. 9-10, the slaying of Ahab's seventy sons, etc., must be evaluated as the work of a power drunk fanatic, rather than a righteous servant of God. Note that the prophet Hosea, about a century later, condemns in the name of the Lord this bloody purge of Jehu, Hosea 1:4.

Note also the negative estimate of the compiler of II Kgs. of Jehu's reign, 10:29-31, in spite of the general affirmation that Jehu is the divine instrument that fulfills Elijah's prophecy against Ahab. Note further that Jehu's persecution of those identified with Baalism failed to stamp out the rival religion.³² -- suggesting the fallacy of the tactic of securing or spreading a religious faith "by the sword". The great prophets, especially Hosea and II Isaiah, are to proclaim that the true means by which God's will is done and the religion of Yahweh advanced is not bloody violence, but long-suffering love, self-sacrifice, forgiving compassion and service. In their later day the ethical Hebrew religion becomes one that is founded on persuasion rather than force. The ruthless element of these Elijah, Elisha, Jehu cycle of stories suggests that the concept of deity is still freighted in large part by the primeval severity of a war god.

Our final estimate of the Elijah period is that it is one when a higher humane conception of deity was struggling for supremacy with a more barbaric and primitive understanding of God. Elijah's great experiences on the two mountains and in the valley of Naboth's vineyard are significant mileposts representing this advance. There is a struggle not only of Yahwism with Baalism, but within the religion of Yahweh itself, as to what is the real nature of God? What is His Will, or requirements for men, in the realms of ethical relationship and of religious rite and devotion? What does religion require morally? What is the proper mode of worship? Increasingly the prophets, as the chief religious leaders in Israel and Judah, are to devote themselves to the interpretation of these basic questions.

The Elijah story calls our attention once again to what will prevailingly now become the major problem with which the prophets will deal, namely, the system of values enshrined in Baalism as opposed to those of the religion of Yahweh. We here set these forth by way of summary and preview:

<u>Baalism</u>	vs.	<u>Yahwism</u>
	in time of Elijah	
1. Fertility concept of Deity -- god of generative, sexual power -- totally immanent in nature		1. Transcendent Spirit of righteousness -- God of moral values, as well as Creator of all material nature: Mt. Carmel
2. Licentious, cruel ceremonial -- temple prostitution, degrading to womanhood and manhood -- human sacrifice an a-moral conception of deity and its requirements		2. Animal sacrifice, but with ethical significance; the sacrifices were an act of atonement for the breaking of the ethical commandments of Moses. (Later the prophets oppose ceremony as such). An ethical conception of Deity and its requirements.
3. Despotic political institutions: Jezebel and Naboth's vineyard		3. Free democratic institutions: Elijah and Naboth's vineyard.
4. How is deity known? Observed in the generative forces of nature.		4. God ultimately known through inner moral conscience and mind -- God as the spirit and source of moral truth: Mt. Horeb.
5. Local, narrow, nationalistic		5. Beginnings of the conception of a universal God, making for the values of internationalism.

³²See II Kings 10:28 in contrast with 12:3; 14:4; 15:4; 17:9, 17.

If we define "religion" for the moment as devotion to whatever is regarded as highest in value, the Hebrews were moving into the climactic phase of their struggle to become dedicated to the system of values reflected in the right-hand column above, and thereby to understand "religion" in the truest : : "..." meaning that it has had for the West.

Study Questions on:

Study Guide, Part Four, III & IV

1. What is the principal message of I and II KINGS from I Kgs. 13f? What is the pessimistic as contrasted to the optimistic side of these accounts?
2. What is the significance of "El" and "Jah" in the names of the prophets?
3. What was the political, social, and religious significance of Ahab's marriage to Jezebel?
4. State clearly the significance of the three chief events in Elijah's ministry: Mt. Carmel, Mt. Horeb, Naboth's vineyard?
5. If we take as the basic definition of religion, "devotion to whatever is regarded as highest in value", state the contrasting concepts of "value" in the opposing religious systems of Elijah's time, Baalism vs. the religion of Yahweh?
6. Can there be "religion" without "ethics"? In your opinion what is the relation between religion and ethics?
7. State your feeling about the wisdom of clergy, priests, or the "church" taking part directly in political activity as Elijah and Elisha did, I Kgs. 19:15-18; II Kgs. 9:1f.
8. What is your estimate of Ahab's treatment of Ben Hadad, I Kgs. 20:30f? Your evaluation of the attitude of the prophetic party toward Ahab about this, I Kgs. 20:35f?
9. What is your estimate of Jehu and his purge of the house of Ahab, II Kgs. 9-10? Does Jehu's sense of retributive "justice" remind you of the principle of lex talionis, or that of Lamech's unlimited vengeance? Summarize the policies of Jehu that weakened the international situation for Israel. What later prophet condemns Jehu for his violence. How does the author of II KINGS feel?
10. What criterion would define the difference between personal ambition and the true will of God?
11. What principle reveals the difference between "true" and "false" prophets in the account of I Kgs. Ch. 22? What is your estimate of the report of I Kgs. 22:19-23 as to the nature and methods of God as conceived at that time?
12. We have studied far enough now for you to be fully aware of an "advance" or "rise" in the conception of God in the Old Testament. What is your reaction to this discovery of "growth" in the idea of God? Is this the same as saying that God has "grown"? Or that God is the product of man's imagination? How does this discovery of growth of ideas affect the significance and value, or the "authority", of the OT in your view?
13. By what custom did Nazarites and Rechabites each show their loyalty to the old, pure religion of Yahweh, as opposed to the growing tendency of the Hebrews to take on the forms of Canaanite culture?

PART FIVEThe Great Prophetic Reformers:

8th and 7th centuries
(c. 750 - 600 B.C.)

AMOS, HOSEA, I ISAIAH, MICAH, DEUTERONOMISTS, JEREMIAH

Reading Assignment for 8th Century Prophets:

RSV II KINGS 14:23-17:18 -----National and international situation in
18:1-20, 33-35 8th century; Assyrian threat

AMOS Chs. 1-2 -----Opening oracles
3-6 -----Addresses on personal and social sins of
Israel and her leaders
7-9 -----Visions of judgment

HOSEA Ch. 1-3 -----Hosea's family tragedy
4-10 -----Addresses: judgment on Israel for her sins
11-14 -----God's ultimate forgiveness and care for the
nation

II KINGS 17:6 -----Fall of Israel/Samaria, 721 B.C.

II CHRONICLES Ch. 26 -----Uzziah's reign

ISAIAH Ch. 6 -----Call and consecration of Isaiah
Chs. 1-5; 9:8-20; 28:1-29:16 Prophecy as social criticism
(& II Kgs. 16:5f) alliance and Immanuel
5:25-30; 8:7-8; 10:5-34; 33:1-6; 36-39 God in history continued:
Assyria as instrument of judgment;
Sennacherib's invasion, 701 B.C.
9:1-7; 11; -----Messianic thought: the Ideal King
Chs. 7-8 -----Judah vs. Israel and Syria, Alliance and Imman
2:2-6; 32:1-16; 35 -----The messianic age
Chs. 25-26 -----The perspective of immortality

MICAH Ch. 1 -----Yahweh's judgment on Samaria and Judah
2:1-11; 6:9-7:6 -----Oppression and suffering of the poor
Ch. 3 -----Heartless crimes of Judah's leaders and
approaching doom
6:1-8 -----Yahweh's real demands; definition of true
religion
Chs. 4-5 -----Restoration of the nation and the Messianic
King

Study Guide, Part Five

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| I. The Writing Prophets and the Characteristics of Hebrew Prophecy | |
| II. Amos | IV. I Isaiah |
| III. Hosea | V. Micah |

Study Questions on 8th Century Prophets

I The Writing Prophets and the Characteristics of Hebrew Prophecy

The fixing of the Hebrew Canon was a long process, not completed until about 100 A.D. The ancient Hebrew Bible was divided by the Rabbis in an artificial rather than in an historical or chronological way.³³ The Law or Torah had come to be especially revered by about the end of the 4th century B.C.; and the collections of Prophets by the 2nd century.³⁴ Some of the so-called "minor" prophets were actually figures of major importance. Amos, for example, whose book is very short was one of the greatest of the writing prophets, and the earliest. Chronologically speaking, his book should stand ahead of Isaiah.

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, et al., whose names stand as titles in our present Old Testament, have been called the writing prophets because much of the material of these books is by their own hand. These prophets tell their own story, frequently in the first person. See e.g. II Chr. 26:22; Is. 30:8; Jer. 36:1-4 where it is indicated that Isaiah and Jeremiah were literary men who wrote books.

Our present prophetic books are collections of their utterances or "oracles"; these were often in the form of short, lyrical, sermonic pronouncements of extreme beauty and power -- purporting to announce Yahweh's moral will or desires for the people and nation. The frequent lack of logical or chronological sequence of these oracles within a given book presents the general evidence of the edited character of the prophetic books. As they now stand they are composite writings, revealing the work of more than one author.

It has been a continuing task of Biblical scholarship to ascertain the extent of the composite character of these books, in the effort to sift the works of various editors and to determine differing historic circumstances and epochs reflected within them. With the books of the prophets the task is somewhat like that of the study of the Pentateuch. The examination of these books at the level of advanced, serious scholarship becomes a very complex undertaking and many of its conclusions will remain, no doubt, indeterminate. However, some of the major questions concerning authorship, and the fixing of dates relative to these writings, have been settled with a fair degree of accuracy by modern scholarship, so that, by and large, its general conclusions about many such matters may be accepted.

Concerning these issues we will here present the general findings of modern scholarship where agreement has been common, and beyond this point, where it may seem important on some issues we will indicate variant points of view.

³³a. The Law or Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy (The Pentateuch)

b. The Prophets or Nebi'im

i. Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, the books of Samuel and Kings.

ii. The latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the twelve "minor" prophets, viz. Hosea, etc.

c. The Writings or Kethubim: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles.

See e.g. Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 1f for a full discussion of the Canon of the Old Testament.

³⁴Ibid., p. 6.

Bear in mind the following general characteristics of the writing prophets and Hebrew "prophecy", which our subsequent study of a number of these books will bring to light:

1. In their major perspective and significance, they are called "prophets" because their main task is to warn men. In describing them we may stress that element of the Greek word, prophetes, from which our English term comes, as meaning one who speaks out for, or in behalf of God. (Pro: "forth"; phanai, to speak). They assume the role of moral forth tellers, that is, declarers of God's will, largely about matters of right and wrong. The Hebrew word for prophet, nabi, also suggests this basic idea of spokesman. In Ex. 4:16 and 7:1 we find Moses' brother, Aaron, called Moses' "prophet", that is nabi, or spokesman, who will speak for Moses before Pharaoh. (See II Kings 17:12, 15; Amos 3:6-8; Hosea 9:8; Micah 3:8; Isaiah 1:16-20; Jeremiah 6:8, 10; 18:7-11; Ezekiel 3:16f. where these prophets describe their mission as one of warning.)

2. The element of "prediction" or foretelling the future is characteristic of the Hebrew prophet only in the general sense that he believes himself to be acquainted with the operations of moral law in history, as an observable cause-effect principle. Wickedness will bring disaster to the nation, if people continue in it; on the other hand righteousness and justice will tend to bring peace and security. The 8th century prophets looked abroad and thought of the invading Assyrians as instruments of the Divine chastisement of Israel for her sins. Thus the expected Assyrian overthrow of Israelite independence was interpreted in this larger moral light. (We will reserve until a later point in our synopsis further comment or evaluation of this prophetic view of history, for its possible significance, or weakness, as an interpretation of historical process or "law".)

Suffice it here to repeat that they are not clairvoyant mediums that magically foresee future events in detail, down through the vistas of time ahead. What they have is moral foresight, rather than occult foresight -- a frequent popular misunderstanding of the Old Testament prophets. Only in a derived and general sense did they speak for the future -- as outlined above. They spoke mainly for their own day and age, and to their own generation.

Their moral foresight derived from their keen understanding of human nature, and of the nature of God as He works in history through moral order. The prophets had foresight because they had insight -- into the nature of man, God's highest and best will for man, God's work in history through the instrumentality of men. Winston Churchill could predict the Nazi conquest because he understood the weaknesses of England and France. A similar gift of insight among the great 8th, 7th and 6th century prophets of Israel and Judah made them accurate observers of the larger political forces and movements of their time, which enabled them to anticipate the destruction of their own nations.

Their hope, however, was that Yahweh would stay the Assyrian and Chaldean hordes, if the people would live up to the Mosaic Code of righteousness, and extend it into far reaching concerns of social ethics and justice. Accordingly the largest perspective in which the "predictive" element of the Old Testament prophets should be understood, is to point out that they predict so that their predictions of judgment may not come true! Prof. McCurdy of Toronto somewhere wrote, "The prophets never meant what they said." As we study passages like Isaiah 1:16-20 and Jeremiah 18:7-11, we perceive that they warn of calamity and judgment, as the sure result of continued personal and social sin, precisely in order to move their generation to repent, to change their ways, so that the prediction of judgment may not come to pass, but rather that the nation might remain secure and blessed. If the moral purpose is fulfilled -- that is to say, if the people change their heart and life -- that is sufficient: the purpose of the prophetic oracle is fulfilled. William Ernest Hocking has captured the spirit of ancient Hebrew prophecy precisely, in its most positive light, in the following memorable philosophic description of the prophetic consciousness:

"By the prophetic consciousness I do not mean a knowledge that something is to happen in the future, accomplished by forces beyond myself: I mean a knowledge that this act of mine which I now utter is to succeed and hold its place in history."³⁵

3. Related to the foregoing and a point which we shall elaborate further as we look at these prophetic figures more carefully, but one which may well be stressed at the outset, is to say that one of the main teachings of the prophets concerns man's freedom of will, and his responsibility as a free moral being. Man is free to decide his own life and destiny, but we take the consequences if we violate the moral order of the universe (Jer. 18:7-11). History is not pre-determined, and can in no wise be predicted in some occult, mechanical way; rather it is open and indeterminate.

4. We shall also see, as another prevailing point with the prophets, that the channel of divine inspiration to them is man's God-given faculty of rational conscience or moral reason, awakened by, and tested in experience. God speaks to man ultimately in an interior way, rather than through theophany and objective vision. (We will evaluate the meaning of "vision" in the prophets as we come to examples of this quality of the prophetic life. Suffice it here in our introductory comments to cite such notable passages as Deut. 30:11-14 - prophetic party's work; Is. 1:18; Micah 3:8; Jer. 20:8-9; 31:33.)

5. We should also realize at the outset that the miraculous element, in the sense of incredible marvels, is not present in the accounts of these great writing prophets, whose books enshrine much autobiographical and first-hand reporting. Sober realism would therefore be expected -- and such we find.

"Visionary" experience does indeed characterize an aspect of the life of these prophets, or some of them -- e.g. those reported in Isaiah 6 or Ezekiel 1. As we will observe, however, when we study these passages more carefully, their visions may be interpreted in the sense of personal "mystical" rapture, explicable more or less in terms of "normal" religious experience. While acknowledging the traditional view of such visions as depictions of totally extraordinary, or supernaturalistic phenomena, we will find room also for viewing them, in the main, as heightened literary descriptions of subjective experiences, by which the prophet wished to emphasize his understanding of God and moral reality. Many of the "visions" reported are, plainly by the context, observations of a natural event from which the prophet draws a moral lesson. For example, Amos sees a basket of summer fruit, which signifies to him that the end of Israel's day -- like the harvested crop -- had come; or Jeremiah tells us he visited the potter and drew a moral lesson, that men and nations are in the hand of God as the clay is molded by the potter.

(The "miracles" in the book of Daniel will be considered later on in the context of our study of that writing as a classic example in the OT of late apocalyptic literature -- to be distinguished from the literature we are now studying under the heading of the "writing prophets" of the 8th to the 6th century B.C.)

³⁵The Meaning of God in Human Experience, Yale 1912, p. 503.

II AMOS

The Historical Situation in Amos's Day (mid-8th Century, c. 750-735 B.C.) was characterized by four developments:

1. There was growing material civilization.

Militarily the Hebrew kingdoms were expanding. Joash and Jeroboam II had added territory to Israel (II Kgs. 14:23-28); while Uzziah was extending the borders of Judah (II Kgs. 15:1-15; II Cr. 26:1-15).

Military expansion brought an increase in trade. Growth in a commercial and urban way of life is everywhere reflected in AMOS and HOSEA.

There is evidence of an agricultural transformation from small freehold farms to large estates, with an accompanying dispossession of the poorer farm classes. We have already seen something of this development in the account of Naboth's vineyard at the time of Elijah in the earlier century. This situation is a number of times implied in AMOS and HOSEA; and the books of ISAIAH and MICAH speak of it explicitly, Is. 5:8f, Micah 2:2.

The effect of these economic changes was a general social degeneration sometimes characteristic of commercial life: increasing luxury for the few, increasing poverty for the many, heedlessness by the rich and powerful of the suffering of poorer groups, corruption of the agencies of justice, and the forgetting of elementary principles of neighborly conduct; in short a wholesale breaking of Yahweh's moral Covenant with the nation, II Kgs. 17:13-15.

2. A flowering of literature indicated growth in intellectual sophistication.

In the 9th and 8th centuries J and E respectively wrote their heroic histories of the beginning of the Hebrew people, and we have seen that they wrote from the prophetic point of view. Thus we have the beginnings of the documents of the Pentateuch at this period.

Most significant is the work of the great writing prophets, Amos, et al., whose pamphlets, calling the nation to repentance and a new righteousness, set fire to the dry moral stubble of the day. Their message has burned brightly through the centuries ever since.

3. There was feverish emphasis on religious ceremonial, II Kgs. 14:4; 17:9-17; Amos 4:4-5. Yahweh was worshipped with offerings, sacrifices, festivals. The sanctuaries or high places were zealously attended. But religion was merely ceremony; it was outward formality. It bore little relation to ethical conduct. Though Yahweh was thought to be the principal, and possibly the only, God, the people were confused about His ethical demands. Also beneath the superficial allegiance to Yahweh, the darker, perverted side of Baal worship still prevailed, with its primeval superstitions, requiring the worship of idols, intoxication, temple prostitution, divination, even human sacrifice, II Kgs. 17:17. The people made no connection between religion and the social and ethical needs of life. The cause of this confused interpretation of religion was a confused idea of the God-head, of Yahweh's real nature and requirements. Into this situation the great writing prophets burst with their deeper understanding of God and of human duties.

4. The threat of foreign conquest, c. 800-587 B.C. The chief development on the international scene, during the later period of the Hebrew monarchies, was the successive rise of two Mesopotamian empires to new power: Assyria (c. 800 to 610 B.C.) in the northern region of the Tigrus-Euphrates river areas, with its capitol at Nineveh; and Chaldea (610 to 538 B.C.) in the south, with its capitol city at the ancient site of Babylon.

When these large totalitarian powers, Assyria in the late 8th century, Chaldea-Babylon in the late 7th century, swept down across the Fertile Crescent into the little western, seaboard countries, they destroyed the "tribes", or the local independence of the Syrian, Tyrian, Philistine, and Hebrew principalities.

The great interpreter of the prophets, George Adam Smith, has said that the result of this development was the destruction of the tribal conception of religion for the Hebrews. After the Assyrian conquests only a larger, more universal conception of Yahweh and his religion would be convincing, a conception of Yahweh's will and his religion which would put meaning and purpose into the overwhelming tragedy of foreign conquest and subjection. The 8th and 7th century prophets saw this larger necessity, and came to know God in terms large enough to include the Assyrians and Chaldeans as His special instruments of judgment in history. From this time on Yahweh becomes, in the thought of the prophets, more and more the Lord of all nations and peoples; Hebrew religion becomes in its outlook increasingly international. (See II Kgs. 15:29; 16:5-9; 17:1-6 for reference to the Assyrian menace.) The conception of Yahweh's world-wide power was to increase the importance of his ethical demands at home.

By the 6th century, with the Second Isaiah, the prophets have discovered that he is in his primary nature a God of Suffering Love. At this general time the full awareness of God in these terms dawns upon the western mind through the experience of the Hebrew people. It is noteworthy how at this period in history -- the latter half of the first millenium B.C. -- other peoples and cultures, through the messages of their sages and prophets were also learning to think of the Divine, and of Human Duty, in terms similar to the Hebrews.³⁶

³⁶ It is instructive to look at Hebrew prophecy in relation to world history during the general dates of 750 B.C. - 350 B.C., one of the most important 400 years in the history of human thought. The prophetic movement in Israel seemed to be a part of a spiritual and ethical upheaval that embraced the whole of humanity:

	<u>Israel</u>	<u>Greece</u>	<u>Persia</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>China</u>
8th cent:	Amos, Isaiah Hosea, Micah				
7th cent:	Jeremiah			Hindu sages	
			Zoroastor		
6th cent:	II Isaiah Ezekiel	Pre-Socratics (Thales, etc.)		Buddha	Conficius Lao-tzu
5th cent:		Socrates Plato			Mo-tzu Mencius
4th cent:	Book of Jonah	Aristotle	Apocalyptic thought		
3rd cent:	Apocalyptic thought				

The parallel rise of other great religious movements gives more significance to the Hebrew development: it suggests that the Divine Spirit was working commonly in all these cultures to bring mankind as a whole to a higher understanding of right and wrong and a deeper knowledge of himself.

In studying the Book of Amos note the following divisions and message:

1. Opening Oracles: sins and doom of surrounding nations and Israel
Chs. 1-2:

- a) Note the dramatic, oratorical effect that Amos achieves as a speaker (and we may well suppose that his original prophetic utterance was a spoken address to an assembled throng at Bethel in Samaria): he calls attention first to the sins of surrounding peoples, Edom, Moab, Tyre, etc., then points the finger at Israel.
- b) Observe that the sins of the surrounding nations are sins of barbarism:
 - ruthlessness in warfare, 1:3, 11, 13
 - captives sold into slavery, 1:6, 9
 - aggression on neighbor's territory, 1:13
 - breaking of international agreements, 1:9
 - dishonor to the enemy dead, 2:1
- c) That the sins of Judah and Israel are sins of civilization:
 - failure to keep the moral laws, 2:4
 - unscrupulous business transactions, 2:6; 8:4,5
 - advantage taken of the poor, 2:6-7
 - sacred prostitution committed upon garment taken in pledge 2:7,8
 - drunken ceremonies, from wine taken as a fine (by priests?) 2:8. Therefore doom for Israel, 2:13-16; 3:2 under the weight of sins.

2. Addresses on personal and social sins of Israel and her leaders Chs. 3-6

- a) Amos must speak out, i.e. prophesy, 3:1-11
- b) Various evils continued, 3:12-5:17
 - idle luxury, 3:15; 6:4-6
 - land seizure suggested (see Micah 2:2)
 - callous, grasping. drunken women, 4:1 -- gluttony and intemperance
 - meaningless religious ritualism, 4:4
 - dullness of moral insight, lack of conscience, failure to comprehend Yahweh's visitations; lack of repentance, pride, complacency, and doom for same, 4:6-5:6
 - corruption of law courts and perversion of justice by bribery of judges, 5:7, 10-17
 - deceit, 5:10
- c) The Day of the Lord will be darkness and not light, 5:18-20; 6:1-8, 11 -- a time of reckoning, rather than of vindication for Israel.
- d) The ethical definition of religion, 5:21-24. (Compare Micah 6:6-8)

3. Visions of judgment, Chs. 7-9

- a) Locusts, fire, plumb-line, 7:1-9
- b) Amos's autobiography: why he prophesies, 7:10-17
- c) Basket of August fruit: the end is sure, 8:1f
 - deceitful measures, 8:5
 - selling the refuse of the wheat instead of giving it to the poor as was customarily done, 8:6

We may summarize and evaluate the salient philosophy of Amos:

He was opposed to personal, social, and religious evils: particularly ceremonialism divorced from ethical action. Religion is not ceremony and formal worship but morality and justice, 5:21-24.

The judgments of God were sure to come upon an unrepentant nation, because this is a universe of moral law, a moral place and process, above all else. A moral gravitation exists as surely as a physical gravity. 1:2; 2:4; 3:3-6; 5:14; 6:12; 9:2 With consummate literary and poetic power he calls attention to the moral order of the world by such passages as:

"...the pastures of the shepherds mourn,
and the top of Carmel withers" (1:2)

i.e. the very foundations of nature have been shaken by the transgressions of Israel. Or again we read the ironic inquiry:

"Do horses run upon rocks?

Does one plow the sea with oxen?

But you have turned justice into poison

And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood..."

Here he declares that the people's transgressions are as unnatural as it would be for wild, unshod ponies to run over sharp rocky places, or for a farmer to take his team out into the surf to plow!

His insight is that the inner moral corruption of states will make them unable to stand in the longer test of life. He is looking at the negative side of a possible moral law of history. Specifically for Israel: the nation had become soft and flabby, without inner moral coherence and strength. Accordingly it will fall an easy prey to the Assyrians. Is there some truth and warning in this outlook of Amos, as we think of some of the larger historic parallels to Israel's experience? Fourth Century A.D. Rome and the barbarian invasions? Pre-World War II France and the Nazi conquest? America now with its over concern for the height of automobile tail fins and her sluggish concern for bringing justice at long last to the American Negro?

Yahweh's personal will is the source of moral law. Our awareness of God is reflected in the speaking of truth to conscience, 5:4, 6, 14. God's nature is entirely ethical. Gone are the a-moral attributes of the Baalistic conception of deity. He is the God in and behind nature, who speaks through various natural portents, indeed, but the whole of nature is suffused by and reveals moral order expressive of Yahweh's immanent presence. In short for Amos, God is conceived above all else to be Sovereign Righteousness, universal controller of nature and history, and a God of Judgment (1:5; 3:9-11; 4:2; 9:4). The idea of God's love and mercy are not present with Amos. He is primarily the prophet of moral law and God as righteous judge.

Many scholars have pointed out that the verses which express assurance of restoration (9:8b, 9b, 11-15) must be by a later editorial hand than Amos's. Would the person who uttered the unqualified doom of 8:2 have retracted this proclamation of judgment in the above questioned verses?

Where, then, Amos's insight into the nature of God may seem incomplete, we turn to Hosea, Amos's contemporary, for a further disclosure.

III. HOSEA

The problem that Amos left was his failure to see the possibility of God's forgiveness of his people, flowing from the Divine Love, if certain conditions by the nation were met; or his failure to see how such a people could repent and be forgiven. George Adam Smith wrote, "There was needed a prophet with as keen a conscience of Law as Amos himself, to affirm that Love was greater still; to admit that Israel were doomed, and yet proclaim that their redemption was possible by processes as reasonable and as ethical as those by which the doom had been rendered inevitable. The prophet of Conscience had to be followed by the prophet of Repentance."³⁷

Hosea the man in contrast to Amos: We may presume that Hosea was a farmer: Hosea 4:16; 7:14; 8:7; 9:1,2; 10:11, 12; 13:3. Amos was a shepherd. Though a farmer, Hosea glorifies the desert for the simplicity and austerity of its tradition as does Amos.

In Hosea we will notice a sensitive capacity for love and sympathy lacking in Amos's uncompromising character. Hosea's personal domestic tragedy is the secret of his profound sympathy. Ch. 1 reads as if God ordered Hosea to marry a woman who was already a prostitute, or a temple prostitute. Three interpretations of this strange passage are possible:

1. We may say that it is pure allegory, as the symbolical names of the children of his marriage suggest. But, if we are inclined toward this interpretation, "Hosea's whole message is characterized by an emotion and pathos that could only come from a devastating personal experience"³⁸, a real experience.

2. We may suggest the hypothesis that the marriage was real enough, and, as the first reading of the words suggest, that Gomer was a prostitute before her marriage. Hosea's deliberate marriage then to such a woman would have been carried out as an object-lesson, designed to impress upon his people the shocking nature of their own unfaithfulness to God. The Old Testament prophets indeed did some very dramatic things sometimes to press an illustration for their people. However, the telling argument against such a theory of Hosea's marriage to Gomer is suggested by the fact that this prophet is particularly outspoken in his criticism of adultery and harlotry, 4:2, 13-14. In the light of Hosea's over-all message emphasizing the ideal of Israel's faithfulness to God, is it credible that he deliberately engaged in such a marriage? What further theory does the book itself bring to light?

3. As you read the book carefully it becomes clearer that Hosea married Gomer when she was young and innocent, 2:7; 11:1-4, 8,9. The real situation must have been that she became unfaithful to him. Hosea's prophecy, then, is a retrospect upon this tragic experience. He comes to see his own experience as a parallel to the nation's unfaithfulness to God, whom God chose when the nation was pure and innocent at the time of Moses and the Exodus. Hosea thus writes "as a traveler writes up his day by day record in the light of the whole journey when completed."³⁹ In the providential guidance of life, then, it was as if God had told him to marry

³⁷ Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, Harper, p. 238.

p. 55. ³⁸ James Anderson, et.al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit.

³⁹ The Abingdon Bible Commentary, 1929, p. 761, H. Wheeler Robinson

this woman, whose character would prove weak in this particular way, so that the experience and knowledge of God as forgiving Love might be forthcoming in the midst of Hosea's personal struggle.

The Book of HOSEA has the following topical structure:

1. Hosea's family tragedy and its parallel in Israel's history, Chs. 1-3 -- the sin against love.

- a) The prophet's unfaithful wife, 1:1-9
 - b) Israel's unfaithfulness, punishment, and restoration, 2:2-13
 - c) Forgiveness and restoration of the prophet's wife, 2:14-3:5
- Note the beautiful contrast between 2:4 and 2:23 as Hosea learns the secret of forgiveness.

2. Prophetic addresses: Chs. 4-10: judgment for Israel's sins, especially the corruption of her leaders, civil and religious.

- a) National guilt: violence, lying, murder, adultery, intemperance, Ch. 4
- b) Guilty priests and princes, 5:1-14
- c) True repentance lacking; imminent destruction of the nation, 5:15-8:3
- d) God's rejection of Israel's kings, idols, and alliances, 8:4-14
- e) Impending and inevitable punishment Chs. 9-10. The nation has trusted in material prosperity and military might, but forgotten justice, 10:1,2,13.

3. God's loving care for a faithless nation and ultimate restoration upon the condition of repentance, Chs. 11-14.

The message of Hosea unfolds in a vein similar to Amos, but with further dimensions of insight lacking in Amos:

1. The universe is a place of moral order and process -- moral law, 4:3, 6b, 19; 5:7; 6:5b, 7, 8:1, 7, 12; 13:15. If it be possible, even more magnificently than does Amos, Hosea stresses this point:

There is no faithfulness or kindness,
and no knowledge of God in the
land;
there is swearing, lying, killing,
stealing, and committing
adultery;
they break all bounds and murder
follows murder.
Therefore the land mourns,
and all who dwell in it languish,
and also the beasts of the field,
and the birds of the air;
and even the fish of the sea are
taken away...

A wind has wrapped them in its
wings,
and they shall be ashamed because
of their altars...
(4:1b-3, 19)

"...Now the new moon shall devour
them with their fields." (5:7c)

"...my judgment goes forth as
the light.
For I desire steadfast love and not
sacrifice,
the knowledge of God, rather than
burnt offerings." (6:5c-6)

"For they sow the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind..." (8:7a)

2. Israel has transgressed the moral order of the world by her sins. At the foundation of things she has been blind to, or rejected moral knowledge, or the Covenant with God, 4:6; 6:6; 8:12; 14:9. And she has rejected Yahweh's love for her (as Gomer rejected Hosea's love), 5:4; 6:4-6; 11:1-5 -- all other difficulties stem from this fundamental ignorance regarding love in its true dimensions. As a consequence society is corrupt, 4:1-3, 11-14; 5:4; 7:3-6; 10:4; 12:7. In terms of religious philosophy and practices, idolatry is at the center of the trouble, 2:8; 4:12-17; 5:4; 8:2-6; 11, 13; 9:15; 10:1-6; 12:11.

3. She has relied on wealth and military power, rather than on God and the moral power which flows from Him, as the source of human strength in the long run, 4:7; 8:14; 10:1-2, 13; 12:8; 13:15.

"...hold fast to love and justice and wait
continually for your God." 12:6

She has depended on ill-considered foreign alliances, whereas moral soundness alone could make her strong; without such strength national ruin will ensue, 5:13f; 7:11f; 8:9f; 10:12-15; 11:5; 12:1, 5f. Her ruling class is corrupt, and monarchy itself, if not a positive evil, is an institution of doubtful value, 7:7; 8:4; 9:15; 10:3; 13:9-10.

4. She must be chastened in the judgment of foreign invasion, before she perceives the error of her ways, repents, and returns to God. As with Amos, and with I Isaiah and Micah in Judah, he believes the Assyrians to be the instrument of the Divine chastisement, 3:1-6; 5:8f; 8:7-14; 9:1-9; 10:1f.

Over, above, and beyond the specific belief of these prophets that the Assyrian invasion and the Assyrian hordes were the express instrument of a Divine judgment in history in their time and circumstance, as we have already suggested their larger message of continuing value may be that men and human groups, nations, and societies, who plunge on in wickedness, will fall a prey to corroding and destructive forces, in the longer test of experience.

"...I will hedge up her way
with thorns;
and I will build a wall against her,
so that she cannot find her paths." (2:6)

"...they came to Baalpeor,
and consecrated themselves to
Baal,
and became detestable like the
thing they loved." (9:10)

5. Israel, however will be restored, if she repents, and changes her thought and ways. For God is love, active benevolence, searching Israel out, even in her

sins and waywardness, and hopes and seeks to restore her. Forgiving and saving love is the ultimate force in moral process; it transcends law as judgment. The Divine love covers men even in their sinful acts, and longs for them to return to righteousness and into fellowship with Him.

Here we have the Old Testament rising to its highest in man's experience or understanding of God as chiefly characterized by out-going or giving love, captured in the New Testament by the term the Christian tradition has known as agape. Here in the Old Testament, and a number of times in Hosea, the Hebrew linguists tell us the expression is chesed, or a derivative of chesed, variously translated "mercy", "steadfast love", "loving-kindness", and having the connotation of concern for the needs of others as the supreme motivation in the ethical relationship.⁴⁰ A number of lovely metaphors bring out Hosea's understanding of the Divine nature in this light:

"I led them with cords of compassion,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one
who eases the yoke on their jaws,
and I bent down to them and
fed them." (11:4)

"I will heal their faithlessness;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.
I will be as the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom as the lily,
he shall strike root as the poplar;" (14:4-5)

When Hosea learns the lesson of the Divine love for Israel, he ransoms and brings back Gomer, Ch. 3. Thus proceeds the message of Hosea. Two further important points are implied in his poetic and religious masterpiece:

6. Ch. 11 proclaims Israel's religion as peculiarly moral, that is, it is based on freedom of choice. The people bring the disaster upon themselves -- by their foolish alliances with Assyria, 8:7; 10:12, 13. Recall that the original covenant or contract at Sinai was voluntary. In Hosea the people are free to repent or not; God will save them out of his own loving freedom of action, 14:4. This chapter underscores the Hebrew insight that free choice is the basis of a moral universe. Hosea (indeed as do all the prophets) appeals to man's moral quality of freedom to rise to its full possibilities as responsible choice reflecting the Divine Love. (6:4-6)

7. The entire book of Hosea is a penetrating illustration of what the prophets meant by divine revelation. It teaches that the revelation of God as love came by experience; it dawned upon Hosea's conscience while he was in the depths of his own domestic tragedy.

⁴⁰ Hosea 6:6; 10:12; 12:6; 103 Psalm:8.

Study Questions on Amos and Hosea

1. What picture of the material strength and stance of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah do you get from II Kgs. 14:23f and II Chr. Ch. 26, during the reigns of Jereboam II and Uzziah (Azariah)?
2. What was the result of the policy of alliances of Judah and Israel with various Assyrian kings during the last half of the 8th century as reported by II Kgs. 15:17f; 16:5f; and 17:1f? Locate Assyria on the map. What was its capital city? Locate Syria. What was its capitol? Keep the difference between Assyria and Syria in mind.
3. List the points of the Lord's continuing indictment against Israel and Judah according to II Kgs. 17:7f.
4. What is a prophetic "oracle"? Illustrate from one of the writing prophets. Why are they called "writing prophets"? Of what historical significance is this? Describe the over-all character of their books as edited works.
5. Give a sketch of, and evaluate the social situation in Amos's day in Israel, concerning material "progress" and religious activity?
6. What was the significance of the 8th century Assyrian invasions in the development of Israel's religion?
7. Read Micah 3:8; Amos 3:6,8; Isaiah 1:16-20; Jeremiah 18:7-11; Ezekiel 3:17-21; II Kgs. 17:13-15. What do you gather from these passages is the prophet's main purpose in "speaking out"? How does the basic meaning of the Hebrew words for "prophet", nabi, suggest the role or purpose of ancient Biblical "prophecy"?
8. Read Isaiah 1:19-20 again. Exactly what does the prophet "predict" in this passage? Read Jeremiah 18:7-11 again. What seems to be the nature and purpose of "prediction" according to this formula of Jeremiah? According to this passage from Jeremiah what is the teaching about human freedom? What is the Divine attitude or relationship toward this fact? What is your conclusion, then, as to the "inevitability" or "non-inevitability" and general character of prophetic "prediction"? In what sense does the prophetic message bear upon the future?
9. Read Deut. 30:11-14; Isaiah 1:18 again; Micah 3:8; Jer. 20:9; 31:33. In these passages of what significance in your opinion is the "heart" or the "reason" or the "mind" (Heb. 8:10) as the stated channels through which "the word" of God speaks? In Jer. 22:13-18, especially verse 16, in what terms does Jeremiah expressly define how men "know" God?
10. What specific evils does Amos condemn in Israel and surrounding nations? Do we have evils like these to contend with today? How are our evils the same, how different? What does he mean by "cows of Bashan", 4:1? For what does he condemn them?
11. What picture as to social conditions does Amos 3:15, 6:11, and Is. 5:8f and Micah 2:2 suggest? As to religious situation does 4:4-5 suggest?
12. How do each of the following verses teach that ours is a universe of moral law, Amos 1:2; 2:4; 3:5-6; 5:14; 6:12; 9:2?

13. What concerning Amos's belief about the nature of God do you gather from the logical connection of 5:1 with 5:14?
14. What does he mean by the "day of the Lord", 5:18f in contrast to the popular belief?
15. What do the words in 5:21-24 imply as to the true nature of religion? Would you rule all ceremony out of religion? Do you think Amos ruled all ceremony out? What is the implied answer to the question asked in 5:25?
16. What difficulty in logical connection do you find within verses 9:8 and 9? What are your conclusions as to the "editing" or not of Amos's book?
17. How do you explain Hosea ch. 1? What internal evidence supports the third theory about the original nature of his marriage to Gomer?
18. Illustrate from major passages in Hosea how God is a God of love? In Hosea what is the human condition of the Divine forgiveness?
19. How does Hosea teach that the universe is moral order? Cite passages.
20. Why is freedom the primary condition of a "moral being"? What further meaning does the word "moral" have in common usage?
21. What do you make of the idea that "human experience" is the channel of "divine revelation", as implied in Hosea?
22. State the major similarities and differences between Amos and Hosea. Because of these "differences" does Hosea supercede Amos? How do you evaluate the discovery of differences in outlook between writings of the Old Testament so far studied?
23. Read to the class your favorite passage in Amos and in Hosea. Why do these passages appeal to you?

IV. The First Isaiah

The Problem of Reading Isaiah. The student who turns to the book of Isaiah for the first time, expecting to read a connected story from the first chapter to the last will very probably become confused without some introduction as to how to proceed. A similar difficulty is encountered in reading the Book of Jeremiah. When read consecutively, the chapters of these books are found to be by no means in perfect chronological order with respect to kings and events. They do not present a systematic development of either history or ideas. There is stirring history, and there are some of the greatest ideas of the OT in these books, but we face the problem of having to seek out the connections in our reading with considerable patience. The representative passages assigned will guide the student to the main story, and the message of the prophet.

Why is the Book of Isaiah (and Jeremiah) broken up in this manner, with political denunciations, moral sermons, theological soliloquies following each other without apparent connection? The answer is that the prophets, for the most part, spoke in brief "oracles". As we have previously pointed out, oracles are prophetic utterances believed to express the divine will. They are short, telling, lyrical outbursts, the most inspired form of communication a prophet can use. The Hebrew prophets spoke in oracles to move the consciences of the people to conform to the divine will. The literary prophets from the eighth century on wrote down their oracles in the form of oracular poetry (recall II Chr. 26:22; Is. 30:8; and Jer., ch. 36). An oracular poem usually presses home a single moral truth in striking phrase and stirring meter. For example:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O
earth;
for the Lord has spoken:
'Sons have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against
me.
The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand.'" (Is. 1:2-3)

The oracular character of Isaiah's book is well illustrated by the format of the Revised Standard Version. Roughly speaking, each of the paragraphs or sections indicates an oracular poem. Apparently, these oracles were put together by later editors, who are responsible for the patch-work form of our present Book of Isaiah.

The Two Isaiahs. The writings of the Isaiah you are now studying include most of chapters 1-39. Why stop at 39? The weight of the biblical evidence is that chapters 40-66 belong to a later period than Isaiah of Jerusalem or First Isaiah, as he is known. (The evidence for this division will be presented in a later chapter on Second Isaiah). We may say here, however, that the two parts of our present Book of Isaiah constitute one of the most magnificent expanses of writing and thought in the OT. In spite of the division after chapter 39, there are certain unities of spirit throughout. Ideas suggested in the First Isaiah (chs. 1-39) are frequently found enlarged in Second Isaiah (chs. 40-66). For example, First Isaiah's theme of the remnant of the people who are to constitute a nucleus for the rebirth of the nation is carried on in Second Isaiah. The Ideal King of First Isaiah becomes the Suffering Servant of God in the Second Isaiah. Chs. 1-39 include passages which seem to be by later hands: chs. 24-27, 13:1-14:23, chs. 21, 34, 35. Chs. 36-39 seem to be based on II Kgs. 18:13-20:19.

The Historical Situation. The prophecy of the First Isaiah extends from "the year that King Uzziah died" (747 B.C.) through the reigns of the following kings of Judah (see Is. 1:1): Jotham (regent 753-747 B.C., and king from 747-742 B.C.), Ahaz (742-725 B.C.), and Hezekiah (735-697 B.C.). Isaiah of Jerusalem was a contemporary of Amos and Hosea, the prophets in Israel, and of Micah, the other great eighth century prophet in Judah. The same historic situation forms the framework of all of these prophets. Each, however, made his distinctive approach to the problems of the day. Let us look more in detail at the background of Isaiah in the history of the Southern Kingdom, commencing with the ruler Amaziah (800-785 B.C.). Sources for this period are II Kgs., chs. 14-20 and II Chr., chs. 25-32.

Amaziah's troubled reign began in a palace revolution which took his father's life and was ended by a conspiracy that claimed his own. Apparently Amaziah was not a party to the murder of his father, Joash, for we read that "...as soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand he killed his servants who had slain the king his father." (II Kgs. 14:5) The most critical event of his reign seemed to be civil war with the Northern Kingdom, Israel. Taking heart by a local victory over the Edomites to the south, he apparently believed that the opportunity had come to square accounts with Israel, which had remained the dominant power since the division of Solomon's kingdom. In spite of Amaziah's courage, Israel defeated Judah. This humiliation led to Amaziah's down fall.

UZZIAH (Azariah) stands out as one of the abler political leaders of the eighth century in Judah. He succeeded where Amaziah failed in making Judah a great and independent power. Never had Judah flourished so much politically and economically as in this period. The reign of Uzziah was especially famous for reorganization and expansion of the military establishment. He modernized the armament of the foot soldier and built engines of war for siege purposes. He conquered Elath on the Red Sea, extended commerce, exacted tribute from once troublesome neighbors like the Philistines and Ammonites, and kept the desert peoples at bay. He expanded Jerusalem, fortified the countryside with watchtowers, and developed public utilities to supply the land with water. The Second Book of Chronicles says, "...And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong..." (26:15). It continues, "But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense." (26:16). In this attempt to usurp the priestly prerogative he violated the ancient principle of separation of church and state. As Saul was confronted by Samuel in the same circumstance, Uzziah suffered reuke from the priest Azariah (not to be confused with Uzziah's other name). The account has it that Uzziah was angered by this rebuke and because of his defiance and stubbornness was smitten with leprosy. It is the story of a great man whose pride was his undoing. In many respects Uzziah must have made a great impression on the prophet: II Chronicles tells us that Isaiah wrote a history of this king's reign (26:22).

Jothan carried on the able administration of his father for the most part. However, the Books of Second Kings and Chronicles say that, like his predecessors, he did not bring about a much-needed religious and social reform: "Nevertheless the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places..." (II Kgs. 15:35); "...But the people still followed corrupt practices..." (II Chr. 27:2). By the end of Jotham's reign we find a plot forming between Syria and Israel against Judah.

Ahaz, Uzziah's grandson, came to the throne as a spoiled, third-generation weakling. It was the opportunity for Judah's enemies to attack her. We find Ahaz, an idolater, completely irresponsible toward the religious traditions of his country. He worshipped at the old Canaanite sanctuaries. His very first act, according to II Kings, was the sacrifice of his own son to a heathen idol (probably Molech, see II Kgs. 23:10). He lost Elath. The Philistines began to give him trouble on the western frontier. He introduced an Assyrian god into the temple at Jerusalem and

worshipped before its altar in order to court favor with the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III, with whom he had just allied himself for protection against the threat from Israel and Syria. Although the Assyrians compelled Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria to turn away from their attack on Jerusalem, the Assyrian help was bought at a great price to Judah. It gave the Assyrians a controlling hand in the affairs of the Southern Kingdom. And in order to maintain the alliance, Ahaz had to despoil the Temple to pay Assyrian tribute. Isaiah the prophet directly forewarned that this courting of the Assyrians would lead to disaster at the hands of the Assyrians in the long run (Is. 7:17).

HEZEKIAH came to the throne (725 B.C.) with the Assyrians under Shalmaneser V preparing an attack on Samaria, capitol of the Northern Kingdom. After three years of siege the northern capitol fell (721 B.C.) to Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon. Assyria was now at Judah's doorstep. Nevertheless we find Hezekiah brave and independent enough to institute an extensive religious reform in the name of Yahweh. He purged his country of heathen cults and practices, and endeavored to rule as a righteous king should, in faithfulness to the old standards of worship and conduct. Personally his reign maintained this character for the most part; but politically his rule was uncertain and devious. We hear at one stage that he rebelled against the Assyrians, and then when Sennacherib besieged Judah, he apologized and again sent tribute. Apparently the old temptation of these weak buffer states of Palestine to rely on Egyptian help against invaders from the north and east was too strong for Hezekiah. Consequently we find him at another time putting his trust "in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen" (Is. 36:9). Isaiah was quick to point out the folly of his turning to Egypt for assistance (Is. 30:1-19 & 31:1-9). Egypt had lost its strength and national unity and was no surety for Judah. Isaiah vividly described the weakness of Egypt (19:2).

Summary of the Domestic and International Situation. The issue came to a head in the reign of Hezekiah. From the standpoint of First Isaiah the international outlook may be described as Judah's fear of Assyrian conquest. For a while we saw that there was fear of the alliance of Samaria, the Northern Kingdom, with Syria (Damascus). Then the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and its fruits were despoiled. In the eyes of the Assyrians, looking higher up on the lush growth of Palestinian civilization, little Judah hung like an over-ripened plum for the picking. For Isaiah the situation was seen in its gravest light when viewed against the internal political and moral weakness that had encouraged the Assyrian pressure: first, moral compromise and a policy of appeasement; then, political intrigue and a sequence of dubious power-alliances. Sennacherib, the enemy king, finally struck in 701 B.C. Apparently he made two attempts to take Jerusalem. Isaiah stiffened the back of Hezekiah when the king was about to surrender and prophesied that the city would be delivered. It was (Is. chs. 36-37). During the last siege some kind of plague decimated the Assyrian hosts, and Sennacherib's depleted army withdrew. Although Is. 37:36 describes the event as a visitation by Yahweh's angel of death on the Assyrian armies, in 10:16 we have the illuminating comment by Isaiah that the Lord "will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors...", suggesting an epidemic.

To Judah it was divine deliverance, one of those unexpected turns of history at a crucial moment that suggests a greater will behind events than man's. The limited quality of Hezekiah's vision as a statesman -- in spite of much in him that was nearly great -- is pathetically illustrated by his last words as recorded in Is. 39:8. After the Assyrian threat was lifted we find him resting content in the thought: "At least there will be peace and security in my time!" Where have we heard that before?

We find Isaiah speaking to at least three distinct crises: the first in ch. 6 at the time of Uzziah's death (747 B.C.); the second in ch. 7 at the period of invasion by Israel and Syria under Pekah and Rezin (c. 735 B.C.); the third in chs. 36-39 at the time of the Assyrian invasion of Sennacherib (701 B.C.). Beyond this

rough outline however, it is difficult to trace Isaiah's activity or to place his oracles in their exact historic setting. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity we will take his message in the order suggested by the readings, beginning with his call in ch. 6.

1. The Call and Consecration of Isaiah takes us back to the death of Uzziah. In connection with this Rogers writes, "as in Israel so also in Judah, prosperity brought incalculable evils in its train, both social and religious. Luxury and debauchery spread widely among the upper classes (Is. 3:16-23; 5:11, 12, 22; 28:1-8; 32:9f). Capital increased in the hands of the few, and the old landowners were gradually deprived of their little farms, which were replaced by great landed estates (Is. 5:8; Mic. 2:2, 9) and a destitute and oppressed lower class was formed. When Uzziah died...the times called earnestly for a strong voice to be raised against these conditions."⁴¹

The vision in ch. 6 is the record of an initial religious experience which was decisive in the life of the prophet. As you read this passage, consider whether the prophet was here describing literal and physical realities, or whether he was using poetic symbols and graphic imagery to describe inward experience. The bare facts of the record seem to admit either interpretation. In any case, the result of the vision was not that he saw merely a heavenly pageant with his eyes, but that his conscience was touched inwardly and his will moved to decision and action. Whatever the character of the vision, the truth that Isaiah saw was: (1) "God's supremacy in righteousness above the low moral standards of men...God's occupation of a far higher throne than that of the national deity of Judah,...God's infinite superiority to Israel's vulgar identification of His purposes with her material prosperity or His honor with the compromises of her politics."⁴² (2) The vision took place in the physical temple where animal sacrifice was customary; yet in the vision there is no sacrifice, or officiating and mediating clergy. The vision of God is direct and personal; forgiveness of sins is direct, following immediately the worshipper's personal repentance and contrition. This is religion in a far higher vein than Isaiah's contemporaries understood it. (3) Religious experience ends in ethical commitment and impels toward active service among men in a world that needs reformation. No high vision of one's duty dare remain without its active expression; although one is free to accept the call or reject it:

"Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"

Then I said,

"Here I am! Send me." (Is. 6:8)

(4) One's message and mission to his generation may encounter ignorance, human inertia, and outward defeat. Isaiah felt that his message would probably not be heeded. Nevertheless, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Fosdick reminds us that we see in Is. 6, Isaiah's central passage, a stride toward the more perfect idea of fellowship with God in terms of private prayer. This great chapter emphasizes God's holiness -- not in the sense of taboo and dread as in earlier epochs but in the sense of reverence. The first attitude of the Hebrew in his personal relation to God was one of dread. In Isaiah we find reverence the outstanding element. We are on the way toward an understanding of prayer in the deeper sense of personal fellowship, which we find in many of the psalms. Having fellowship with God is not summed up in outward ceremony, temple sacrifice, and

⁴¹The Abingdon Bible Commentary, op. cit., p. 632., Robert Rogers

⁴²George Adam Smith, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, Harper, Revised Ed., p. 61.

church attendance (Is. 1:11). Prayer, worship, fellowship are cast in terms of ethical devotion.⁴³

(In our later chapter, summarizing the basic Old Testament philosophy of religion, we cite Isaiah chapter 6 again. In its larger Biblical context, it expresses, along with various Psalms, one of two types of Old Testament thought concerning man's awareness of God through "religious experience". Isaiah 6, along with other Old Testament passages enshrines the mode of religious experience as beginning in a sense of moral self-dissatisfaction; other parts of the Old Testament tradition emphasize religious experience as beginning and continuing in a sense of moral well-being. The reader may turn to pages for a fuller discussion of this point.)

Note the ironical way in verses 9-10 Isaiah says the people will not heed his message; therefore judgment, v. 11-12.

2. Prophecy as social criticism, chs. 1-5; 9:8-20; 28:1-29:16. Isaiah's intense social prophecies form the larger background of which his vision of the ideal king, presently to be considered, are the center and focus. He inveighed against evils which are similar to those we find in Amos and Hosea. To mention but a few, he rebuked ill-considered alliances (28:14f); land monopoly by the rich (5:8-10); corruption of law courts (10:1f); neglect and advantage taken of the poor and defenseless (1:23; 3:15); hard commercial spirit, too concerned with mere money-making (2:7); lies, lack of integrity (5:18f); broken covenants (33:8); drunkenness (5:11f, 22; 28:1, 7f); vain and callous women (3:16f); lack of proper discipline of children (3:12); idolatry and superstitious practices, e.g. fortune telling (2:6,8), etc. He declared that piety divorced from social ethics is an abomination to God (1:11f; cp. Amos 5:21-24; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8).

Chapter 1, opening this indictment, is a scene of magnificent proportions. Ewald has called this tableau "The Great Arraignment"⁴⁴, a court scene: Isaiah appeals to Heaven and earth as the jury (here we have his emphasis on the universe as moral place and process); God is prosecutor, plaintiff, and judge; he himself as prophet is witness; and the people are the defendants. The charge has just been read. On the horizon is the Assyrian menace. That danger meant to Isaiah that God was displeased with his people's sins. He saw in the Assyrian a divine instrument by which God would chastise Judah, if she failed to repent and change her ways.

There is in Isaiah, however, as in Hosea, a profound hope. His message phrased in its over-all positive light enjoined the people to a just and pure life free from frivolity and vice.

An important aspect of Chapter 1, as indeed the whole book, is its announced theory of inspiration. Isaiah says that God's appeal is to moral reason:

"Come now, let us reason together,
says the Lord..." (1:18)

The people themselves may hear the interior voice of Yahweh, as well as the prophet, and may be inspired to act upon it! Conscience and reason are the channel of Divine revelation. Concerning this point in Isaiah George Adam Smith, the noted Scottish commentator on the prophets wrote:

"In the order and calmness of nature, apart from catastrophe, nor seeking to influence by any miracle, God speaks to men by the reasonable words of His prophet. Before He will publish salvation or intimate disaster He must rouse and startle conscience...Before religion can be prayer, or sacrifice, or any acceptable worship it must be a reasoning together with God."⁴⁵

⁴³Guide to the Understanding of the Bible, op. cit. pp. 210, 224.

⁴⁴G.A. Smith, Isaiah I, op. cit. p. 4.

⁴⁵Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, op. cit. p. 6.

(The appeal here is equally to human freedom, a point to which we will return presently under a summary of his view of man.)

On Isaiah's view of inspiration G. A. Smith continues:

"To Isaiah inspiration was nothing more nor less than the possession of certain strong moral and religious convictions, which he felt he owed to the communication of the Spirit of God, and according to which he interpreted, and even dared to foretell, the history of his people and the world...The literal view of inspiration is too simple to be true, and too mechanical to be spiritually edifying...Simple faith, acting along with a wonderful knowledge of human nature, and ceaseless vigilance of affairs, constituted inspiration for Isaiah."⁴⁶

3. Let us next consider Isaiah's theme of God in history, discussing it for the present as it bears upon the view of these 8th century prophets concerning Assyria as the Divine instrument of chastisement, 5:25-30; 8:7-8; 10:5-34; 33:1-6; 36-39. Note that he condemns Assyria and predicts her downfall for her prideful heedlessness of moral law or good.

In this dimension he conceives of Yahweh as now the universal God of history, the only God. In the best minds of Israel Hebrew religion has become free at last from polytheism. For the First Isaiah, however, there is still a limitation in the conception of God: Yahweh's favor or grace does not seem to extend to individual Assyrians; i.e. they are regarded as an impersonal mass. God uses them as an impersonal instrument and then throws them away as a carpenter would discard saw or ax, when he is finished using them. (We will see how this contrasts with Jeremiah's, Second Isaiah's, and Jonah's thought.)

Though we may recognize this partiality or limitation of First Isaiah's thought about foreign peoples as not standing in personal relation to God as did the Hebrews, we can to some extent understand his total condemnation of the Assyrian, when we look at the situation through his human eyes in the ancient day and setting. The Assyrian for him was a symbol of all that was evil, cruel, and tyrannical about man. Her armies were utterly ruthless; her kings proud and domineering, respecting neither man nor God (Is. 36:4-20). They stood in their time somewhat as the armies of Adolf Hitler did in our own. Accordingly, Isaiah thought of them, and the nation that supported them, as the very embodiment of evil, human nature on its corrupt side, which a righteous God could only judge. Isaiah's total condemnation of the Assyrians has at least this certain truth that states founded solely on military power and intrigue are doomed, a point substantiated by much of history.

We have already discussed the dramatic deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib described in Chs. 36-37

His philosophy of history -- indeed that of the entire group of prophets, as we have observed -- is succinctly summarized in the words:

"In the path of thy judgments,
O Lord, we wait for thee...
For when thy judgments are in the
earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn
righteousness." (26:8-9)

Isaiah does not state the prophetic law of history in its negative mood only, as above, but also, as do his prophetic colleagues, in the positive vein:

"If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 388-389.

But if you refuse and rebel,
 you shall be devoured by the
 sword;
 for the mouth of the Lord has
 spoken." (1:19-20)

How shall we evaluate Isaiah's "disciplinary" theory of historical judgment enshrined in such lines as we have just quoted? From a modern perspective Isaiah was, of course, naive in speaking of the Assyrians as a kind of direct, mechanical, flaying instrument in the hands of God, like a "saw" or "ax", that Yahweh would throw away when He was finished hewing with it. We have already noted the more general truth in his statements about the Assyrians, that states founded solely on military power and intrigue will not long endure. In this larger context of Isaiah's message God is conceived as a universal God of moral law, Lord of all nations, who would judge all for their moral weaknesses, for aggressive and unloving life, Assyrians as well as Israelites. As we have already phrased it in our study of the previous two prophets, the inner moral corruption of states will make them unable to stand in the larger test of life. This same truth Isaiah implies in his thought concerning history.

4. His theme of God in history expands to its largest dimensions in the Messianic thought of the book, to which we now turn; and it will no doubt be helpful for us at this place to paraphrase the several themes found thus far in Isaiah's prophecies concerning Judah. (1) You have sinned. (2) Your sins have weakened the nation. (3) Therefore, when the Assyrians attack, you will not be able to withstand them. (4) The fall of the nation is the judgment of God. (5) However, this judgment may chasten you, and out of what is left God will raise up a new nation. (6) Then there will be purity, justice, and universal peace under an ideal king of the line of David. This messiah will be specially endowed of God for his task.

a. His oracles on the Ideal King, or Messiah as the ideal king -- the word Messiah has meant one especially "anointed" of God to perform a special task-- are found in chapters 9 and 11.

"The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 those who dwelt in a land of deep
 darkness,
 on them has light shined.
 ...For unto us a child is born,
 to us a son is given;
 and the government will be upon
 his shoulder..." (9:2, 6a)

"There shall come forth a shoot
 from the stump of Jesse,
 and a branch shall grow out of
 his roots.
 And the Spirit of the Lord shall
 rest upon him,
 the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the spirit of counsel and might,
 the spirit of knowledge and the
 fear of the Lord.
 ...with righteousness he shall
 judge the poor,
 and with equity for the
 meek of the earth;..." (11:1-2, 4a)

Why did Isaiah's thought leap to such an inspired height?

One origin, no doubt, we may trace in Isaiah's inaugural vision previously studied.

An effect of his vision was the feeling of moral imperfection in himself and his contemporaries. Thus his thoughts turned to the possibility of human perfection and ideal manhood. Just where his prophecies of the messianic king, in part typifying perfected manhood and human character, fit into his life we are not sure. This central theme, however, of Isaiah's message relates to the long reigns, in part successful from a worldly standpoint, of Uzziah and his successors. Isaiah, proud patriot, courtier at Jerusalem (perhaps even prime minister as well as prophet) was anxious for the safety of his country. He wanted to see his people happy and secure, living at peace with neighbors and in justice at home, inspired by the leadership of a strong and righteous king. Each of the real kings, however, had certain failings that disappointed Isaiah. He realized that they fell far short of the kingly ideal: Uzziah was sacrilegious, Ahaz was weak, Hezekiah vacillated. His nation was threatened and suffering because of the imperfections of its monarchs. Thus several of his important oracles dealt with the theme of the ideal king who would one day come. These passages are important because they represent the dawn of the messianic idea among the Hebrews. Isaiah suggests that the nation's special destiny, which was symbolized in the Covenant at Sinai, is now to be fulfilled through the agency of a divine-human personality:

"...and his name will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty
God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government
and of peace
there will be no end..." (Is. 9:6-7)

Isaiah's concept of the ideal king is sometimes called the "Son of David" view of the messiah, in which his contemporary Micah, and also other, subsequent OT thinkers shared. It is in essence a political conception. The messiah would be a king, a lordly personality and descendant of David of old, who like him would sit upon a throne, a human ruler, but albeit with God-like qualities, of grace, wisdom, and power. Before we are done with the Old Testament view of the messiah we will trace two further conceptions, the Lowly Suffering Servant ideal of II Isaiah, and the heavenly or transcendent Son of Man concept of the apocalyptic book of David.

A further source or origin of his messianic thought may lie in an experience which occurred about 735 B.C. and enshrined in chapters 7 & 8, concerning the alliance of Israel and Syria against Judah (See also II Kings 16:5-18).

The problem of chapter 7 concerns the proper interpretation of the new-born child, "Immanuel" of 7:14? The historic situation of that time helps us to see the meaning of this figure of speech. In verse 10 Isaiah challenges Ahaz. The polytheistic king was not relying on divine providence, but on a treacherous alliance with Assyria. In the account of the situation in II Kings we learn that he had to despoil the temple in order to pay tribute to Assyria. Accordingly in chapter 7 Isaiah means, and explicitly says, that before the very next child is born in the land and grows up, the alliance will be broken. The reference may be to any child next to be born in the land. It is possible, however, to conjecture that Isaiah had some more specific child in mind, such as Ahaz's expected heir to the throne, or possibly his, Isaiah's own child, see Ch. 8:3, 18. In any case the expected birth to which the passage refers, is plainly to take place in the immediate future of Isaiah's own day

and time; it is not a clairvoyant prediction of an event in a distant future age. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that in the very next chapter 8 the symbolical name of Isaiah's own child refers to the breaking of the northern coalition against Judah, as the text clearly explains, 8:1-5. Moreover, in 8:8 the author further says that the Assyrian invasion will sweep into, and threaten the land of the little Immanuel mentioned in chapter 7, obviously indicating that he is conceived to be a child of that day and age.

Is this not, then, a messianic passage referring to the birth of Jesus by a virgin as tradition has held? By the context it is clear that Isaiah does not mean a child born in the remote future, but a child of his own time. In 7:14 Isaiah thinks of the new child as "Immanuel", which means "God is with us"; that is, the name summarizes Isaiah's message to the weak king: "You need not fear this alliance of Syria and Israel, Ahaz, for God is with us, and will see that the alliance is broken soon." In the King James translation the wording is "a virgin shall conceive." The Hebrew word is "almah", which the translators of our edition feel is better rendered by "a young woman", though "virgin" is given in the note as a possible translation. The New Testament quotation of this famous passage in Matthew 1:24 is "virgin", from the Greek "parthenos", which does indeed mean more explicitly "virgin". Moffatt Commentary suggests that the New Testament author of Matthew quoted from the Greek edition of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, where the reading is "parthenos".

Our conclusion is that although the passage is not explicitly messianic, it may be thought of as indirectly messianic and related to the explicitly messianic passages later on, Chs. 9 and 11, if one wishes to put this construction upon it. The situation may have aroused in Isaiah's mind the idea of a messianic child to be born, who will grow up and fulfill the ideal of kingship in every way in which Ahaz has failed. The brilliant spontaneous figure of speech about the little "Immanuel" in ch. 7, starts Isaiah's train of thinking about the need for a "prince of peace" which flowers in the great passages of chs. 9 and 11. We may say that although not initially and situationally messianic, possibly finally and in retrospect in Isaiah's mind it is.⁴⁷

b. Another aspect of Isaiah's messianic thought is the Messianic Age. Chs. 2:2-6; 32:1-16; 35 look toward a period in earthly history when there will be universal peace and prosperity.⁴⁸ Ch. 2:2-6, and the parallel passage in Micah 4:1-3, lay down the conditions for international peace, e.g. an international tribunal and international law. In these magnificent and often quoted passages we see Old Testament "prophecy" indeed influencing the future as a statement of prescriptive truth. Though Isaiah and Micah described "Zion" or Jerusalem as the center of a world empire -- no doubt reflecting the age-old longing of the Hebrew mind and heart, that somehow Israel or the Jews (an historically persecuted people) will at the long last gain their rightful place of leadership in the world; it is the superiority of Israel's law, her sense of humane righteousness which is stressed as the ultimate force for peace and civilization.

Thus the messianic age sums up Isaiah's philosophy of history, that the world is moving toward a blessed summation under divine purpose. For him the Hebrews are to be the chief instrument in the realization of this purpose. The belief in historical purpose and in a divine meaning to history is a type of faith that the world always needs and is pertinent to our present period of crisis. Time has fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah and the other Hebrew seers that the Jews would be a

⁴⁷G.A. Smith, and more recently B.W. Anderson, have drawn this type of connection between these sections of the book.

⁴⁸Chapters 34 and 35 are sometimes assigned to Deutero Isaiah section, of the Book of Isaiah, i.e. chapters 40-66. Chapter 34 breathes a spirit of vengeance against the neighboring people of Edom as chapter 63 does. For the problem of II Isaiah at such points see page

blessing to mankind. Their humanitarian sense of life, their doctrines of the supreme worth and dignity of human personality, of justice, fair-play, and mercy have influenced civilization. Along with the Mosaic laws, the major Psalms, and the social criticism of the prophets, their concept of the Divine purpose moving in history, in the dimension just described, toward an actual historical fulfillment constitutes one of the greater themes of the OT that has stirred the spirit of Western man for good, lighted his imagination, and sustained his best effort and hope.

5. Further implications of Isaiah's message. The Idea of God. He represents GOD as the Universal Sovereign (10:5) who governs the destiny of world empires. God's attributes are majesty and transcendence (ch. 6). His conception of God is one of the loftiest found in the OT up to this time. His emphasis on the ethical holiness of God draws together in magnificent language the similar themes you found emerging in earlier prophets. There is one respect, however, to which we have already alluded, in which it must be said that his conception of God seems incomplete, and wherein his contemporary, Hosea, rises higher, namely, the greater love and mercy of God. Isaiah of Jerusalem spoke of the Assyrians as if they were but God's impersonal instrument (ch. 10). To Isaiah God did not stand in a personal relationship to individuals of other nations. This truth had to wait for utterance until Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah, and the authors of the Books of Ruth and Jonah.

The Idea of Man. Isaiah's appeal to reason (considered in the previous discussion of his concept of reason as the normative channel of divine inspiration) is also an appeal to, or affirmation of, human freedom. The stress on human freedom, as we have already pointed out by general reference, was a primary feature of prophetic philosophy, here specifically spelled out in such great lines, as "Come, now, let us reason together..." Not conceiving man as determined by any inherent or antecedently corrupted nature, the appeal to man is to avoid the possible corruptibility of his nature, and to repent and make amends where corruption has already occurred.)

In his idea of MAN, Isaiah prepared the way for his successors, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the great prophets of individualism. Though Isaiah's was primarily a social message, denouncing the sins of men and nations in mass, beneath his condemnations he meant the individuals who compose the crowd. National and international evils have their source in the minds and hearts of individuals. His positive note to this effect was that a righteous remnant will be responsible for the salvation of Israel (1:24-31 & 10:20-23). This means that individuals of integrity and high purpose must step forward to assume the leadership of national affairs. For Isaiah, society in the abstract was never saved; progress in the abstract was never made. Only as individuals take hold by their own wills do concrete achievements come to pass:

"Behold, a king will begin in
righteousness,
and princes will rule in justice.
Each will be like a hiding-place
from the wind,
a covert from the tempest,
like streams of water in a dry place,
like the shade of a great rock in
a weary land. (Is. 32:1-2)

Religion and Ethics. Isaiah's contribution to the idea of RIGHT AND WRONG is his stirring reemphasis of the message of all the great prophets, that religion and ethics cannot be separated. Isaiah and the moral prophets translated the idea of holiness, which had merely meant taboo in former time, into ethical meanings.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Fosdick, op. cit., p. 212. Is. 1:1; 5:16-19.

However, if Isaiah invested religion and the idea of holiness with goodness, the corollary of this identification is no less significant. To Isaiah, the religious vision was the source and norm of ethical action, and ethical action is the adequate response to the religious vision (1:10ff & ch. 6). In sum, Isaiah retains for ethics the vitality of a religious motivation, and the insight that personal good works and social justice are expressions of the will of God. A rational, moral conscience is the capacity of man through which the Divine Will contacts life and realizes destiny (ch. 1).

Evil and Suffering. The prophets of the OT are primarily concerned with social or moral evil, with man's inhumanity to man, and how through the infusion of the Divine Spirit into man this evil, or sin, may be overcome. They were not so consciously concerned with the philosophic problem of why, in a world created good by God, there is natural or physical evil? -- this larger issue waits for the consideration of the book of Job. In so far as the problem occurs to them they meet it at the level we have already indicated in their philosophy of historic judgment or suffering.

Isaiah's conception of the cause of SUFFERING was that trouble is deserved punishment. If Judah's disaster came, it would be a penalty for social sin. This was to be for a good many generations, the orthodox Hebrew teaching about suffering and evil. Deeper conceptions of the problem had to wait for Second Isaiah and the Book of Job.

Destiny. Isaiah's concept of human destiny in one important dimension of the book's thought we have heretofore considered under the topic of his messianic beliefs and the concept of the historic Golden Age toward which human experience is moving.

Chs. 25-26 (25:6-8; 26:19) enshrine a perspective of eternity and immortality. The message is that the ultimate meaning of life, history, and human destiny or goal lies beyond this life. The rise of messianic thought would foster the conception of resurrection from the dead and the possibility of immortality.⁵⁰ Chapters 25 & 26, though believed by many scholars to be later than the time of First Isaiah, nevertheless carry on, and expand into a beautiful product of literature and imagination, the vision of a future life. First Isaiah's purposive conception of life and history is here carried to its farthest implication, whether by his hand or a later one.

In conclusion First Isaiah is often called the great prophet of Faith, as Amos was the prophet of the Divine Righteousness, and Hosea was the prophet of the Divine Love. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the concept of faith any more beautifully expressed than in this part of the Book of Isaiah.

"On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things...He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken." (25:6a, 8)

"Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in.
Thou dost keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee,
because he trusts in thee.
Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise.
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades
thou wilt let it fall." (26:2-3, 19)

⁵⁰Fosdick, op. cit., p. 270. For the character and content of these chapters as post Isaianic see e.g. G.A. Smith, Book of Isaiah, Vol I, p. 464f.

V. Micah

Micah, the Morashite, was from a town in the fertile country west of Jerusalem toward Philistia. He was a prophet from agricultural country, in contrast to Amos who was from the hills of Tekoa. Amos denounced the luxury and idolatry of the rich. Although both Isaiah and Micah scourged the fatal politics of the capitol, Micah was particularly aware of economic dangers in the provinces. His main mission was to rebuke the avarice of the land-owner and the oppression of the peasant.

"Woe to those who devise wickedness
and work evil upon their beds!
When the morning dawns, they
perform it,
because it is in the power of their
hand.
They covet fields, and seize them;
and houses, and take them away;
They oppress a man and his house,
a man and his inheritance." (2:1-2)

As Micah you find expressed the bitterness of one who had experienced the exploitation of the poor by the rich (see 3:1-3). Since he predicted the ruin of Samaria (1:6), capitol of the Northern Kingdom he must have begun to prophesy before 721 B.C.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND of his prophetic idea, is found in the exploitation of the poor (2:1ff; 3:3); deceit in trade and business (6:10ff); treachery and dissension in society and the home (7:5ff); corruption of rulers and judges (3:9-11); the mercenary motives of priests and prophets (3:11); and idolatrous and insincere religion (5:12-14), where low morality had its root.

One way to study the Book of Micah, in order to catch its principal message, is suggested in the outline of assigned readings. For style and unity of the book as a whole, an examination of the sequence of his oracles makes possible a division into three parts: (1) chs. 1-2, chs. 3-5, and chs. 6-7. Each of these begins with a "Hear ye" and carries through the following scheme: description of "corruption, judgment, salvation of a remnant, exaltation" (McFadyen, Abingdon, 792). This arrangement may be due to the editing of Micah's material by later hands. Transitions are sometimes abrupt, and it is not always possible to trace connections of thought exactly.

THE MESSAGE OF MICAH : . . . We call attention (1) to his definition of the function of a prophet and the nature of inspiration. . . . "The function of the inspired prophet -- and he knew himself to be one (see 3:8) -- was not to predict the distant future but to stir the popular conscience by confronting it with the moral demands of God" (McFadyen, Abingdon, 791).

"But as for me, I am filled with
power,
with the Spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin." (3:8)

(2) In contrast to the degenerate religion and morality of the day, stands Micah's own

"incomparable conception of the divine demand upon men, expressed in terms of elemental simplicity -- justice and kindness between man and man, and a humble walk with God" (McFadyen, Abingdon, 791). Micah's classic definition of true religion (see 6:8) has been called the highpoint of Hebrew prophecy. (3) Micah's conception of God's moral holiness and his universal, righteous government of the world reminds us of Isaiah (see 1:3-5). (4) In spite of his warning to the nation, he foresaw that the majority would not heed the word of God as spoken through him. Therefore judgment would come. But as with Isaiah so with Micah, there is hope in the remnant that will be saved under the messianic king. After the time of purging and discipline there would be an age of permanent peace and prosperity. The messianic prophecies of Micah are strikingly similar to Isaiah's. Indeed, Micah 4:1-3 is an exact repetition of Isaiah 2:2-4:

"It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house
of the Lord
shall be established as the highest
of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the
hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,
and many nations shall come,
and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain
of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the
law,
and the word of the Lord from
Jerusalem.
He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide for strong nations
afar off;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning
hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any
more;"

McFadyen commenting on this magnificent passage says that it "is not an idealist's dream, it is full of practical insight, suggesting as it does the way to world peace. To secure this, there must be (a) a hatred and horror of war -- the nations recognize that arbitration is a more excellent way than war; (b) a tribunal (here, Zion) which the nations can trust; (c) nations willing to submit their case to arbitration and to abide by the result; (d) unquenchable hope -- 'it shall come to pass.' As in his blood-drenched and war-weary world the prophet dared to cherish this confident hope, so may we" (Abingdon, 795).

Micah added to the messianic cycle the birth place of the ideal ruler -- Bethlehem (5:2-6). George Adam Smith, offering in part an explanation of why the messianic idea loomed so prominently in the minds of the eighth century prophets, said it is "because the pain of the greatest minds of the eighth century was the contradiction between faith in the God of Zion as Universal Righteousness and the experience that nevertheless, Zion has no influence upon surrounding nations, this vision shows a day when Zion's influence will be as great as her right..." (BI, I, 430). How much of the vision has already been fulfilled! Through the influence of Judaism and

Christianity the peoples of the western world have come to be "instructed" in the ways of the God of Micah and Isaiah and the message of just relationships between men which the vision of that God inspired. (We should not forget also the humanizing forces of Greek philosophic idealism and, at a later time, the religion of Islam, as major influences for good in the life of the West, which augmented those of the Judeo-Christian stream of value.) The reference to Bethlehem as the birth place of the Ideal King, 5:2, has traditionally been interpreted to be a clairvoyant prediction by Micah of the birth place of Jesus of Nazareth. A more natural interpretation of the passage is that it was Micah's way of saying that the Ideal King Messiah would come from the line of David, since traditionally Bethlehem had been regarded as the city of David, I Sam. 20:6; II Sam. 23:15.

Study Questions on: Isaiah and Micah

1. When we say that the writing prophets (Amos, Isaiah, etc.) wrote their own Books, this statement must be qualified. To what extent and how do we know? What problem particularly do we face in reading the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah?
2. What picture of the material situation in Judah at the time of Uzziah do we get from II Chr. Ch. 26? What was Uzziah's "sin"? Of what event in the life of King Saul does this remind you?
3. What foreign alliance against Judah prompted Ahaz to court favor with Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria? How did he court favor, II Kgs. Ch. 16?
4. What truth concerning Israel's conception of God and religion did Isaiah "see" in his inaugural vision, Ch. 6?
5. What elements of Isaiah's vision suggests what we may call "normative religious experience"? Do people have "religious experience" today? How is it different, if at all, from other types of experience? How like, and where joins other experience? What is the purpose of religious experience?
6. Paraphrase Isaiah's over-all message.
7. Which of the evils of his day are current today? Read the Biblical passages for each of these that you think apply today. How and in what quarters do they apply?
8. Explain the historical background of Is. Chs. 7-8. Read 7:16 and 8:7-8 carefully. What is your conclusion as to whether these verses refer to a child contemporary to Isaiah or not? What was the purpose in calling this child "Immanuel"? What does the strange name he gives to his own child in Ch. 8:1f mean? Is the purpose of this allegorical name identically the same as the child of chapter 7? Recall the peculiar names Hosea gave his children in Hosea 1. Did those allegorical names teach a contemporary lesson for Israel of Hosea's day? How may Is. ch. 7 be thought of as indirectly leading up to his explicitly messianic concepts of Chs. 9 and 11?
9. Why did Isaiah's thoughts turn to the need for an ideal king? What does the word "messiah" mean in Hebrew?
10. What is Isaiah's philosophy of history? What is the purpose of historical judgment as suggested by 26:9b? Do you think this is true? In what sense has time fulfilled his prophecies about (a) the Assyrians, (b) his own people and nation?
11. Do you think that nations are used as Divine instruments in history today? What would be the forces in a nation's life that God might use for his work -- through what channels might the Divine Spirit act to influence history?
12. Read Ch. 10. What is the Divine attitude toward Assyrians as people? What limitation does this seem to give to the Divine universality? What do you make of the imperialistic note in 11:14 (is this under the leadership of the ideal king?). How do you square 11:14 with e.g. 2:4 or 11:9?
13. Read Is. 1:24-31; 10:20-23; 32:1-2. What do you conclude as to the importance of the individual in society by these passages? Are individuals, or is social "structure", or institutions, more important to human well-being? What is "society"? Which has the prior "reality" in your opinion, "society" or "individuality"?

14. Read Is. 1:10-17. How does this compare with Amos 5:21-24; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:7-8?
15. Read Is. 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4. How does such a prophecy cover the future and in what sense true? Do you think there will ever be world peace? What conditions would be necessary for it? Do you think Is. 11:6-9 is poetic imagery, or points to what will be real fact?
16. Read Micah 2:1-2; 3:1-3; 6:12; 7:3. What do you conclude from these passages as to Micah's social conscience?

7th Century

Reading Assignment:

1. RSV II KINGS Ch. 21 -----Manasseh and Amon, idolatrous and ruthless kings of Judah.
 Chs. 22-23 -----Josiah's reform inspired by the prophetic movement.
- II CHRONICLES Chs. 34:1-7; 35:1-19 ---Josiah's reform: purging the land of Baalism, emphasis on ceremonialism, centralization of worship at Jerusalem.
- DEUTERONOMY Chs. 12:1-13; 16; 17:2-5; 18:9-14; 23:17 Religious reforms: centralization of worship; opposed to idolatry, to worship of "hosts of heaven", to human sacrifice, to practice of divination; opposition to cult prostitution.
 Chs. 15:1-15; 16:18-20; 19; 22:1-8; 23:15-20;
 24:1-25:4, 23 -----Various humane social laws.
 Ch. 30:11-14 -----God's will and moral law known in inner conscience.
 Chs. 20; 23:3-7; 25:17-19 Vengeful and exclusion principles
- JEREMIAH Ch. 36:1-32 -----The Book
 Chs. 1:1-10; 4:19; 6:11; 8:18-9:3; 9:23-24; 12:1-6; 14:7-15:21;
 18:1-12; 20:7-18; 22:13-16; 38:1-13 Biographical: Jeremiah's call; anguished inner conflict concerning his responsibility as a prophet; moral conscience as the channel of God's voice; the nature of the prophetic office; persecution.
 Chs. 4:5-6:30; 9:4-26 Period of the Sythian threat and analysis of Judah's sins.
 Chs. 11:1-14; 17:19-27; 34:8-22 In support of Josiah's reform.
 7:1-23; 8:8-13; 11:15-17 In opposition to overemphasis on ceremonialism and the Temple in the reform; religion not rite and ceremony but just conduct.
 Chs. 25:1-14; 22:1-19; 26; 36; 27:1-28:16; 21; 29:1-23; Period of the Chaldean invasion and exile of Judah's leaders to Babylon; letter to the exiles.
 Chs. 30-31 -----Restoration and the New Covenant.

2. Study Guide, Part Five,
 VI Deuteronomy
 VII Jeremiah

3. Study questions on 7th century

VI Deuteronomy

The extensive religious reform instituted by King Josiah (639 B.C. - 609) was inspired by the prophetic party and their program laid down in the book of Deuteronomy. The reform also constitutes the background for an understanding of the book of Jeremiah. Accordingly we pause to look at the account of the reformation in the books of II Kings and II Chronicles.

Josiah's Reform

Read carefully the assignment from II Kgs. and II Chr. These accounts present the social and religious conditions in the mid-7th century in Judah, and tell of King Josiah's sweeping reforms. Note the main contents of this reform, inspired by the prophetic underground during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, Josiah's immediate predecessors:

1. Renewing of the Covenant, and emphasis on "the book of the covenant", II Kgs. 23:1-3, as inspiration for the reform.
2. Practices purged:
 - Idolatry in the Temple and elsewhere, II Kgs. 23:4f
 - idols burned
 - priests deposed
 - forbidding of astral worship and astrology, "the hosts of heaven".
 - Temple prostitution, II Kgs. 23:7
 - Human Sacrifice, II Kgs. 23:10
 - Divination forbidden, II Kgs. 23:24 (Contrast earlier attitude toward divination, eg. I Sam. 23:9-14, and compare Isaiah 2:6, or Jer. 27:9).
3. Centralization of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem -- Baal sanctuaries in outlying regions destroyed, II Kgs. 23:13f; II Chr. 34:1-7. (Compare Deut. 12:2-28; 16:1-6)
4. Reestablishment of the ancient Hebrew ceremonies, eg. the Passover, II Chr. 35:1-19; II Kgs. 23:22 (which takes place customarily the last of March and the 1st of April).
5. Reemphasis on the ancient social laws of Moses, II Kgs. 23:25. (Compare Ex. 21-24 and Deut. 19-25).

Many modern scholars agree that our present book of DEUTERONOMY is a document that comes from a period just prior to Josiah's reform (c. 621 B.C.). They arrive at this conclusion because so much of the account in DEUTERONOMY seems to parallel exactly the social conditions, and the evils expunged, in the reform described in Kings and Chronicles.⁵¹

⁵¹See eg. a parallel description of the events recorded in II Kings and II Chronicles and those of Deuteronomy, Anderson, et.al., Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

1. Origin of the name Deuteronomy: The Greek translation of the OT, called the Septuagint (3rd - 1st century B.C.) translated the Hebrew "a copy of this code" in Deuteronomy 17:18 into "this second law-giving" and gave the name Deutero-nomion to the whole book. (In the Hebrew Bible the title was "The Words")

This in fact is a good over-all description of the book. It is a second codification of the laws of Moses in the light of the 7th century times. The oldest is found in Ex. 21-23; and a later version than Deut. 12-26 are the laws found in Leviticus and Numbers.⁵² It is understandable that Deuteronomy found its place in the Canon at the end of the writings traditionally attributed to Moses.

2. Date of writing: We have pointed out that II Kings 22-23 seems to be a description of the reforms we find in Deuteronomy. Scholars have concluded that "the book of the law" mentioned in II Kings 22:8 is Deuteronomy, or the core of Deuteronomy. Many modern students believe that Deuteronomy inspired Josiah's reform, and would therefore have to be written somewhat before his reign (639 B.C. - 609). Amos and Hosea 750-735 B.C. do not demand abolition of local sanctuaries as Deuteronomy does. Thus this book would have to have been written after their time. Probably 650 B.C. in the reign of Manasseh is a good guess. Deuteronomy would then have been an underground, reform tract, composed by the prophetic party of Yahwism, which Manasseh tried to exterminate.

In form the book is presented as Moses's valedictory, a hortitory discourse, Deut. 1:5-6; 12:1.

3. Authorship: It is, however, clear that the book as we now have it is later than Moses's time. A generally accepted theory is that it was written as a program of action for Josiah's reform, a kind of manual for the people. Deuteronomy itself indicates that it was written after Moses's time:

a) For example, the expression "beyond Jordan" (1:1,5; 3:8; 4:41,46) shows that the author was living in western Palestine; yet according to the story of Moses, Moses was not allowed to cross into western Palestine.

b) Nowhere does the book claim to be written by Moses. Rather the parts introductory to the speeches of Moses refer to him in the third person. Moreover, Moses's death is mentioned in Ch. 34

c) The work reflects more settled social conditions than the nomadic situation of Moses's time:

- property is owned, 19:14
- houses are assumed, 22:18
- farming is assumed, 24:19f; 24:6
- trade/commerce is assumed, 23:19f
- city life, "gates" assumed, 17:5

d) Its theological ideas are presented from the prophetic point of view, suggesting the influence of Amos and Hosea, etc.

e) It is opposed to the worship of the "hosts of heaven" (the stars) reflecting Assyrian and Chaldean influence from 8-7 centuries, Deut. 17:3; II Kgs. 17:16.

f) Opposed to the practice of divination Deut. 18:10; but divination was practiced in the earlier days, eg. by David.

⁵²Abingdon Bible Commentary, op. cit., p. 269.

g) Opposed to collective punishment, Deut. 24:16; contrast Joshua 7:24.

h) Criticizes certain policies of King Solomon, 17:16-17.

Why do the editors or the authro write it in the name of Moses? Was this book a forgery? We evaluate such a question in the following terms:

The author might well have used the tradition of a final legislative address delivered by Moses. Moses announces in Deuteronomy that no quarter is to be given to the inhabitants of Canaan, 7:1-5; 20:16-18. The real purpose of the book was that no quarter be given the idolatry which had arisen under Manasseh.

The laws "are unquestionably derived from pre-existent usage...The new element in Dt. is thus not the laws, but their parenetic hortatory setting... Deuteronomy may be described as the prophetic reformulation and adaptation to new needs, of an older legislation."⁵³ It was a "reaffirmation of the fundamental principles which Moses had long ago insisted on, loyalty to Jehovah and repudiation of all false gods."⁵⁴ Moses's mind was the Matrix of the national history. Deuteronomy was written in the Mosaic spirit, and may be regarded as a quotation not of the words, but of the larger monotheistic thought of Moses.

Our conclusion may be then that Deuteronomy is not a forgery in a modern sense. It was written in the name of Moses for verisimilitude; a device common in the history of literature. As an aspect of campaign oratory, spokesmen for the Democratic Party often appeal to Thomas Jefferson's outlook for support for social sentiments or legislative proposals that they are concerned about; the Republicans appeal to Lincoln's memory in the same way -- we have often heard the phrase "as Lincoln would have said," etc. Similarly the authors of Deuteronomy "did not consider this a deliberate attempt to deceive the people because they were giving the people nothing except the great principles of the religion of Moses."⁵⁵

4. The message:

(1) Deuteronomy emphasizes centralization and purification of worship at Jerusalem, 12:1f; eg. it prohibits infant sacrifice 12:31; 18:10, superstitious ceremonialism 18:10, 11, idolatry, and temple prostitution, Chs. 12-13; 23:17.

(2) It teaches that Israel's greatness and strength lay not in her power and wealth but in her humane statutes and judgments, founded in her ethical monotheism: eg.

- Mitigation of slavery, 23:15f. Run-away slave not to be returned to master. Contrast Dread Scott Decision 1858!
- Protection of women and careful marriage regulations, 22:13f.
- Exemption of newly married men from war service, 24:5!
- Against taking of interest from Israelites, 23:23.
- Against taking the mill or upper millstone as a pawn 24:6 and obligation to restore pawns, 24:10-13.
- Against kidnapping and stealing of Israelites for slaves, 24:7.
- Against neglect of leprosy, 24:8f.
- Fair treatment and payment of wage earner, 24:14f.

⁵³Driver, S.R., An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, Scribners & Sons, 1898, p. 91.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁵Old Wooster "Syllabus", p. 63.

- Individual responsibility for a crime, 24:16.
- Against injustice to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow, 24:17f.
- Enjoins leaving part of harvest for them, 24:19-22.
- Against flogging of criminals, 25:1-3.
- Humaneness to animals, 25:4; 22:6.
- Against crooked weights and measures, 25:13-16.
- Wise judicial procedure, such as degrees of murder recognized, cities of refuge provided, two witnesses necessary to cite for crime, against false witnesses, 19:1f.
- Property protected - against removal of landmarks, 19:14.

(3) God's will lies not in any unknown height, but is manifested in the moral sphere known and understood by all, 30:11-14, i.e. in man's rational, moral conscience. This was precisely the teachings of the prophets as to how God spoke to or in them.

5. The weaknesses of the Deuteronomic reform:

(1) It dealt too much with the externalities, the formalities of religion in over-emphasizing centralized worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, even though the rite and ceremony was purged of the grosser influences of Baalism. In saying that Yahweh could not be worshipped in the outlying sanctuaries (where his worship had been confused with Baal worship) did this mean that he could not be worshipped anywhere but in the Temple in Jerusalem? In other words, was there danger in localizing God again too much? Jeremiah seems to think so, and says that God may be worshipped anywhere, even in Babylon, where a great many Hebrews had gone captive by this time; and also that true worship pertains to the attitude of the inner heart primarily and not to ceremony and ritualism.

(2) It was weighted down by an exclusion principle in Israel's laws: Israel's humane laws apply to in-group relations; the foreigner was treated on a lower plane. See eg. 23:3f, where the Hebrew cannot befriend Ammonite or Moabite.

(3) We question the severity of some of the penalties for idolatry, filial disobedience, adultery, etc. However, in their day and age, "the sternness of the fight against heathenism has to be remembered and the great issue, Israel's very destiny as Jehovah's people, involved; to Israel there was no remedy against things that were an abomination and detestation to Jehovah short of ruthless extermination... it must not be forgotten that prisons were non-existent and the evil with its influence and defilement must be destroyed."⁵⁶

(4) With the Deuteronomic code the religion of Israel begins to be the religion of a book; it originates the idea of an authoritative scripture or Bible. There is, of course, much good in a development of this kind in its desire to preserve and sanctify the great teachings of the past; it makes for a common standard for conduct. But always in such a development there is danger of bibliolatry, the worship of a frozen tradition, which might misconceive the larger spirit of the tradition in behalf of the narrower letter (Deut. 17:18; II Kgs. 22:8; 23:2).

(5) How are we to evaluate parts of Chapter 20 condoning barbaric warfare, particularly after the condemnation of this very practice by Amos, et. al.? In this section of Deuteronomy, relative to the capture of distant cities (i.e. people far from one's kin) we find a relatively humane treatment for ancient times: if the terms of surrender are accepted the people are put to servitude; if the terms are not accepted, at least women and children are spared. But how are we to consider the further injunction that all the inhabitants of Canaanite cities are to be exterminated, 20:16-18?

Undoubtedly, this is an attitude reflecting a barbaric past (recall Joshua 6:16,21) out of keeping with the spirit of humane justice expressed in other parts of Deuteronomy, and may have been repeated within the Deuteronomic code to emphasize that Canaanite practices should be obliterated. Although the principles of lex talionis or blood feud and revenge in chapters 23 and 26, relative to treatment of Ammonites and Amalekites, repeat the ancient principle of Exodus 21:23, we find in Deuteronomy a more humane attitude toward some foreign groups in 23:3-7. Furthermore, quite contrary to the corporate punishment meted out to Achan's family in Joshua 7:24, we read in Deuteronomy:

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin. You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge; but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this." (Deut. 24:16-17)

We must conclude that the book enshrines the more primitive along with the more humane concepts of ethical duty and relationship.

VII Jeremiah

Historical background: Jeremiah's book must be studied against the background of the Josian or Deuteronomic reform, just reviewed. On the wider international scene the 7th century period was marked by the decline of Assyria, and rise of Chaldea to power in the Mesopotamian region, with the Chaldean capitol city at the ancient site of Babylon. The Chaldeans captured Nineveh, the Assyrian stronghold, in 621 B.C.⁵⁷

The cataclysmic event in the life of the Hebrew nation of this period was the invasion, and final destruction of Judah in 587 B.C. by the Chaldean armies under Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah's career spans the period of Josiah's reign to this latter tragic event. In so far as we have tried to organize the reading from Jeremiah's book in a chronological manner, the student will trace events from Josiah's time through the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah.

In the time of Assyria's decline, prior to the final threat of Chaldea-Babylon, Jeremiah speaks of a threat coming from the North, which probably refers to the group history has called the Sythians (1:14; 4:6; 6:2,22), barbaric plunderers coming from the northern steppes, who struck at the Fertile Crescent quickly, and then retired. Along with Assyria's cruel repressions of subject peoples, which made for restiveness, and finally the revolt of the Chaldeans, in alliance with the Medes, the Sythians helped weaken her hold on the Crescent region. As the 8th century prophets looked upon Assyria as the instrument by which Yahweh was chastizing the Jewish nation, Jeremiah speaks of the Chaldean threat and invasion as the judgment of God on Judah.

Another element on the international scene of those times was the effort of Egypt to rise again to imperial power. Pharaoh Neco mounted a number of campaigns northward against the Chaldeans, but was defeated at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. Except for an attempt at resurgence after the time of Alexander the Great, Egypt ceased to be a major actor on the stage of world history. Jeremiah warns the Jewish leaders in the latter days of Judah's fortunes not to rely on Egypt as a safe place of refuge from the Chaldean over-lords. His advice was not heeded, and ironically his opponents forced him to immigrate with them to Egypt, where we hear of him no further, (ch. 43).

The book of Jeremiah: Professor Adam C. Welch summarizes the problem of the book of Jeremiah in the following manner:⁵⁸

...the present book is better described as a collection of material bearing on the period of Jeremiah than as oracles from or a biography of the prophet. Thus it contains material which ranges in date from Jeremiah's call to the period of Cyrus (51:11-14), and even to that of the return (17:19f), and presents historical matter (chs. 40-42, 52) which is only indirectly connected with Jeremiah. Again, the book clearly contains little collections which once existed separately (cf. chs. 30f; 46-51). Each of these has its own history, especially its own place and date of collection...there also appear a series of records which present an informal biography of the prophet ...in this biographical material Jeremiah is sometimes introduced in the third person, in other cases in the first person. It will thus be seen that the whole question of the composition of the book is extremely complicated and perplexing...Two things need to be said in connection with the study of the book here presented. Since oracles here ascribed to Jeremiah appear elsewhere under the names of Isaiah and Obadiah, and since Jeremianic material appears alongside sayings of later date, it is clear that the original oracles were much briefer and more disconnected than they appear in the long chapters of the English versions. In some respects they resemble the Sermon on the Mount, which contains collected "logia" (sayings).

Again,

all the material has passed through the hands of men who attempted to interpret it for the needs of their own time...

⁵⁷This event prompted the exultant cry of the prophet Nahum that God's judgment had at last broken upon the Ninevites for their bloodthirsty ways - a point which we consider further in a later chapter dealing with the nationalistic trend in Israel after the exile.

⁵⁸Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 680.

The message of Jeremiah: Much of Jeremiah's outlook reflects problems arising in Josiah's reform. In a sense the limitations of this reform constituted a central issue for our prophet. Apparently it was a brief reform, imposed on the people rather than wholeheartedly accepted by them. (We may compare National Prohibition in the 20th century U.S.) Jeremiah apparently accepted the general principles (both ceremonial and ethical) of the reform. In order to trace the relationship in the deuteronomic version of these events we may compare Jer. 11:1-8 with Deut 27:26; 28:15-16; Jer. 17:19f with Deut. 5:12; and Jer. 34:8f with Deut. 15:12f; and see also II Chr. 35:25. He points out however its lack of lasting effect in the lives of the people, saying, in brief that no human institution can be made a substitute for (personal) faith and ethical life.⁵⁹

1. As his predecessors -- Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah -- Jeremiah calls the attention of his people to prominent personal and social evils of the day. He was thereby reminding them of the way they were failing to live up to the ideals of the reform, which had been inspired by the moral ideals of Moses. For example he cites:

- The grosser practices of Baalistic worship:
 temple prostitution, 2:20; 3:2,23. Following from this, adultery,
 5:7,8; 7:9
 infant sacrifice, 7:31
 forsaking Yahweh for idols, 11:13
- Calmness of the well-to-do and powerful toward the poor with violence,
 oppression, murder, stealing, 2:34; 5:26-28; 6:5-6; 7:6-11; 22:1-19;
 26:20-23; 34:8f.
- Greed for unjust gain, selfishness at expense of neighbor, 6:13-14; 8:10.
- Malicious intent to work evil upon one's neighbor, 4:22b; 5:26.
- Treachery, deceit, breaking of oaths and promises, and contracts;
 presuming to do and be one thing to neighbor, but practicing another.
 5:27; 9:5-8; 12:6; 34:8f.
- Slander of neighbor, evil and false talk about him, 6:28; 7:9; 9:4 -
 falsewitness.
- Corruption of the courts of justice through the bribery of judges, 5:28.

The foregoing evils stem from the following profounder types of evils:

- Failure of desire for justice and truth, 5:1, 7:5.
- Lack of moral knowledge, rejection of moral law, and lack of repentance
 for same, 4:22a; 5:4-5, 21; 6:19; 8:6, 8; 9:2-3, 13.
- Ceremonial formality substituted for ethical action, 1:6; 6:20; 7:9;
 11:15.
- Failure of prophets and priests and intellectual leaders to call these
 matters to the attention of the people, 5:11-12, 31; 6:13.

2. Not outward formality then, even in the form of a purified ceremonial, but inward attitude and ethical action are the important things about religion. In the new Temple cults there was the danger of slipping into religious legalism, and

⁵⁹Ibid., Abingdon, p. 679.

formality, and forgetting the ethical injunctions of the reform, promulgated in the name of Moses of old, (7:22). Jeremiah reemphasizes the warning and definition of his great predecessors that religion must issue in loving and just acts, in ethical activity, to be true religion. This is the major import of chapters 2-9. Compare Jeremiah 6:20; 7:1-8,22; 8:11; 9:23-24; 11:9-15; 22:13-16 with Amos 5:21-24; Hosea 6:4-6; Isaiah 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8. By his constant critical reference to "priests", do we gather that he was opposed to priests as such, as a class, the officers and administrators of the new ceremonialism, ch. 26?

3. Another specific problem grew out of Josiah's reform, with its emphasis on centralized worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. Was the Spirit of Yahweh confined to the Temple? Did the destruction of the Baalistic sanctuaries in the outlying provinces, in the laudable effort to get rid of Baalism, and the emphasis that legitimate worship could be carried on only in the central temple in the capitol, imply that God was limited to a particular territory, even to one city? The great prophets had long since preached that he was a universal God, Lord of all nations and peoples, and by no means confined to some particular spot or sanctuary. Accordingly, Jeremiah writes to the exiles in Babylon that God could be worshipped anywhere, even there in a foreign city; they may worship him there on a personal basis, in the inwardness of their individual spirits -- ceremonial and Temple are not necessary (cp. Deut. 4:27,29). Furthermore, he says that God's love and care extends to all men, even to the Chaldeans, Jer. ch. 29:7. This suggests his larger understanding of God and Man, and takes us to the very heights of Old Testament thought about these themes.

Major Ideas concerning God and the Nature of Religion: (1) As his 8th century predecessors had done, Jeremiah emphasized that Yahweh was a universal Lord, a God of moral righteousness, whose Will was expressed in moral laws founded in the very nature of the universe and disclosed in life and history, 4:23-24; 9:23-24 (Compare Amos 1:2; 6:12, Hosea 5:7, etc.).

As the Author of Life and the moral truths or principles by which life should be lived, Yahweh would judge and discipline a nation for its moral weaknesses. The inner, moral corruption of states will make them unable to stand in the longer test of life. This was his message to a corrupt Judah. Scythians and Chaldeans are God's instrument of chastisement of Judah for her sins (as Amos had said that Assyria would be for Israel, the northern kingdom.). He hopes that Judah will learn by her calamity of suffering foreign invasion, and by the judgment of the Exile to Babylon; repent as a people, and be restored in due time to a new life, 31:15-20. We may again call this the disciplinary theory of history (Compare Isaiah 26:9b).

2. But if God is a judging God, He is also a loving and forgiving God, who will restore Israel upon the latter's repentance; an outgoing, and down-reaching Lord, whose love has constantly searched Israel out to restore her, as a "father" who would restore his "first-born", 31:9. In Chapter 31:1-26 we have as fine an understanding of God as searching and serving love as in Hosea. He will restore Israel under the leadership of an Ideal King, who will sit in the lineage of David of Old (Compare Isaiah Chs. 9 and 11). This has been called the Ideal King or Son of David concept of the Messiah, 30:1-3, 8-11.

3. In Jeremiah we have it clearly announced for the first time in Israel's history that God loves and cares for other peoples as well as the Israelite, specifically the Chaldeans who are the captors of the Jews! "...seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf", 29:7. Israel's religious thinking had here overflowed into a clear universalism, and personalism: all men were God's children, equally worthy of the Divine love and watchcare. (Contrast this sentiment with Isaiah's attitude toward the Assyrians, Is. Ch. 10.)

4. Jeremiah is noted for stressing the immanence of God. God reveals Himself to, and is present in, the enlightened conscience -- He speaks above all to man in the Voice of Moral Truth: 4:19; 9:3, 24; 11:20; 17:1, 9f; 20:9, 12; 22:16; 23:24; 29:12-14. The Covenant with Israel is henceforth to be understood in new terms, as the willingness of men to permit God's law or moral truth to hold sway in their personal hearts, on the basis of their continuing, free acceptance; thus righteousness will become a natural expression of personality, rather than an imposed law. The Divine Spirit dwelling in man will make him morally free, as he should be, (31:31-34; cp. Deut. 30:11-14).

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when
I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and the house of Judah,...I will put my law within them,
and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will
be their God, and they shall be my people." (31:31, 33b)

"Only as men do the will of God spontaneously because they know him intimately and make his purposes their own can there be any hopeful future for them."⁶⁰

5. Jeremiah is noted for stressing the personal meaning of religion in a way that had not yet been perfectly understood in Israel. In contrast to the concept of religion as empty ceremonial, 7:8-10, he poses the idea of religion as personal experience and prayer. This theme was elevated to great heights in the Psalms (e.g. Ps. 141), and we owe it in considerable part to Jeremiah. In his own interior struggle, as the reluctant prophet, we have some of his more vivid expressions of religion as interior prayer and personal communion with God, 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 20:7-18; 29:12-14.

The meaning of religion as personal communion, which may be universally experienced by all, apart from place or circumstance, leads on into the highest dimension of Jeremiah's thought concerning the personality of Deity, or the understanding of God as universal Personal Spirit. Perhaps he of all the prophets looks farthest along this dimension of understanding. Let us retrace again the steps of his experience:

In effect he says to his people: "In the destruction of the Temple and the national life, and in the experience of exile, you will learn several things. (1) The universal nature of God. (2) You will come into full understanding of God as personal love -- the understanding that religion is personal, ethical commitment, prayer, and communion with God. As long as there was a national life and a national shrine, Israel could not learn these things. Cut her free, however, and scatter her, and she would have to learn them on an individual basis, 21:1-14; 27:1-17; 29:1-14! Moreover, if this was to become the privilege of individual Israelites, why not the privilege of all individuals, whoever they be?

Thus the cardinal mark of complete, full, or perfect personality in God, would be his love and concern for all persons and peoples, Gentiles as well as Jews. "When the scope of God's activity is universal then the unit of relationship is necessarily the individual."⁶¹ In the realization that the relationship with God could no longer be tribal or merely national, came the understanding of God as fully personal. God is personal, outgoing Love or concern for the welfare and salvation of all men who may worship Him in the personal inwardness of their hearts.

⁶⁰ Harold Smith in Anderson, et. al., Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., p. 84.

⁶¹ Harold Smith, op. cit., p. 77.

"...I have loved you with an everlasting love;" (31:3b)

"...for I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my first-born." (31:9c)

"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent
you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf,
for in its welfare you will find your welfare...
Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me,
and I will hear you...I will be found by you..." (29:7,12,14a)

The Idea of Man: The theme of the earlier prophets that man is individually free and responsible comes to climax in Jeremiah (and Ezekiel, Ch. 18), Jer. 18:5f; 31:29-30. These passages on individual responsibility for moral conduct, are an explicit rejection of the older concept of "corporate personality" and corporate responsibility for crime, and also the idea of inherited original sin. Contrast Jeremiah 31:29-30 and Ex. 18 with e.g. Joshua 7:24; Deut. 5:9; II Kings 14:6; or Psalms 51:5. Thus the emphasis on the dignity of human personality, freedom, and moral responsibility are taken to new heights in Jeremiah, and are reemphasized later in Ezekiel's book. To these prophets Democracy and Personalism owe much!

But what of the note of bitterness we trace in some of Jeremiah's oracles? A number of passages express indignation at the way unworthy men were persecuting him. In 17:9 we read, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" Is this a doctrine of the inherent depravity or sinfulness of man? We think not. Such passages as this have given Jeremiah the title of the Gloomy Prophet. In the larger whole, however, his view of man is positive and hopeful. Indeed the very next verse stresses what we have already discussed as his emphasis on man's freedom and inherent responsibility for good or evil actions:

"I the Lord search the mind and try the heart,
to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings." (17:10)

The more pessimistic sayings must be understood in the context of the gross and heartless corruption of the day, e.g. Jehoiakim's tyranny, 22:13f.

Jeremiah's criticisms of the evil or sinful men of his day after all sprang from a sense of righteous indignation within himself, 15:16-20. He thereby does not condemn himself or all men as inherently evil. He explicitly announces that other men may come to have a sense of moral rightness, or righteousness like himself, as their characteristic or true nature or destiny, 31:31-34. In the great chapters 30-31 his hope and belief is that Israel will at last come into her true selfhood as a righteous and a saved people. There are many joyful Psalms expressing an awareness of God's presence as beginning and continuing in a sense of moral well-being.⁶² So basically with Jeremiah. In the passage above cited, 15:16-20, he refers to himself as an example of righteous life, and he cites other examples of life that is righteous, e.g. King Josiah, 22:16; or the righteousness of life that is to be expressed by the entire society in the often quoted new covenant passage, 31:31-34.

⁶²e.g. Ps. 1, 15, 23, 24, 26, 100, 119, 121, 139, 144 and see our later discussion of this theme and the OT concept of religious experience, p.

Finally, his understanding of "prophecy" as moral warning, chs. 18; 28, -- a theme we have stressed a number of times as characteristic of all the writing prophets -- adds insight to Jeremiah's positive, hopeful, view of man. He says that God is interested in a change of heart in men, not in the outcome of the warning or prediction of doom. The prophets' interest in the future is to say how best men can fulfill the will of God in lives of personal and social righteousness. If we live by the great commandments life will tend to be harmonious and well-established; the future will be secure in peace and joy. This was the message of the prophets on its brighter side as they looked into the future.

Politics: A fact which initially puzzles the historical student is Jeremiah's attitude of "appeasement" toward Babylon-Chaldea. Though an intense patriot, warning against defensive alliances, he "advocated complete subjection to Babylon." What light can we throw on the reasons for this aspect of his message? In part a clue may be found in what we have already discussed as his growing comprehension of the universal and personal nature of God. Professor Harold Smith continues with a superb explanation of this political problem in Jeremiah's thought:

...He loved his country so deeply that he could not bear to see it spiritual corrupt. It would be better for the national organism to die than to survive in sin. In Jeremiah's political philosophy there is an interesting combination of sheer historical realism and almost visionary idealism. (1) He realized the immense resources of Babylon and the weakness of any coalition of small states. Even more, he saw the folly of independent effort against such might. Better submit and hope that something valuable in the national heritage could be salvaged. (2) In a vast empire like that of Babylonia there would be a better chance for a true universal and personal religion to develop freed from any nationalistic overtones. (3) He was convinced that immorality and social corruption such as that which characterized his people could not be tolerated by a just God. Punishment must come and the Babylonians would be the instrument of Judgment and no hysterical resistance could long hold this off. (4) He saw clearly the fallacy of the traditional belief that the bond between Yahweh and Israel was indissoluble. As we have seen the national entity meant little, people meant everything. If national consciousness, with its tendency to complacency stood in the way of personal moral contact between individual man and God, it were better that national life be liquidated. (5) Legal forms and ceremonial practices had failed and even perverted the individual conscience. These were associated with a particular geographical area and with corporate life as a nation. It were better that they be abolished and the most likely way to accomplish this would be destruction (temporary at least), of national existence. (6) We might say that the death of the body of Israel might result in the survival of its soul, that is, of its profound spiritual heritage. All external devices and institutions must be taken away from the people so that they might learn to trust in God and not in men or man-made institutions. Therefore Jeremiah enthusiastically endorsed full submission to Babylonia, and saw in the destruction of the nation and the deportation of its people a hopeful portent for the future. Although these ideas may not all be explicitly stated in Jeremiah, they are implied throughout. Furthermore they represent a point of view which is in keeping with Jeremiah's basic insights and help explain an otherwise incomprehensible policy (read 21:1-14; 25:1-12; 27:1-28:16; 17:5-8; 16:19,20).⁶³

⁶³Anderson, et.al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit. p. 80-81.

We pause at this place to summarize two major themes found in these great prophets thus far: one, their belief in the reality of God and the reasons, implied, and expressed, which underlay their belief in God; and two, their concept of revelation, which lies at an apex of developing thought in the Old Testament. We will draw upon the incisive commentary of Harris Franklin Rall for this second point.

The Prophets and the Moral Argument for God

The basic belief of Amos and his successors is that a moral cosmic Mind exists because the universe is a moral place and process, i.e. a moral order. They discover a Mind in the universe by the presence of moral order in the universe. Steps in their reasoning is as follows:

1. The universe is a moral order because it is a place which has produced personal beings with moral conscience aware of universal laws that will govern life harmoniously and well (the basic principles of the Mosaic Commandments, veracity, respect for neighbor or human personality, etc.). This seems to be the subjective, or a priori, truth as we look inward at our own nature and its implications. This step in the reasoning is implied by the prophets, rather than expressly or philosophically formulated.

2. The universe is a moral order because we cannot survive without practicing the higher morality — that is to say, to have regard for one's fellows, to respect their persons. This is the basic articulated insight of Amos and the other prophets. The outworking of history suggested this truth to them: when men collectively persist in sin they meet in the long run with collective ruin or disaster. Nations that do right in their individual and collective relationships (that is, apply the Commandment of respect for personality) tend in the long run to survive. This to the prophets was the empirical or experimental truth or law of history as they looked out at the world of men and events.

In sum, this is the way Amos and his followers believe in God: being aware of universal laws (keeping of which brings harmony and the breaking of which brings disaster in the collective life of a nation's destiny) they are aware of Moral Cosmic Mind governing existence. This is the Bible's basic argument for God (We review further phases of the OT argument for God in our later chapter summarizing its theology.)

The key to the moral argument is the idea of the supreme worth of personality. How or why is personality or personal being supreme in our case unless it is supreme in reality or in the universe as a whole? We have a deep intimation that our own persons are supreme in value because they are like what is supreme in being; or derive from a power no less in kind than their own selfhood; that they are rooted in an Ultimate Reason. Stating the moral argument in its essence the philosopher Hastings Rashdall wrote: "A Moral Ideal can exist nowhere and no how but in a mind; an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a Mind from which all Reality is derived (or at least a Mind by which all Reality is controlled). Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regarded as the revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God."⁶⁴

A further statement of the moral argument was expressed by another noted moral philosopher and theist of our times, W. R. Sorley:

⁶⁴Quoted from The Theory of Good and Evil, by John Hicks, Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion, Prentice-Hall, 1964, p. 272.

"The argument... may be looked upon as a special and striking extension of the cosmological argument. In its first and most elementary form the cosmological argument seeks a cause for the bare existence of the world and man: to account for them there must be something able to bring them into being: God is the First Cause. Then the order of nature impresses us by its regularity, and we come by degrees to understand the principles of its working and the laws under which the material whole maintains its equilibrium and the ordered procession of its changes: these laws and this order call for explanation, and we conceive God as the Great Lawgiver. But beyond this material world, we understand relations and principles of a still more general kind; and the intellect of man recognizes abstract truths so evident that, once understood, they cannot be questioned, while inferences are drawn from these which only the more expert minds can appreciate and yet which they recognize as eternally valid. To what order do these belong and what was their home when man as yet was unconscious of them? Surely if their validity is eternal they must have had existence somewhere, and we can only suppose them to have existed in the one eternal mind: God is therefore the God of Truth. Further, persons are conscious of values and of an ideal of goodness, which they recognize as having undoubted authority for the direction of their activity; the validity of these values or laws and of this ideal, however, does not depend upon their recognition: it is objective and eternal; and how could this eternal validity stand alone, not embodied in matter and neither seen nor realized by finite minds, unless there were an eternal mind whose thought and will were therein expressed? God must therefore exist and his nature be goodness!"⁶⁵

On the developing idea of the Divine self-disclosure in the Bible, Harris Franklin Fall writes:⁶⁶

"The Old Testament offers us interesting material on this problem of revelation and experience. In general it shows two levels of thought, moving slowly from the lower to the higher. For the lower level the transcendence of God implies a certain externality, and revelation appears as the action of God from without. Hence it is sought in the unusual and extraordinary. It may be in something physical: fire falling from heaven, words spoken by an ass, fleece dry or covered with dew in miraculous contrast with its surroundings, or literal tablets inscribed by a divine finger. If the action be in the realm of the spirit, it is found in dreams and visions or states of ecstasy. The higher conception appears with the prophets and follows from their conception of God. There is no loss here of the idea of transcendence and no thought of man's reason as sufficient to discover God. They see the Lord high and lifted up. They know the majesty and holiness of God, the finiteness and sinfulness of man. What is new is the moral nature of this transcendence. God is not mere Power demanding submission and sacrifices; he is righteousness and mercy and truth. Hence his transcendence, or holiness, means not judgment but mercy. 'I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee.'

This radical insight has profound consequences for the conception of revelation. As religion becomes a morally conditioned personal relation, revelation means increasingly person speaking to person, truth to reason, righteousness to conscience, mercy to sin, and man's need. The Eternal says: 'Come now and let us reason together'; 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet'. The holiness of this God is no aloof transcendence; it is a high purpose of justice and mercy. He is the living God, carrying out this

⁶⁵ Moral Values and the Idea of God, 2nd Ed., 1921, Macmillan, p. 348-49.

⁶⁶ Christianity, An Inquiry Into Its Nature and Truth, Scribners, 1940, p. 153-54

purpose in the world. Men are summoned to see God, not in the isolated and unusual, but in human history, in human experience. Profound personal experiences enter, as indicated in Jer. 1, Isa. 6, and Hos. 3. Necessarily, an ethical God is known most clearly through moral experience and insight. The prophets dared to believe that in such experiences in individual and national life they discerned the spirit of the Eternal. The forgiving mercy that Hosea found in his own heart, the righteous anger that Amos and Micah and Isaiah felt against social oppression and international iniquity, these were to them not mere human ideals or achievements; they were God's Spirit speaking to them of his purpose and judgment. They cry out with Micah: 'I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.'

Three significant elements bearing upon the idea of revelation thus appear. (1) There is no separation of natural and supernatural, though there is the clearest recognition of the God who is more than man. (2) There is no mutual exclusion of divine and human; God is found in the insights and experiences of man, and man finds God not in passive submission but in the active response of the sensitive and sympathetic heart, the alert understanding, and the obedient will. Revelation and discovery are thus different aspects of one process. (3) The realm of the ethical, particularly as seen in historical events, is the special field of divine revelation and human discovery."

.....

The New Testament carries to completion this idea of revelation as that which is at once divine gift and human insight and experience...The knowledge of God is in and through the life which God gives to men...

...Jesus...finds the word of God within, in his own sure insights; and his own spirit, the spirit of love and truth, is for him the guide to the understanding of God.

Study Questions on:

The Biblical assignment for Josiah's Reform,

and JEREMIAH.

1. List the idolatrous practices of Manasseh, II Kgs. Ch. 21. According to this chapter what seems to be the relationship between idolatry and political tyranny?
2. Describe the circumstances of finding "the book of the law" during Josiah's reign, II Kgs. 22:8f. Compare to Deut. 17:18. What specific acts of purgation of the realm did Josiah carry out?
3. Read II Kgs. 21:6; 23:24 with Deut. 18:10 concerning divination; II Kgs. 17:16; 21:5; 23:4 with Deut. 17:3 concerning worship of "the hosts of heaven"; Deut. 24:16 vs. JOSHUA 7:24 on corporate punishment; Deut. 17:16-17 reflecting, apparently, certain evils of Solomon's reign -- and draw your own conclusions as to the general period of Israel's history from which DEUTERONOMY as a whole must have come.
4. For what general reason could the 7th century author of DEUTERONOMY legitimately publish it as the voice of Moses?
5. Which of its laws might speak to our own contemporary social problems?
6. What limitations and dangers do you find in Josiah's or the Deuteronomic reform?
7. What do you make of Deut. Ch. 20 in its advocacy of barbaric warfare against certain groups? Which cities are to be exterminated; which dealt with more leniently? How do you reconcile 20:16-18 with 23:3-7; 24:17 where some foreigners are tolerated? How do you reconcile 20:16-18 with Amos's condemnation of barbaric warfare, Amos 1:3,6,11,13: Could it be that the 7th century authors of DEUTERONOMY repeat the ancient rules of war of extermination in order to emphasize that Canaanite practices, i.e. idolatry, with all of its social and political evil, should be obliterated?
8. Why is Deut. 17:18 and II Kgs. 22:8; 23:2 important in the history of the idea of the Bible as authoritative scripture?
9. What is Jeremiah's relationship to the Deuteronomic or Josiah's reform? What passages point this out?
10. What definition or purpose of prophecy does Jeremiah give us in Ch. 18? What formula may guide against false prophecy, 14:13f?
11. Give a sketch of Jeremiah's character and the nature of his inner conflict.
12. Read Jer. 4:19; 6:11; 9:3,24; 11:20; 12:3; 17:1,10; 18:1-11; 20:7-9, 12; 22:15-16; 31:33. What figures of speech does Jeremiah employ in these passages to indicate how or through what means God speaks to him? i.e. what is his concept of the method and channel of revelation? Compare Isaiah 1:18; Micah 3:8; I Kgs. 19:12-13; Deut. 30:11-14. Would you say such channels are "natural" or "supernatural"?

13. Compare the above passages with Gen. 15:1; 18:1f; 20:6; Ex. 3:2; 31:18; Numbers 22:28-31; Judges 6:36-40; I Sam. 10:5-10; I Kgs. 18:38. What change seems to have taken place in the concept of revelation between Jeremiah and the material in Gen., Ex., etc.? In the older material what does the "transcendence" of God mean? In the newer material of Jer. what does transcendence mean?
14. Read Jer. 7:4, 8-10; 11:15. What concept of religion does Jeremiah here criticize? Read Jer. 9:3, 23-24; 22:13-16; 4:19; 6:11; 8:18-21; 11:20; 12:3; 20:7-9; 23:23; 31:33. In these passages what do you make of Jeremiah's thesis that God's immanence lay in "truth" (9:3), in right reason or "mind" (11:20; 12:3; 20:12) in moral knowledge and conscience (20:9; 22:16; 31:33)?
15. In Chs. 27-28, especially in a verse like 27:12, 17, why does Jeremiah seem to advocate a policy of "appeasement" that amounted to national suicide materially? (He even calls Nebuchadnezzar, the autocrat of Babylon, God's "servant", 25:9). The issue in Jeremiah's thought at this point is expressed by the question, "Why should this city become a desolation? (27:17). What answer to this question do you find in 29:1, 10-14 and throughout Chs. 30-31? Which theme, now familiar, do you note in 30:9?
16. What concepts regarding God do you find in 29:12-14 and 31:3-9. Of which of the preceding prophets do these passages remind you?
17. What major concept regarding man do you find in 18:5f; 31:29? (Compare Ezekiel Ch. 18 where the matter of individual freedom and responsibility is expounded more at length). Read Ex. 20:5; Joshua 7:24; Deut. 5:9; Psalms 51:5. How does Jeremiah and Ezekiel's view contrast with these passages?
18. Which is your favorite passage of Jeremiah? Why?
19. How would you evaluate the "moral argument" for God implied by the prophets?
20. How do you evaluate Rall's analysis of the growth of the idea of revelation in the Old Testament and Bible as a whole?

I. Exilic and Post-Exilic Trends

We pause to mention four major developments in the exilic and post-exilic periods, so far as we are to consider the remaining major thought and literary forms of the OT.

1. There is the continuation of the universalistic ethical concept of religion stressed in Amos. Soon to rise, however, will be an additional stream of tradition which will emphasize nationalism and ceremonialism. Second Isaiah, Jonah, the Book of Ruth, and many Psalms represent continuation of the ethical prophetic view; in many ways Ezekiel stands astride the two views; while such writings as Nahum and Obadiah, Ezra and Nehemiah, Esther and some Psalms illustrate the second trend in Israel's outlook in the age beginning with the exile. We shall presently mention in our study of Ezekiel the historic justification which the trend toward a restored religious nationalism and ceremonialism had in the institutional life of Israel in the post-exilic period, as well as to point out a narrower view, adjunct to this development, found in writings like Nahum and Obadiah.

2. During the post-exilic period we witness the final coalescence of the great wisdom and psalmical literature into our present books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms.

3. Late in this era we witness the rise of apocalyptic thought and "prophecy", found in such books as Joel and Daniel.

4. And last, but by no means least, we have the final growth of, and increasing reliance on, the Torah, or Pentateuchal material, as sacred scripture. Recall that the age of a holy scripture or Bible, as the authoritative standard for inspiration and conduct, had begun when Josiah's workman found the "book of the law" chached in the Temple, II Kings 22:8.

Our remaining larger task then, so far as the study of the Old Testament is concerned, will be to discuss the literature, and the outlook of the books, mentioned in points 1-3 above.

II. Second Isaiah (chs. 40-66)

The historic setting, as these chapters themselves make abundantly clear, is the suffering of the Israelites in an age of captivity. A standard interpretation has been that the author wrote during the classic exile period, when the Israelite leaders were held in the Chaldean capitol of Babylon. The great event, which the author anticipates will take place in the near future, is the overthrow of the Chaldean power by Cyrus, the Persian monarch, who is pressing in from the east. Cyrus conquered Babylon in 538 B.C. He is regarded by the author as God's instrument who will liberate the Hebrew slaves and permit a return to Jerusalem. (We will presently cite an alternative view of these chapters which to some extent modifies the one now under consideration.)

1. The problem of date and authorship of Isaiah Chaps. 40-66:

Firstly we should acknowledge that these chapters are not entirely dissociated in spirit from chaps. 1-39. For example continuing in them are the ideas of the rebirth of the nation; of the remnant or righteous few who will aid in the rebirth; and, as some would hold, the idea of the Messiah. (Note also our subsequent discussion on themes in II Isaiah's message held by his prophetic predecessors, p.)

Secondly, in chaps. 40-66, however, the great exile is everywhere presupposed. This constitutes the main evidence that these chapters were written during or after the exile. For example:

- a) Jerusalem is described as in ruins; and the temple destroyed: 40:2; 44:26; 49:19; . . . 58:12; 61:4; 63:18; 64:10.
- b) The time of the writing is an age of despair: 40:27f; 49:14. The people addressed are not the self-confident and rebellious contemporaries of I Isaiah; e.g. contrast 40:29; 51:12-13 with 1:23; 2:12.
- c) Captivity is spoken of: 49:24f; 51:11-14; 52:5; 61:1f.

In short, "Israel is addressed as having exhausted the time of her penalty and is proclaimed to be ready for deliverance," 40:1f.⁶⁷

⁶⁷G.A. Smith, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. II, Harper, Rev. Ed., p. 7.

Other details suggesting that these chapters are not by the First Isaiah of the late 8th century are the following:

d) The writing is specifically set during the Chaldean age, which followed the Assyrian age, 47:1f; Cyrus, Persian conqueror of Babylonia is named, 44:28-45:1. The reference to the Assyrian 52:4 is obviously a general reference to past history spoken in the same breath with the sojourn in Egypt in Joseph's time. (This passage may even be spurious since it says that the people were oppressed without cause! This is contrary to the spirit and outlook of I or II Isaiah who said that the captivity was God's judgment for Israel's sins, e.g. 50:11; 65:6-7.)

e) If a product of the 8th century, nowhere do these chapters say that Assyria is to disappear and Chaldea is to arise. Why, if a clairvoyant prediction of the First Isaiah -- a prediction "which we might fairly have expected had the prophecy been (First) Isaiah's" (G.A. Smith)?

f) It is clear that the book of Jeremiah is earlier than Isaiah chaps. 40-66. Jeremiah predicts general restoration of the nation: would he not have filled in this general picture with all of the stirring detail of Isaiah 40-66 had these chapters as a clairvoyant prophecy been current in his day? Also, Jeremiah 26:18 refers to Micah's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. If Isaiah chaps. 40-66 had then

2. The message of II Isaiah. Note the following main themes and problems:

(1) The author is a prophet of hope and comfort to his people. He declares that Jerusalem will be restored, 40:1f; 44:21, 26, 28. Cyrus is depicted as God's historic agent -- the Lord's "shepherd" and "anointed" ("messiah" in Heb.)-- who is now about to achieve this deliverance for Israel, 44:28; 45:1 (see also 41:2,25). The designation of a non-Israelite as God's agent is not unknown elsewhere in the OT; e.g. Jeremiah calls Nebuchadnezzar God's "servant", Jer. 25:9; 27:6. (In connection with the further theory, mentioned above, regarding the composition of II Isaiah we will discuss the Cyrus allusions again as presenting a significant problem in the interpretation of the book.)

(2) II Isaiah also speaks of another agent, or "servant", obviously not Cyrus, the Persian conqueror. Which servant does he mean? What role will he play? The prophetic voice answers that Israel is the Servant, 41:8-9; 44:1-2, 21-22; 45:4; 49:3, and Israel's role or mission will be to bring "light" to the Gentiles, to be a "covenant" to the nations, i.e. to carry to them her message of ethical monotheism, Israel's teaching, law, or torah, with its affirmation that justice be established among men, under the over-arching care, or love of God for men, 42:1-7; 45:22-25; 49:6-8; 51:4-5; 43:25. By what means or method will this great mission be accomplished? By long suffering and gentleness, a tactic of patient and persuasive teaching:

"He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break
and a dimly burning wick he will
not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not fail or be discouraged
till he has established justice in
the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his
law.

'I am the Lord, I have called you
in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand
and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to
the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the
dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in
darkness...' (42:2-4, 6-7)

Ft. 67 continued:

existed, one would suppose that king Jehoiachin might have referred to them to rebut Jeremiah, or at least soften his prediction of doom.

g) G.A. Smith reminds us that the spirit of the significant Cyrus passages is that "Cyrus...is not presented as a prediction, but as the proof that a prediction is being fulfilled." (p. 9)

h) There is even some Biblical allusion that Isaiah chaps. 40f were written by another than I Isaiah: e.g. does II Chr. 36:22 or Ezra 1:1 suggest that Jeremiah was the author of these chapters? The authors of Chronicles and Ezra have no tradition that I Isaiah predicts such a role for Cyrus as is mentioned in their books!

In brief, the new insight of II Isaiah is that Israel has been elected to a world-wide service, not to a special salvation of her own. In these terms the author transmutes the meaning of her tragic history, finding Yahweh's good purpose even in the tragedy of Israel's exile, dispersion, and suffering. Her circumstance of captivity may be turned into a heretofore undreamed of, and unsought opportunity, namely the conversion of her Gentile captors to the religion of Israel and its humane outlook and ways.

(3) The arrangement of the Servant poems suggests that the concept undergoes development in II Isaiah's thought. First, as already indicated, the Servant is announced to be the nation as a whole (41:8; 44:1-2).

Next, strongly implied at least, is the concept of a remnant, or righteous, serving few who will perform this great work for mankind; Ch. 49:5-6 suggests a distinction between an effective Israel as the Servant and the mass of the nation as a whole (see G.A. Smith and others).⁶⁸

Finally, in chaps. 52:13-53:12 the Servant is depicted as an individual, whose special character or role is that of sufferer. What is the intent of this portrait? Does the author have in mind some specific individual? Or does the Servant here remain still a vivid personification of the nation? Many scholars including both Jewish and Christian accept the latter interpretation.⁶⁹

Still the vivid language of this classic passage may mean that the author had in mind, not just the personification of the nation in the most abstract sense. Alternative to this group theory, or in addition to it, the passage has been interpreted as meaning some specific individual sufferer. Indeed, a blending of the group and individual interpretations would suggest that the prophet had in mind each individual Hebrew as sufferer and sharer of the burden -- and in fact a collectivist interpretation could hardly intend less. It has been suggested that Isaiah 53 is best represented as a "collective and individual synthesis."⁷⁰

But beyond this, theories have been pressed that ch. 53 of II Isaiah portrays, not all Israelite sufferers, or even any special group or remnant, but a specific person. If this is the correct view of the chapter, what person does the author mean? Is it the prophet himself?⁷¹ Or could the author have had in mind some other great prophet or historical sufferer of the past, Jeremiah for instance, who suffered considerably for righteous Israel's cause in his time? Could it be he to whom the Second Isaiah was here referring as example or type? Indeed, along with Jeremiah, scholars have suggested Moses, Job, Uzziah, and other Biblical personages

⁶⁸See G.A. Smith, Isaiah Vol II, op. cit., pp. 280-282. See 46:3 reference to a remnant; 59:20 where only the repentant are to be saved; 66:19 where "survivors" are to go forth to the nations.

See Norman K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations, Harper, 1959, pp. 422-424 for summary of scholarly opinion that the Servant represents a group, including such alternatives as the total exiled Israel, the "ideal Israel" or a "minority in Israel".

⁶⁹See B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 420-421, 423 for an interesting presentation of the Servant as personification of the nation; The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isaac Landman, New York, 1941, Vol 5, p. 605 for an interpretation of 52:13-53:12 as the suffering of Israel.

⁷⁰Gottwald, op. cit., p. 425; and, in effect, B.W. Anderson, op. cit., pp 420-23.

⁷¹The Ethiopian eunuch asked this very question of the Apostle Philip according to Acts 8:26-39. Apparently it has been a prominent theory among Jewish interpreters, Gottwald, op. cit., p. 420.

Samuel Sandmel, as a Jewish commentator accepts chapter 53 as referring to a person, but says the passage is a stray poem, not II Isaiah's work; he believes that other servant passages refer to Israel the nation, and a few to the prophet himself, The Hebrew Scriptures, Alfred A. Knopf, 1963, pp. 170, 190.

as candidates for the Suffering Servant role of Chap. 53.⁷²

A still further possibility is to say that the passage portrays a specific messianic sufferer to come; that the concept of the messiah, which we have already met in Israel's intellectual history (Is. 9,11), is here transmitted from that of a kingly or political role to a sacrificial or soteriological one. The critical point is to ask whether the passage is consciously "messianic" in the thought of the prophet? Many interpreters have so felt. A classic statement of this view was given by the noted scholar George Adam Smith:⁷³

"...The type of Hero had changed in Israel since Isaiah wrote of his Prince-of-the-Four-Names. The king had been replaced by the prophet; the conqueror by the martyr; the judge, who smote the land by the rod of his mouth, and slew the wicked by the breath of his lips, by the patriot who took his country's sins upon his own conscience. The monarchy had perished; men knew that, even if Israel were set upon their own land again, it would not be under an independent king of their own; nor was a Jewish champion of the martial kind, such as Isaiah had promised for deliverance from the Assyrian, any more required. Cyrus, the Gentile, should do all the campaigning required against Israel's enemies, and Israel's native Saviour be relieved for gentler methods and more spiritual aims. It is all this experience, of nearly two centuries, which explains the absence of the features of warrior and judge from chap. liii, and their replacement by those of a suffering patriot, prophet, and priest. The reason of the change is, not because the prophet who wrote the chapter had not, as much as Isaiah, an individual in his view, but because, in the historical circumstance of the Exile, such an individual as Isaiah had promised, seemed no longer probable

⁷²See Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 418-426 for a full discussion of the various views of the Servant.

⁷³The Book of Isaiah, Vol II, op. cit., pp. 289-290.

Prof. Gottwald cites C. R. North, The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah, Oxford, rev. ed., 1956, as presenting the most thorough study of the history of interpretations of the Servant conception, and places North among those who believe that II Isaiah had in mind a future saving, messianic person, who was, however, not consciously known, as Jesus of Nazareth, to the prophet. Prof. Gottwald, in our previous reference, raises questions about the North view on the score that strict "messianic" theory in Israel envisioned a kingly figure rather than a soteriological one, A Light to the Nations, pp. 421-422.

Further scholarly comment on the problem of the messianic quality or content of Isaiah 53 follows: C. R. North writes:

"The Servant bears more the features of a prophet than those of a king,...and he manifests exactly those qualities which accorded with messiahship as Jesus understood it. In this sense he is a messianic figure, although we should not attempt to apply every detail in the description of him."

"At the beginning of the Christian era there were...Jews who thought the Servant was the messiah, but since they found difficulty in conceiving of a suffering messiah, this interpretation was always qualified -- e.g. in Targ. Isaiah the exaltation of the Servant is applied to the messiah, but his sufferings fall in part upon Israel, in part upon the Gentiles. Later, as Christians pressed the messianic interpretation, most Jews adopted the collective theory, that the Servant was Israel." C.R. North, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon, 1962, Vol R-Z, p. 293. (The Targums were Aramaic translations of Scriptural books)

Somewhat critical of the view that the passage has a messianic intent, Ernst Jenni writes: "A Messiah who suffers and dies as a substitute for all men in the NT sense was unknown in Judaism...The ideas of Isa. 53 did not affect the Messiah image, although the Servant of God has now and then been considered messianic. In the Targ. of Isa. 53 the text has been transformed..." (Jenni here quotes the Targums text which follows the description of North in the above comment.) Ernst Jenni, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol K-Q, p. 365.

or required.

So far, then, from the difference between chap. liii and previous prophecies of the Messiah affording evidence that in chap. liii it is not the Messiah who is presented, this very change, which has taken place, explicable as it is from the history of the intervening centuries, goes powerfully to prove that it is the Messiah, and therefore an individual, whom the prophet so vividly describes."

Within a Christian framework, we may view the Suffering Servant poem as a messianic teaching from two perspectives:

The classic Christian tradition, of course, has claimed that Isaiah, in a visionary rhapsody, was here foreseeing and foretelling the life and role of Jesus, The Christ, as supreme sufferer and sacrifice for mankind before God.

On the other hand, liberal Christian opinion often views the "fulfillment" in Jesus in more natural and historic terms. Liberal perspective transcends the problem aroused by the belief of conservative and traditional theology that "clairvoyant prophecy" is the essence or chief significance of the passage. Before, however we discuss these two understandings of Isaiah 53, let us pause to summarize the heart of II Isaiah's teaching thus far, regarding the role of sacrificial suffering as redemptive force.

(4) II Isaiah emphasizes the concept of redemption by suffering, or salvation through suffering. The larger problem now before Israel's conscience concerned her historic plight, as she finds herself a defeated nation and in captivity and exile whereas all along her spiritual leaders had proclaimed her to be God's favored people! Why had this evil overtaken them? John Noss reviews the problem with extreme clarity:

"Why had Yahweh brought so much suffering upon them? The old answer that it was because of their sins -- while acknowledged to explain much -- was not wholly satisfactory; for it was evident that the people of Babylonia, who now prospered, were as bad, even worse, than the Jews had ever been. Deutero-Isaiah did not reject the conventional explanation: he saw truth in it. But he did not think the sufferings of the Jews could be entirely explained on that basis. He set his people's trials against a world background; they were, he declared, a part of Yahweh's plan of redemption."⁷⁴

Accordingly we find acknowledgement that suffering may be explained as discipline, 40:4; 50:1. But beyond this, why was Israel suffering in excess? What was the deeper historical purpose in her suffering? II Isaiah finds his answer in the traditional purposive conception itself of history, which the Jews have all along had; he sees a deeper purposive meaning in his peoples' catastrophe, and bursts forth with the redemptive theory of suffering in chaps. 52-53. Israel, through her patient suffering in exile, would have the opportunity to teach the world about Yahweh and ethical monotheism. On second thought, however, the prophet realizes that suffering cannot be in the abstract; for it is only individuals who suffer, not nations as a whole. Thus 52:13f depicts an individual who suffers.

At this point some will be inclined to say the Prophet has in the passage personified all, or any individual suffering, where the tribulations or pains of individuals, when caused by the hands of other individuals through malicious, heedless, or narrow intent, have awakened conscience, stirred up remorse and repentance, and inspired personal and social renovation and change. Others will proceed to see in II Isaiah's thought here a messianic vision of a suffering servant; that through the unique suffering of one, salvation will be brought to many, and find in the passage a vindication of such theme announced first by God, 52:13-15; then by the conscience of men 53:1-6.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Man's Religions, 3rd ed., Macmillan, 1963, p. 541.

⁷⁵G.A. Smith.

That humanitarian advancement or progress, human uplift and betterment often come as a reaction to human tribulation and pain, as men have been moved to find relief from their sufferings, is a truism concerning life attested by much experience and history. Indeed, it might not be too wide a generality to assert that most human achievement and progress have come about through suffering and sacrifice -- patent in the history of medical science; in the history of the growth of law and democratic political institutions when viewed against the slaveries and tyrannies that men have suffered in the past; in the reach of humanity in our time toward world peace, in reaction to the pains of total war in our century; toward economic well-being and security, in reaction to the poverty that men have immemorially suffered; or toward integrated, equalitarian and humane community in the areas of mixed racial populations in reaction to the blight of segregation and racism.

Furthermore, that redemptive suffering is not merely mass, general, social or abstract in meaning, but that it centers on individuals who incarnate the redemptive forces in suffering is suggested in the lives of the saints and martyrs down through history -- from Jeremiah, to Gandhi or Ann Frank. This writer was witness after the act to one of the Nazi atrocities at Gardelegen, Germany, where 1016 slave laborers were brutally murdered in a large potato barn on the edge of that town -- a discovery of the 405th Infantry Regiment in April, 1945. At that time our regiment also liberated several German youths who were in the prison at the larger city of Stendal, some miles away, who had not bowed the knee to the Nazi baal. These Christian young men - "Aryan" stock - would have been executed shortly, had not the advancing American armies saved them. One of these persons has grown to be a close friend of this writer; and, as a result of his great suffering for the sake of justice and humanity during the Hitler regime, has become a dedicated hand and voice for democracy in the West German republic.⁷⁶ The effort of the present German government in making restitution to the state of Israel, as an act of national repentance and contrition for Hitler's crime against the Jews, is a moving spectacle of our time suggesting that suffering bears on its tide a redemptive force. The indignities that two American Negro young people suffered in their attempt to register in the University of Georgia in January of 1961, awakened the conscience of that institution to its larger duty, so that their acceptance was effected a few days later under the leadership of white students and faculty, and orderly integration begun. A news report of this event appeared under the piquant title "Grace in Georgia".⁷⁷

Generally speaking, Second Isaiah's theme in the Servant passages is that good may come, not by suffering, in the sense that God intends suffering, but in spite of suffering, that is, as a creative reaction to it -- so the Servant, suffering as a captive, will bring light to the Gentiles. In Chapter 53, however, the Second Isaiah seems consciously to have in mind the idea of vicarious, substitutionary, or intercessory atonement of the old animal sacrifices of Israel,⁷⁸ but of course transmuted or spiritualized into terms of the voluntary suffering of the Messianic Servant, who receives the onus of the sins and removes it, by satisfying a judgmental requirement of God. Actually, innocent suffering, which is the case in point of the Suffering Servant, is the most unjust of all suffering. It does indeed "bear" the iniquity of all concerned in the sense that it is the effect of others' selfishness, or heedless disregard of the sufferer's right or need, and thus when so perceived induces repentance, restitution, and renewal. Was such II Isaiah's deeper insight into the role of suffering in history deeper than his prophetic forebears had understood; an insight into the larger purpose of God creatively at work in a

⁷⁶Herr Gerd (Spitzbart) Bartenberg of Manover.

⁷⁷Time, January 27, 1961: the Negro students: Miss Charlayne Hunter and Mr. Hamilton Holmes.

⁷⁸Verse 7: "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter...so he opened not his mouth," though in the parallel line, "and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb," the thought is pastoral rather than sacrificial. See discussion on the meaning of the Old Testament animal sacrifices, p.

psychological principle, whereby the prophet could announce that triumph would emerge from tragedy, salvation from sorrow, and that sin or other evil need not be the final arbiter of life? It is often pointed out that here II Isaiah represents the way Hebraic thought ultimately looks at suffering -- not pessimistically as hopeless fact -- but positively or optimistically, creatively or redemptively.

3. For Christians Christ has been the classic sufferer for evil. Since Isaiah, chapter 53 has featured so prominently in the Christian tradition as the "prophecy" or forecast of the sufferings of the Christ we digress for a moment to review alternative perspectives within this theme.

There is, of course, the traditionalist or conservative view, the interpretation that this chapter is a supernatural prediction in specific detail of the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth on the Roman Cross about 33 A.D. Difficulties of this view have often been pointed out:

Firstly, we have seen that the prophets were not predictors of future events, but rather moral proclaimers of God's ethical will.

Secondly, the view implies a determined concept of life and history; whereas the prophets believed in the freedom of man, and in his own responsibility for the outcome of his history -- man freely determines his own destiny, (Is. 1:18-20; Jer. 18:7-12; 31:29-30; Ez. 18 -- though God chastises him when man violates the moral law.)

Thirdly, assuming that the clairvoyant interpretation of prophecy is the true one, why did not Isaiah go into further detail, e.g. predict clearly the three crosses, name individuals, calling the sufferer "Jesus", etc. (According to the clairvoyant view the original Isaiah calls Cyrus by name 150 years before his birth; it would have been far more important to us that he call Jesus by name in chapter 53!).

Fourthly, some of the details in the chapter do not compare with the known life of Jesus. Jesus did not grow up with a disfigured or diseased countenance, so far as anything in the gospels tell us. Although verse nine of the poem may call to mind Jesus's crucifixion between two thieves and burial in the grave of Joseph of Aramathea, whom Matthew calls a rich man, Jesus was not interred with "the wicked" or in an unhallowed grave -- Joseph was an honored follower. Actually the phrase "a rich man" is often emended to "evildoers" by scholars on the grounds of the similarity of the two expressions in the Hebrew. Supporting this possibility is the appearance of the term in the poetic parallel with "the wicked", suggesting their possible synonymous intent, as is sometimes the case elsewhere (Mic. 6:12; Jer. 17:11; Prov. 11:16).^{78a} Nor did Jesus have children or "see offspring", as by restoration to normal existence after his suffering, which verse 10c suggests was the destiny of the Servant. To read such lines in the poem as referring to crucifixion between two thieves; the reference to "offspring" as the disciples; or to the resurrection is to interpret them figuratively in a way to make them conform to the reported events in Jesus' life, and, strictly speaking, less literally than a conservative theology might desire.

A more realistic, and, in our opinion, important view of chapter 53 suggests that it may cover the suffering of a personality like Jesus, without being a magical prediction of the man Jesus; that is, it depicts the loving, sacrificing type of personality which, in Christian eyes, came to supreme expression in Jesus. II Isaiah believed that it is by the work of just such life and personality that men are saved. As we have already indicated, II Isaiah, with a marvelous depth of divine inspiration, perceived that the Messiah when he comes must needs be a sufferer, whose life of love and sacrifice will work redemption for men. For II Isaiah the Sufferer freely or "vicariously" gives himself. How typical of the whole life of Jesus -- whom Christians have called the Messiah. Along this line, George Adam Smith, commenting about II Isaiah's insight in chapter 53, wrote in his memorable way:

^{78a}See James Muilenburg, *Interpreters Bible*, V, pp. 626-27. It is interesting in the Markan source of Matthew here (as in the Luke parallel) Joseph is not referred to as a rich man, Mk. 15:43; Lk. 23:50; Mtt. 27:57.

"...substitutive suffering is a great living fact of human experience, whose outward features are not more evident to men's eyes than its inner meaning is appreciable by their conscience, and of irresistible effect upon their whole moral nature...We are not so capable of measuring the physical or moral results of our actions upon the lives of others; nor do we so awaken to the guilt and heinousness of our sin as when it reaches and implicates lives, which were not partners with us in it. Moreover, while a man's punishment is apt to give him an excuse for saying, I have expiated my sin myself, and so to leave him self-satisfied and with nothing for which to be grateful or obliged to a higher will;...so, on the contrary, when he recognizes that others feel the pain of his sin and have come under its weight, then shame is quickly born within him, and pity and every other passion that can melt a hard heart. If, moreover, the others who bear his sin do so voluntarily and for love's sake, then how quickly on the back of shame and pity does gratitude rise, and the sense of debt and of constraint to their will!...Thus Christ, like the Servant, became a force in the world, inheriting in the cause of Providence a portion with the great and dividing the spoils of history with the strong."⁷⁹

In conclusion then, from a Christian point of view Jesus may be regarded as a fulfillment of this prophecy of II Isaiah in the sense that he himself possibly chose to be its fulfillment. (Compare Luke 4:18-19 and other New Testament passages interpreting Jesus as fulfilling a servant role, and our discussion of scholarly opinion regarding these issues, p. . See especially C.T. Craig's negative evaluation of the theory that Jesus consciously adopted the role of the Isaianic Suffering Servant. In the opinion of this reviewer Prof. Craig discusses this possibility in its most realistic terms, to the effect that Jesus did not consciously pursue the fulfillment of this role, but, if anything, found himself indeed a sufferer for righteousness sake, as a consequence of the type of message he elected to preach, in the peculiar circumstances of his time in Israel, which inevitably led to his martyrdom.) That the early church apparently so interpreted him as material in the Book of Acts suggests, is, of course, a further dimension of the history. In any case, Isaiah chapter 53 may be regarded as a general depiction in the realm of moral truth concerning the redemptive role of suffering individuality, which leaves room for human freedom; the future open, and, indeed, which either Jesus himself, or the early church, came to appreciate as casting light on the deeper significance of the events that they in their time were threading on the loom of history.⁸⁰

⁷⁹G.A. Smith, The Book of Isaiah, Vol II, pp. 370-72, 389.

⁸⁰In acknowledging in the above terms that chap. 53 may bear upon the future, as Christians have come to view the person and work of Jesus Christ as fulfilling that future, care must be taken not necessarily to read into Jesus' personal martyrdom on the cross the legalistic concepts of the sacrifice which some aspects of Isaiah 53 suggest; we refer the reader to our discussion of two principal interpretations of Jesus's death found in the history of Christian thought, since St. Paul first began to articulate in his memorable love-energy terms the significance of that event, p. Those two theories we discuss as a penalistic or legalistic type of view in contrast to a revelational or moral-energy understanding, p.

Christians need not say that Jesus' actual suffering on the cross was, in point of intellectual interpretation, an Old Testament type of sacrifice. (We have cautioned the reader previously to review carefully the meaning of the OT animal sacrifices, as discussed on p.). Isaiah 53 would no more determine or limit for Christians the meaning of Jesus's cross in deepest dimensions than, in their view, the OT as a whole limits the New. For example, St. Paul never refers to Isaiah 53 as the prototype of his conception of the meaning of Jesus' death. In fact, in our view, the meaning of Jesus' death as discussed in the Pauline letters ranges far beyond the sketch of atoning sacrifice that we have in the Isaianic chapter. (See p. where we comment on the report of Jesus' reference to Isaiah 53, in Luke 22:27.)

4. We may now summarize the several perspectives of II Isaiah. In general terms he both reemphasizes and then advances the ethical monotheism of his predecessors. To review the old in his message, he:

(1) Accuses the nation of having been faithless and idolatrous: 43:22; 46:8; 50:1; 56:9; (57:13; 59:1-8,13; 64:6; 65:1-19)⁸¹

(2) Speaks of the futility of rites and observances, if not performed in sincere contrition and devotion, and unless they have some outlet in ethical conduct: 40:16; 43:22f; 45:19, 21-22; (58:3f; 66:3) Though rites have some value 60:7.

(3) Proclaims doom on unfaithful Israelites: 50:11; (65:6-7; 66:17)

(4) Says that the repentant will be saved: 44:22; 55:6f; (59:20)

(5) That religion is an individual experience rather than corporate ritualism: 55

(6) That God's Spirit is immanent in moral conscience: (57:15) 61:1

⁸⁰cont. Even, however, if the main cast of chapter 53 be reminiscent of the OT idea of substitutionary animal sacrifice, it would be too much to claim that it presents the idea of sacrifice that satisfies divine justice or wrath in the elaborate sense of the post-New Testament theories of the atonement of Jesus. They were to the effect that Christ's suffering was a punishment really due others (v. 10,11) and that he makes "intercession", presumably before a wrathful God.

For one thing, the chapter nowhere speaks of a divine wrath, but by and large concerns the self-giving love of the servant for "transgressors", whose sins he bears, and presumably hopes to change by so suffering. Furthermore, in our main text above, we said that verse 6b need not be interpreted in a legalistic way. Rather it may simply mean that the innocent do suffer as a consequence of the iniquity of all. So too verse 12c, "he bore the sins of many". Verse 11a also need not refer to a penalistic judgment placed by the Divine on the sufferer; it may more simply state the truth that suffering is redemptive and will have a "satisfactory" outcome -- indeed -- "the fruit of the travail" phrase suggests that there are those who are brought to repentance by the Servant's suffering: "...by his knowledge shall...my servant...make many to be accounted righteous". The purposes of a God of Love would indeed be satisfied by such redemptive results.

Verse 10b is specifically moral: the suggestion is that the Servant voluntarily offers himself in sacrifice; God does not compel him or require him to do so. Strictly speaking, however, verse 10a and 10b seem contradictory: the first clause suggests that Yahweh compels; yet the second reads that the sacrifice is voluntary! Actually, then, but two phrases are possibly legalistic or penalistic in idea, 10a and 12c.

Finally, indeed, the intercession idea of 12c might be cast on the side of a moral theory of the atonement: for, it is "intercession" for what? Does intercession necessarily mean here against God's wrath and outraged sense of justice? It is not spelled out in this way. Could we not as well say, then, that the idea of intercession may refer here to a divine grief for and over sin? In this sense the Servant intercedes in order to change the Divine grief into joy, in the fact that sin may be overcome as a consequence of the servant's sacrificial act.

⁸¹The bracketed chapters here are often disputed as being by a "third" Isaiah" or "Isaiahs", that is, as representing prophetic oracles coming after the Exile period, and often inferior in note when compared with the great message of 40-55 (possibly inclusive of 60-62). We cite them above simply to credit them as expressing the points summarized. See e.g. standard commentaries on Isaiah chapters 56-66 such as Maillenburg, Interpreters Bible, op. cit. p. 414; or Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, Harper, 1911, pp. 480-81.

The new in his message as compared to his prophetic forebears:

(7) Takes to supreme heights the idea of God as omnipresent and omnipotent, Creator of heaven and earth, Lord of all races and history, who loves and intends to win all at last. 40:12, 21f; 44:24-25; 45:7, 12, 18, 21-22; 48:12-13; 51:15; (56:6-8; 60:1-3; (66:1, 18) (It is sometimes believed that chap. 35 should be assigned to II Isaiah).

(8) The special role of Suffering as a redemptive force: 52:13-53:12.

5. The problem passages of II Isaiah. As we read chapters 40-66 a conflict appears between two themes: on the one hand the concept of "suffering service", non-violence, an expansive internationalism or spiritual universalism, in contrast on the other to a theme of belligerency, subjection of enemies, a narrower nationalism or and political imperialism. How can we reconcile or explain this apparent contradiction within these chapters? We point out the following possible solutions to the problem:

(1) Many Biblical scholars accept the theory that such contrasts may be due to more than one author; that there is not only a Second Isaiah, but another author or authors who are responsible for some of the material found in the book.⁸² Thus the writings of the great prophet of Suffering Service lie along side those of a nationalist and even imperialist, e.g. chapter 53 compared with chapter 63. (Compare also 42:1-4; 53; 55:1 with 41:15; 43:3; 45:14; 49:23; 63:1f).

Chapters 55-66 are those commonly taken to be the work of a later hand than the writer mainly responsible for chapters 40-55.⁸³ Within the perspective of the Third Isaiah hypothesis, the II Isaiah, or the prophet of Suffering Service, is thought to have been a resident of Babylon during the classic Exile, who in a moment of enthusiasm writes of Cyrus, a heathen prince, as an instrument of the Lord especially chosen to liberate the captives. In this view the servant chapters (mainly 40-55) would have been written about 538 B.C., the time of Cyrus's conquest of Babylon. Such a theory of a "Second Isaiah" whom later editors combined with "Third Isaiah" (a more nationalistic prophet) may indeed be the most considered solution to the problem of the book. Thus such imperialistic lines as 41:15; 43:3; 45:14; or 49:23 -- if by the same author who wrote the suffering servant philosophy -- may be regarded either as figures of speech symbolizing Israel's missionary victory, as scholarly opinion often takes them⁸⁴; or realistic (and indeed exultant) acknowledgement by the II Isaiah that the expected military victory of Cyrus over the Chaldeans and other traditional enemies will contain an inevitable element of violence by which the captive or exiled Israelites will profit. How could liberation come except by a military victory -- either by Cyrus or some other -- that would spell overthrow and subjection of Israel's erstwhile enemies? Doubtless it is expecting too much of even a II Isaiah to have resolved this conflict of love for the nations on the one hand while awaiting their overthrow on the other; or to have left us a work -- immortal in quality though it is as a whole -- possessing an entirely consistent system of values throughout its multiple poetic utterances. In this connection, of course, we should constantly be reminded of the many problems of corrupt or unclear

⁸²i.e. in chapters 40-66.

⁸³The student at this place may consult such sources as Mullenburg, Interpreters Bible, op. cit., p. 414; Oesterley and Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 277f; Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, Harper, 1941, p. 480f; or others for discussions of the Third Isaiah hypothesis.

⁸⁴See subsequent note 87 on these problematic verses.

text that Biblical scholarship finds in this, as in the other ancient Biblical writings, when questions of precise exegesis in numerous instances are raised.⁸⁵

(2) The late C. C. Torrey of Yale in his well-known work, The Second Isaiah,⁸⁶ set forth another view of chs. 40-66, which is regarded even by its critics as an arresting thesis. Professor Torrey held to the substantial unity of these chapters and included with them chapters 34-35 of the earlier portion of Isaiah.

He believed that the references to Cyrus and Babylon were later interpolations by a third hand or hands, not the main author of the material between 40-66, whom we may call II Isaiah. Torrey points out that the servant throughout these chapters is either Israel, the nation, or a suffering individual within Israel. But in 44:28 and 45:1, and possibly again in 45:3-4, there is a sudden reference to Cyrus, as expected military deliverer who is designated as anointed of God. In other words, there is an abrupt and unaccountable change from Israel, or an individual in Israel, as "servant" to a foreigner as "anointed". There is also the change from the praise of the servant as a gentle personality to admiration of a conquering military hero. How does such an abrupt contrast come about? Only, says Torrey, by the hypothesis that the reference to Cyrus is a gloss of a later scribe, and not original with II Isaiah, can these chapters make sense. Contrast, for example, chapters 49-55, where a "victory" of the Lord's servant, the setting of the captives free, etc., is discussed, but with no reference to Cyrus, as in chap. 45.

Torrey further believed that the "exile" to which the writing alludes is not the specific Exile in Babylon (if the references to Cyrus, Babylon, and the Chaldeans are deleted) but is the general dispersion or diaspora, which began in 586 B.C. In many places the general diaspora is referred to as the "exile" from which the Jews will return to Jerusalem, the "captivity" from which they will be freed. For example, it says that the people will return from the "isles", the "coastlands", the "north", and the "south", i.e. from the four corners of the earth: 40:15; 41:5; 42:4,10; 43:5-6; 49:1,12; 51:5; 60:8-9; 66:19.

Torrey's conclusions were that the book has been adapted to an Exile setting in the city of Babylon by the retouching of a later scribe who supposed that the original author meant Cyrus, King of Persia as the anointed of the Lord, since in fact Cyrus did initiate a return to Jerusalem. If the Cyrus and Babylon references are left out there is little else to suggest the theory that the specific Babylonian Exile of 587-32 is meant, but much suggestion rather that the author has in mind the great dispersion as the captivity, or the "exile", from which the Jews would return. Torrey thus believes that II Isaiah wrote later than the classic Exile, and that his main theme is, not a local liberation from Babylon as the hope of Israel, but rather that the hope of Israel lies in her role as a people chosen of God to save the world at large.

Finally Torrey believes that II Isaiah's military figures of speech, which are undoubtedly present in the writing, proclaim the Servant as a spiritual conquerer, who will win a victory over men's minds and purposes. The military or imperialistic figures of speech are symbolical of the victory of good over evil, a figure which is quite common in the Old Testament. For example, "Edom" in 63:1 designates the incorrigible enemies of the Lord.⁸⁷ To the ancient Hebrew the conflict

⁸⁵The student may observe such difficulties by examining the more complete discussions of commentaries devoted to detailed exegesis, such as found in The Interpreters Bible.

⁸⁶Scribners, 1928.

⁸⁷Torrey, The Second Isaiah, op. cit., p. 462.

Torrey believes that the wording "in chains" in 45:14 is a later scribal addition, p. 360. Muilenburg, otherwise an advocate of the Third Isaiah, agrees with Torrey at this point, Interpreters Bible, op. cit., p. 529; similarly, G.A. Smith, with some reservation, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 182; also

with evil was a warfare; thus it was natural for II Isaiah to use military figures of speech, as was done for example in many of the Psalms. Thus the beligerant aspects of chapters 45, 49, 63 may be interpreted as the work of II Isaiah, who otherwise depicts the servant as having a character of gentleness and peace.

6. One further problem: Why does the New Testament associate the name of "Isaiah" of the 8th century with passages from chapters 40-66? There are nine such New Testament citations in all, e.g. Matt. 3:3; Lk. 3:4; 4:17, etc. The answer lies in the fact, simply, that the New Testament authors accept the tradition, which was solidly established by their time, that the whole of Isaiah was by one authorship. Technically speaking, their purpose in these citations is one of reference; not of critical scholarship, that is, to prove that chapters 40-66 were by the I Isaiah. Our modern principles of historical, literary criticism were unknown and unapplied by them.⁸⁸

⁸⁷cont. Robert W. Rogers, Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 658.

See also Torrey, op. cit., pp. 387-88, where such lines as 49:23, 26 are understood to be figures of speech not at all meant by the poet to be taken literally, but rather as symbolical of Israel's spiritual victory in winning the nations to herself and her cause; likewise Muilenberg, op. cit., p. 577, believes these lines to be characteristic oriental imagery, and agrees again with Torrey that the reference to "Edom" in 63:1 is a metaphor of the characteristic hostility of the nations to Israel's God and the chapter as a whole as referring to God's judgment upon them for their evil ways, Interpreters Bible, op. cit., p. 726. G. A. Smith takes 41:15 as figurative, op. cit., p. 132-33.

On the other side of some of these problems, Pfeiffer (following the Third Isaiah view) indicates that chapter 63 is not a symbolic depiction of the missionary efforts of Israel, but rather that 63:1-6 portrays how Yahweh is to devastate Edom, Introduction to the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 480. Similarly Oesterley and Robinson imply that 41:15; 49:23; 63:1 are to be read more literally as announcing that national enemies will be overthrown and punished, Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit. p. 268, 271, 281.

⁸⁸See G. A. Smith, Isaiah, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 6-7, 24.

Study Questions

1. What are the four major developments of the post-exilic period? Which Biblical books illustrate these?
2. What is the significance of the following Biblical dates: 750 B.C.; 721 B.C.; 650 B.C.; 587 B.C.; 532 B.C.; 166 B.C.?
3. Name the five successive world empires from about 800 B.C. to the time of Christ. What was the general significance of each in the life and fortunes of the Jews? See page .
4. What are four or five points of general evidence that ISALAH Chs. 40-66 are by a later hand than the Isaiah of the 8th century? What similarities are there between the messages of chapters 40-66 and 1-39?
5. What is the main message of II Isaiah as the prophet of hope and comfort to his people, and how does this differ from major themes of the previous eras of prophecy? What are chief passages that indicate his theme?
6. Underscore every place that the expression "my servant" appears. What variations in who or what the servant is do you notice? What are your conclusions as to development in the servant concept? In what sense has the prophecy of Israel as the servant been fulfilled?
7. Do you think that salvation or release from evil comes by suffering service? What has been the prophetic theory of suffering up to II Isaiah? What new problem about suffering does II Isaiah bring up?
8. What are your opinions relative to the interpretations of Chapter 53 as a "prophecy" of Christ?
9. How is II Isaiah similar to his prophetic predecessors? What new message do you find?
10. Read the passages indicated in section 5 of the II Isaiah discussion. What major conflict in theme seems to be present in these verses? What solutions to this problem have been offered? Can you suggest a theory of your own about this problem?
11. Read Is. 42:1-7; 53; then read 9:6-7; 11:1-5. What similarities and differences do you note in these concepts of the Messiah and the Servant?
12. What concept of God do you find in Is. Chs. 40; 45? Does II Isaiah have the concept of God as love? What passages bear out your answer?
13. What is your favorite passage of II Isaiah? Why? Which passages stress the idea of religion as individual relationship to God?

III. Ezekiel, Father of the Ceremonial Community

Somewhat earlier in the 6th century than II Isaiah Ezekiel formulated his plan for a restored Jewish nation.

1. The book of EZEKIEL presents the following primary division:

Chs. 1-24: prophecies of judgment -- discussing why Jerusalem must fall; they seem to have been written before the destruction of the city in 587 B.C.

Chs. 25-48: prophecies of restoration -- anticipating how Jerusalem is to be revived, apparently written after the fall.

Unlike ISAIAH and JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL is a tidy book. In larger respects its theme progresses without interruption from the first chapter to the last. It gives the impression that, to some extent, Ezekiel himself may be responsible for the way his oracles were put together.

In spite, however, of an over-all well organized format much variety and contrast are evident in the book, when we look at details. For example, in the first part the ethical and prophetic impulse prevails, whereas in the latter portion the priestly and ceremonial interests are more prominent. Or contrast 33:11 "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" with chs. 38-39 where enemy nations are to be put down in a bloody victory of Israel, 39:18-20. Paterson says that "the strange variety of the book may be due to the strangely composite personality of Ezekiel as prophet and priest."⁸⁹

2. Ezekiel's vision (1:1f) may be interpreted in two ways:

On the surface it seems to be a report of an explicitly objective experience: Ezekiel is moved about in space from Babylon to Jerusalem; the heavens are opened; he is commanded to eat supernatural books, etc. 8:1-3; 3:1-3. Thus a literal interpretation would hold that Ezekiel is an abnormally inspired person psychologically, is supernaturally and miraculously stimulated; he has clairvoyance; he experiences levitation, etc.

However, a symbolical explanation of the account of these visions is also possible. Such a view is more realistic and makes Ezekiel less abnormal. Oesterley and Robinson say, that these accounts of the visions are "purely literary description of an imaginary picture constructed by the prophet".⁹⁰ That the visions constitute a literary method or vehicle for his message, by which he intended in no sense to deceive, but to bring home to his readers the truth of his message for the nation, is made plain by the memoir concerning the eating of the book, 3:1-3. The eating of the scroll is most obviously intended to be taken symbolically by 3:10. If this more credible interpretation of these visionary accounts be the true one, it in no way detracts from the message or significance of Ezekiel, but would rather enhance it.⁹¹ (Recall our discussion of the First Isaiah's vision.)

⁸⁹The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, Scribner's, 1950, p. 173.

⁹⁰An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit. pp. 327-28.

⁹¹It is often pointed out that there doubtless were elements of the abnormal in Ezekiel's personality; his book suggests that he was subject to periods of unconsciousness and catalepsy, or epilepsy, Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit. p. 327.

The possible psychological source of Ezekiel's vision may lie in his experiences as a sojourner in Babylon, where the main elements of the symbolism were suggested to him -- the colossal cherubim -- by the great winged griffins and lions "which formed such an impressive feature in the palaces of Babylonia"⁹².

The principal features of the symbolism contain an important aspect of Ezekiel's message: the wheels full of eyes suggest the universality of the all seeing Divine presence, while the throne above the Chariot suggests the supreme majesty and transcendence of God. That the chariot comes out of the north suggests that God inhabits the inner sanctuary and mystery of the universe itself, and is not, as Deity, confined to Jerusalem.

3. The message may be summarized by saying that Ezekiel writes the program for the restoration of the nation under a theocratic (ie. priestly ruled) state. He is often called the Father of Judaism and his book its constitution, especially chs. 43-46. In further detail, however, there are three points he wished to express:

- (1) He wanted to emphasize the Divine Holiness or Transcendence. Thus we hear him speak in
 - in 1:26-28 of God's transcendent majesty;
 - in 20:14,22 of God's outraged "holiness"; note the ceremonial
 - 36:20-32 definition of sin as failure to keep the ceremonies,
 - in 44:15-24, esp. 19, of mediating priests who are necessary to perform the ceremonies correctly for the worshipper.

Such passages indicate that Ezekiel's book is noteworthy for a judicial concept of the divine forgiveness: God's holy honor as a transcendent judge must be appeased by correct ritual. To the idea of God's inwardness (Jeremiah 31:34) Ezekiel adds and emphasizes God's transcendent honor and sovereign holiness, Ez. 36:22,26.

- (2) We therefore point to his stress on purified ritual, i.e. on sacerdotalism and ritual formality:
 - 20:12f - his emphasis on sabbaths
 - 36:25 - " holy water
 - 43:18f & 46:1-4 " formal sacrifices (contrast Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah)
 - 44:15,23 " a mediating clergy/priests between the laity and God; note that the priests are also to perform judicial or civil functions (theocracy).
 - 44:23 " distinction between the
 - holy and the common
 - sacred secular
 - "clean" "unclean"
 - 44:5 " exclusion of foreigners from the Temple
 - 46:9-10 " formalism

- (3) We observe thirdly, therefore, Ezekiel's nationalism and his advocacy of a policy of segregation.

In sum, Ezekiel carries to new heights the idea of religion as based on ritual law and ceremony administered by an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The difference between Ezekiel and his predecessors among the prophets lay in the fact that, whereas they emphasized that God would bring judgment upon the nation for ethical transgression, Ezekiel adds that God would bring judgment for ceremonial transgression,

⁹²S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, Scribner's, 1898, p. 280.

5:7; 8:9f; 18:5-9. Thus we find the trend of the Deuteronomic reform, with its emphasis on ceremony and the Temple cult, strengthened in Ezekiel's outlook. Conversely, whereas the earlier prophets predict restoration if there is ethical repentance and cleansing; Ezekiel predicts restoration if there is ceremonial cleansing. In short, whereas they question and tend to rule out ceremony altogether, he wishes to restore ceremony on a purified basis. Contrast

Amos 5:21f	with	Ezekiel 36:25
Micah 6:6		46:1-10
Isaiah 1:16		

4. Evaluation of Ezekiel: On the positive side we must recognize that Ezekiel is a noteworthy ethical prophet like his predecessors, as chapters 3, 18, 33, 34, etc. bear out. We observe many favorable similarities between them, such as the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| e.g. Jeremiah | <u>Ezekiel</u> |
| 6- New Covenant, Jer. 31:33, where God's law is to be in the heart. | Ch. 36:26-27 |
| - Individual responsibility for sin is emphasized in Jer. 31:29-30, where the idea of transmitted original sin is repudiated. | Ch. 18:1-10, 19-20, 31-32, verses which carry on this theme. |
| - Restoration, Jer. 31:7-9 | 34:11-16 where Ezekiel speaks of restoration in no less moving terms. |
| - The Ideal King concept of the Messiah, Jer. 30:8 (cp. I Isaiah, Micah) | Ideal King, 37:24-25 |

Indeed, Ezekiel seems even to exceed his predecessors in saying that there was no time when the people were not wicked ethically. In a sense his very zeal for righteousness leads to his emphasis on the holiness and transcendence of God. By these doctrines Ezekiel teaches the seriousness of ethical monotheism. He is trying to say that a nation that accepts this Yahweh has high responsibilities. The duties of this religion cannot be taken lightly. God, the author of moral law, is offended personally with every breach of it. Israel must set a serious example before the heathen world, 36:22. "The prophet's idea is a large one, and might comprehend more than he fills into it. It is that God's revelation of himself is historical; that he becomes the God of one people with whose destinies his name is linked; that his rule of his people in their history, its progress and final issues, the way he leads them and that into which at last he fashions them, is his revelation of himself to the eyes of mankind".⁹³

We may also understand what lay behind his emphasis on the ecclesiastical institution and in a measure justified it. The essential historical fact was that ecclesiastical hierarchy began at this time to take the place of the old monarchy -- "the people who were once a nation have now become a church".⁹⁴ The church must replace the state in order for Israel to survive, in her circumstances as a subject nation in the post exilic era. Ezekiel emphasized the ecclesiastical institution, along with Ezra and Nehemiah at a later time, because it seemed to be the only practical way Israel could survive; her independent nationhood was gone, but she could

⁹³A.B. Davidson, Cambridge Bible, xlii, volume on Ezekiel.

⁹⁴Paterson, Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, op. cit., p. 175.

continue to live, and affect the future, as a closely organized, disciplined church. Moreover a church can be internationalized and carried abroad, whereas a political state cannot be, unless by imperialistic aggression. (Ezekiel does not expressly state these issues in this way; but these ideas are implicit in the history of his times and we see them outlined in his book.)

Why did Ezekiel emphasize ceremony, when the trend of his predecessors seemed so definitely against it? Possibly the reason lay in some inability on his part to make a distinction between the ethical problem and ceremony. The heathen ceremonies, which his own people had too often copied, were perverse and cruel: human sacrifice, prostitution, divination, superstition. Ezekiel reasoned that bad conduct follows bad modes of worship. Pure worship and good conduct should go together.

A further reason for the elevation of ceremonial in Ezekiel's religious philosophy comes to light in a point already stated. We observed above that the growth of Israel into a church and synagogue system was a natural and ingenious development, since the latter institution can be an international one, whereas politically their national life had been destroyed. But distinctive ceremonial, symbolically reflecting an ethical and theological outlook, is the center around which a church can be, and must be organized. This with consummate genius Ezekiel and his followers perceive. The understanding of the Jewish religion as a matter of keeping the law or Torah of Moses grows apace after Ezekiel's time. In summary, then, in the age of restoration, fathered by Ezekiel, Israel's leaders believed that the only way the Jewish people could be returned to a position of influence in the world was for the nation to become a churchly community, whose ritual purity and ethical beliefs would be an example to the world. Was this, after all, the practical, institutional way the Jewish community could fulfill the missionary ideal of II Isaiah? In any case, Ezekiel's plan of a priestly or theocratic state, and a ritually pure and segregated community became the ideal of Israel through New Testament times.

On the negative side in over-stressing physical holiness, the clean and the unclean, cult and ritual, there was the danger "that the ethical may be thrust into the background."⁹⁵ Ezekiel's, and following him Ezra's and Nehemiah's, nationalistic exclusion of foreigners often comes in for criticism. Such trends were exacerbated in the subsequent development of Phariseeism on its worst side. (See our later discussions of Phariseeism in its larger, constructive light.)

Ezekiel's chapter 18 marks a high point in the Old Testament concept of man as spiritually free, morally responsible being, unweighted by the inheritance of a preternatural original sin. Recall Jeremiah's views in this respect, Jer. chap. 31:29f.

⁹⁵Paterson, op. cit., p. 177.

IV The Three Ages of Hebrew Prophetism

In order to place them in their largest historic perspective, we may summarize the work and thought of the prophets in terms of three great ages:

First, in the 11th, 10th, and 9th centuries (1150-800 B.C.) prophecy was mainly a defense of the community or national life. At this time the contribution of the prophets was both political and moral. In the latter part of the 11th century Samuel, last judge or first prophet, consolidated the nation against the Philistines and established the monarchy under Saul and David. We recall how he wrote a constitution of kingship for the realm, and how he fostered the nebi'im, the early prophetic party. Following Samuel, Nathan, in the Bathsheba and David incident, spoke out for morality against the tyranny of a king. We next read how he conspired to get Solomon on the throne. Succeeding him, the record informs us of Ahijah's part in the revolt of the northern tribes against Solomon's dynasty. These events as reported in I Kings cite as justification for the rebellion the injustices of Solomon's reign, his idolatry, and the announcement by his son, Rehoboam, that he intended to continue the harsh policies of his father.

In the 9th century Elijah condemned Baalism, i.e. Philistine-Tyrian culture, religiously, ethically, and politically. He rallied the people when the national individuality depended on maintaining Yahweh's ethical religion. We witnessed his stirring challenge to the high handed, murderous policy of Ahab and queen Jezebel in the vineyard of Naboth. Like his predecessors we also found him conspiring to overthrow a dynasty, that of Omri (house of Ahab), a policy carried out by Jehu, whom he and his successor, Elisha, favored for the throne of Israel. In brief, these prophets were stirred by patriotism, by nationalism in behalf of Hebrew supremacy, political and ethical.

Second, in the 8th and 7th centuries, beginning the age of the writing prophets, (800-600 B.C.) prophecy became a criticism and a warning to the national life. In the 8th century (c. 750-700 B.C.) Amos, Hosea, First Isaiah, and Micah spoke of the Divine judgment and the Divine mercy, of the ideal king, and of social justice. In the latter part of the 7th century (c. 640-600) the Deuteronomists, as the prophetic party, brought off a sweeping reform under king Josiah; and following this Jeremiah, in partial criticism of the reform, emphasized personal religion above formal and centralized worship in the temple.

The contribution of these figures was largely ethical and religious. They condemned personal and social evils, including corruption in government, economic exploitation of the poor and weak by the rich and powerful. They were men of deep conviction, and men against their age. They were forthtellers of what they believed to be God's moral truth; they were not clairvoyant foretellers of future events. Rather, their moral prophecies tended to fulfill themselves because they were based on knowledge of the moral order of the world and its outworkings in human life and history. They raised the conceptions of God and man to highest ethical level, and found God to be a real Presence in the inner stirrings of conscience, in the sustaining power to live and proclaim the good from day to day, and in both the judgments, and the outworking for good of events.

Third, from the 6th century and following the voice of Hebrew prophecy spoke largely as a comfort, encouragement, and inspiration to a people whose national life as politically independent had been destroyed. Two critical events occurred. First had been the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, or Samaria, in 721 B.C. to the Assyrians, followed by that of Judah in 587 B.C. to the Chaldeans, and by the great exile to the city of Babylon 587-532 B.C. The overall theme of the exilic prophets, both Ezekiel and II Isaiah, was to interpret the calamities of Israel as the fruit of

her sins, but also to offer hope that restoration would ensue, upon the condition of repentance, and the reorganization of religious outlook and life.

In the 6th century (600-500 B.C.) II Isaiah of Babylon (?) completed the change in the conception of Israel's destiny from a national outlook to an international perspective: Israel, in his philosophy, was to become the spiritual leader of the world, the world's teacher of religious and ethical monotheism -- even as a captive, indeed by virtue of this circumstance, she is to make her moral ideas triumph in the world. Through her suffering service she will save mankind.

Ezekiel conceived resurrection of the national life in terms of purified religious discipline and law. He wrote what is sometimes called "the constitution of Judaism" and as did II Isaiah, he anticipated the return to Jerusalem and the restoration of the temple, events carried out by Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

In the latter part of the age of Jeremiah, and during and after the exile, we may say that two contrasting prophetic schools emerged. Both of these gave voice to the hope for Israel but in varying tones. In general terms, following the trend begun with Amos, universalistic, internationalistic, ethical prophetism continued in II Isaiah, appears in some respects in Malachi, and emerges later on again in the superb book of Jonah. On the other side, we should point to the rise of a narrower nationalistic outlook in Nahum and Obadiah at the end of the 7th century and beginning of the 6th; we recall the stress on nationalistic perspectives in Ezekiel; and we are soon to witness the advent of apocalyptic thought, foreshadowed in his book, and in those of Haggai and Zechariah. Except for the last half of Zechariah, the latter writings come from the late 6th century, the beginning of the Persian period. Presently, we are to read from Nahum, Obadiah, Joel and the latter part of Zechariah for examples of the narrower nationalism into which prophetism generally fell, on its way toward becoming apocalypticism.

As mentioned previously these prophetic books -- along with other Old Testament writings we have yet to consider -- take their place, on one side or the other of the nationalism-internationalism perspectives in the post exilic period. Before we proceed to a further consideration of these trends, we pause to look at Hebrew prophecy in relation to its larger setting in world history.

The period from 750 B.C. to 350 B.C. was one of the most important 400 years in the history of human thought. The Prophetic movement in Israel was a part of a spiritual and ethical upheaval that embraced the whole of mankind, as the following chart suggests.

<u>Israel</u>	<u>Greece</u>	<u>Persia</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>China</u>
8th cent: Amos, Isaiah Hosea, Micah				
7th cent: Jeremiah		Zoroaster	Hindu sages of the Upanishads	
6th cent: II Isaiah	Pre-Socratics (Thales, etc.)		Buddha	Confucius
5th cent:	Socrates			Lao-tzu
Apocalyptic thought	Plato	Apocalyptic thought		Motzu
4th cent:	Aristotle			Mencius
Book of Jonah				
3rd cent:				
2nd cent:				

The parallel rise of other great "prophetic" or ethical movements inspired by religious insight gives more significance to the Hebrew development: in the eyes of faith, it suggests that the Divine Spirit was working commonly in all these cultures to bring mankind as a whole to a higher understanding of right and wrong and a deeper knowledge of Himself.

Perhaps the unique contribution of the Hebrew prophets was their leadership, in point of time in the successful correlation of ethics to religious personalism, that is to say, religion as based on the conception of Deity as Personal, Loving Being, in contrast to the a-moralistic and immoralistic polytheism of primitive times.

Although the concept of Ultimate Being or Deity, and interpretation of life's values, remained impersonalistic in much classic Hinduism and Buddhism (with the latter avowedly agnostic and behavioristic initially), there were, beginning in early times strong historic developments toward a view of the ultimate, and man's relation to it, that in many respects was like Hebrew prophetism. We hear of the personal, forgiving love of God in the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, coming from the New Testament times; in Ramanuja's monotheistic and idealistic interpretation of Vedanta Hinduism in the 11th century A.D. and of the personal saving force of God in Mahayana Buddhism's Bodhisattva theology.

The classic Chinese systems, both Confucian and Taoist, and even more expressly the early critic of Confucianism, Motzu -- each with their characteristic Chinese affirmation of life, in contrast to some of the Indian emphasis on denial of life and world flight -- spoke of Ultimate Reality, or Heaven and its law or way, Tao, in terms of its Personal Purposiveness, good will and love toward men; and cited this cosmic standard of concerned love as the clue, inspiring power or holy spiritual force by which, or through which men may best relate themselves to one another.

"...Only those who are their absolute true selves in the world can fulfil their own nature; only those who fulfil their own nature can fulfil the nature of others; only those who fulfil the nature of others can fulfil the nature of things;..."

"Oh, how great is the divine moral law of the Sage. Overflowing and illimitable, it gives birth and life to all created things and towers high up to the very heavens..."

"...the moral man...knows the evidence and reality of what cannot be perceived by the senses. Thus he is enabled to enter into the world of ideas and morals..."⁹⁶

"...Now Heaven loves the whole world universally. Everything is prepared for the good of man. Even the tip of a hair is the work of Heaven...Now Heaven loves the whole world universally. Everything is prepared for the good of man. The work of Heaven extends to even the smallest things that are enjoyed by man..."⁹⁷

"...For he who fights with love will win the battle;
He who defends with love will be secure.
Heaven will save him, and protect him with love..."⁹⁸

⁹⁶From The Golden Mean of Tsesze, grandson of Confucius, in Lin Yutang, ed., The Wisdom of China and India, Random House, 1942, pp. 857, 859, 862-63.

⁹⁷From Motse in The Will of Heaven, Ibid., p. 804.

⁹⁸From Lao tzu, Tao-Te-King, in Robert O. Ballou, The Bible of the World, Viking, 1939, p. 500. In other passages The Tao-Te-King describes the Tao in impersonalistic and absolutistic terms resembling the description of Brahman in some passages of the Upanishads.

All of the Oriental systems have basic moral codes that closely parallel each other and the Hebraic system in the great ethical laws, namely, those regarding the sanctity of life, property, truth, sexual discipline, and a non-avaricious disposition of spirit. Like the Hebrew prophets, the Confucian sages particularly were concerned with the renovation of society, rather than expressing their religious piety merely in passive mystical contemplation. They proclaimed their views on social reform in the name of Heaven and its moral order or Tao. As Micah said that he was "filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (3:8), so it is often pointed out that Confucius said, resembling the Hebrew prophets in his "prophetic consciousness", that "Heaven begat the power (te) that is in me. What have I to fear from such a one as Huan T'ui?" (Analects VII,22)⁹⁹. Of him his disciples said, "The world for long has been without order. But now Heaven is going to use the master as an arousing tocsin" (An.III 24)¹⁰⁰. Though the Confucian ethic was couched in a feudal concept of social order, many of the sayings of Confucius and his disciples transcend their historic milieu and rise to the heights of personalistic, equalitarian ethics and democratic values.

"The Master said... 'I will not be afflicted at men's not knowing me; I will be afflicted that I do not know men.'" (An. I 16)

"The Master said... '...Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves; -- this may be called the art of virtue.'" (An. VI 28)¹⁰¹

⁹⁹The Analects of Confucius, Arthur Waley, Random House, Vintage Books, 1938, p. 127.

¹⁰⁰trans. by Fung Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Macmillan Paperbacks, 1948, p. 47.

¹⁰¹from Ballou, op. cit., pp. 399, 403.

Study Questions

1. What are the two theories of Ezekiel's vision? Which appeals to you and why? If the second theory suggests that his vision was an imaginative, literary construction, what, then, might be the role and significance of "imagination" as a channel of divine revelation? Amos emphasized "conscience"; Isaiah "reason". Did Jesus use "imagination" when he constructed his famous parables? What is the relationship between man's imagination and his higher freedom?
2. What are the several main elements in Ezekiel's message, and the major passages bringing these out?
3. In what major respects is Ezekiel's outlook both like and unlike his prophetic predecessors?
4. What possible historical timeliness is there in Ezekiel's emphasis on God's transcendence and the ecclesiastical and ritual institution? In what sense is he the "father of Judaism"?
5. How would you evaluate Ezekiel in comparison to Amos on "ceremony" or ethical life as the essence of true religion? What is the role of ceremony or sacrament in religious piety or devotion?
6. What two major developments in the concept of man do we find in the Bible according to Fosdick? Trace these developments thus far at major places in our study of the Old Testament.
7. Read Ez. Ch. 18. What is the point of this chapter? Recall the same point made in Jeremiah 31:29-30. What is the relationship between democratic society and government and Ezekiel's concept of individual responsibility for "sin"? What societies in the modern world have recently denied this principle? In what sense is Deut. 5:9 true -- i.e. in what sense is there human "solidarity" and corporate responsibility for sin. How far may Ezekiel's doctrine of individual responsibility be taken? What does Ezekiel's doctrine do to the concept of "original transmitted sin" expressed in Psalms 51:7, and possibly in Deut. 5:9 or Ex. 20:5?
8. Give a summary of the prophetic movement in Israel in terms of its three ages.

Part Seven

Religious Nationalism and Internationalism in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times

Reading Assignment

1. RSV
 - Ezra Ch. Ch. 1:1-4f.....Restoration decrees of Cyrus
 2:1-2 c. 532 B.C.; of Artaxerxes c. 450 B.C.
 7:1-10. Return of Zerubbabel, later Ezra.
 - Nehemiah Ch. 1:1; 2:1-10..Work of Ezra, the scribe and priest, and
 8:1-10:39 of Nehemiah, the governor, c. 450 B.C. in
 rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem;
 - Ezra Ch. 10:1-19..... exclusion of foreign wives and children;
 emphasis on ceremonial in accordance with
 Ezekiel's constitution.
 - Esther 1-10.....A Jewish girl becomes a Persian Queen.

 - Nahum Chs. 1-3.....Against Nineveh about the time of her fall
 V612 B.C.
 - Obadiah Ch. 1:1-21.....Against Edom at the time of Judah's fall
 587.
 - Psalms 137.....A psalm of vengeance against foreign
 enemies.
 - Zechariah Ch. 9:11-10:5...Apocalyptic voices in Greek times raised
 12:1-14:19. against Israel's enemies.
 - Joel Ch. 2:10,11
 2:28-3:21
-
- Jonah Chs. 1-4.....The spirit of II Isaiah revived: inclusion
 of the people of Nineveh as God's children.
 - Ruth Chs. 1-4.....International marriage condoned; human
 interdependence affirmed.
 - Psalms 67.....A universalistic psalm.

2. Study Guide, Part Seven

- I. Establishment of the Ceremonial Community
- II. Religious Internationalism

3. Fosdick, op. cit., chap. 3 The Idea of Right and Wrong

Study Questions

I. Establishment of the Ceremonial Community

From Ezekiel's time forward, except for the Maccabean period, the principal fact on the international scene was the continual subjection of the Jews to foreign overlords (recall the earlier destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 721 B.C.);¹⁰²

Chaldeans	586-538 B.C.
Persians	538-334 B.C.
Greek and Hellenistic rulers	334-166 B.C.
(Maccabees	166- 63 B.C.)
Romans	63 B.C. - 135 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed in reaction to Bar Kokba revolt.

Recall that Ezekiel looked forward to a restoration of national life in Jerusalem, with restored Temple and purified worship, emphasizing stricter observance of ceremony and ritual.

In 538 B.C., Cyrus the Great, Persian king, who had conquered the Chaldean power in 538, and inherited its empire, permitted a Jewish party under Zerubbabel to return from Babylon in order to restore the Temple and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra chaps. 1 and 2). In the middle of the next century, during the reign of the Persian monarch Artaxerxes I (465-425 B.C.), Ezra, the priest and scribe, and Nehemiah, former cup bearer to the king, returned to Jerusalem to continue the restoration program attempted earlier by Zerubbabel.

Ezra and Nehemiah: These 5th century Jewish pioneers were evidently inspired by the ideas of Ezekiel, as revealed in their emphasis on an exclusive community, on ceremonial purity in strict keeping of the feasts and ritual observances, and on a theocratic or priestly organized state (Ezra 7:1-10; Nehemiah chs. 8,10). Typical of the new spirit of ecclesiastical discipline is the following:

"...We also lay upon ourselves the obligation to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: for the showbread, the continual cereal offering, the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God..." (Neh. 10:32-3)

In these writings we note the segregation of foreigners from the inner fellowship of Israel, in such developments as their exclusion from the Temple, and the divorcing of foreign wives (Neh. 9:2; 10:28f; Ezra 9:1; 10:2; 10-11, 14, 17-19, 44). We will contrast this provincial outlook with the universalistic attitude of the book of RUTH, which is the story of the marriage of a Hebrew with a foreigner; and also presently with the book of JONAH, written to emphasize the idea that God includes all men in his fellowship. In Ezra 9:1-2 Moabites, among others, are singled out as "peoples of the lands" with whom the Israelites are not to marry, in express contrast to the spirit of the Book of Ruth.

Perhaps we should not be too hard on this restoration community for their policy of exclusion in their time and circumstances. Israel was indeed small;

¹⁰²See chart next page.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>World Empires</u>	<u>Centuries</u>	<u>Response of Israel to events as reflected in her literature.</u>
800 - 610 B.C.....	<u>Period of Assyrian ascendancy</u>		
721 B.C.....	Fall of Israel to Assyrian king, Shalmaneser. Period of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah.	8th	Amos, et al
		7th	Jeremiah
612 B.C.....	Fall of Nineveh, Assyrian capital, to Nabopolassar, Chaldean leader. Described in O.T. by prophet Nahum, 3:1-3. Later period of Jeremiah.		Nahum
610-538 B.C.....	<u>Chaldean Period.</u> Babylon is the Chaldean capital.	6th	
605 B.C.....	Chaldeans defeat Egyptians at Carchemish.		
587 B.C.....	Fall of Judah to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon		Obadiah Ezekiel II Isaiah
587-532 B.C.....	Exile of the Jewish leaders to Babylon		
538 - 332 B.C.....	<u>Persian Period</u>		
538 B.C.....	Cyrus the Great, Persian King, moves west and conquers Babylon establishing the Persians as military and political rulers of the near east.	5th	Haggai & Zechariah (1-8)
			Malachi Ezra & Nehemiah Ruth, Esther
332 B.C.....	The Greek, Alexander the Great, conquers near east - Persian empire falls.	4th	Joel, Zechariah (9-14)
			Jonah
332 - 166 B.C.....	<u>Greek Period</u>		Pentateuch completed
		3rd	Wisdom Lit: Job, Eccles., Prov. & Psalms completed
166 B.C.....	Maccabean revolt of Jews against Syrio-Greek masters.	2nd	
166-63 B.C.....	Period of Maccabean independence.		
63 B.C.....	Roman general Pompey conquers Palestine.		Daniel Apocrypha: Maccabees, etc.
63 B.C. through New Testament times..	<u>Roman Period</u>	1st	

wholesale intermarriage might have engulfed her, and the purposes of God in her historic destiny frustrated. At that time they justified their program by citing the "abominations" of "the peoples of the lands", with whom they feared their sons and daughters might wed. Possibly we should view these attitudes of 5th century Israel to have been partially justifiable, as we might regard analogous historic facts, such as the ancient practice of polygamy, or the lex talionis principle of justice -- arrangements in ancient times and situations that were necessary, until some advancing larger good could change them.

The numerous references in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah to the Law or Torah, which these leaders stressed as hereafter to be the authoritative standard for faith, conduct, and ceremonial observance, probably meant the Levitical, or Holiness code enshrined in the book of Leviticus, chs. 17 to 26. Pious editors, thinking and writing in the priestly tradition in Israel, had long since been at work compiling such material. The increasing reliance upon the Torah, writings and laws of Moses, as the sacred scripture, or Bible, Neh. 8:1f, was a continuation of an emphasis in the Deuteronomic Reform, noted in II Kgs. 22:8f; 23:1-3. We have previously suggested that the coalescence of the Torah or writings and laws of Moses -- known by modern scholarship as the legal literature of the Old Testament -- and the increasing reliance on them as a divinely inspired and sacred guide to life, was one of the major developments in the post-exilic period.

We may well also indicate again that, at the time of the restoration, Israel's leaders believed that the only way the Jewish people could be returned to a position of influence in the world was for the nation to become a churchly community, whose ritual purity and ethical beliefs would be an example (Ezekiel) to the world. Ezekiel's plan of a priestly or theocratic state prevailed, as the ideal, until the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. During this age the national emphases were priestly authority, and law or Torah, strictly observed in terms of ritual and ethical prescriptions. By New Testament times priestly authority had come to have its center of power in the party of the Sadducees, while the Pharisees were especially noted as practitioners and interpreters of the Law.

The ideal of the Jewish people as representing an example to the nations, or a living testimony of Yahweh's ethical monotheism, was institutionalized for their conscience in this age by the sacramental forms that have prevailed as characteristic of Jewish life and piety, such as:

Sabbath observance weekly at the Jerusalem Temple, or in the
synagogues of the surrounding towns of Judah and
cities of the diaspora (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:8).

The annual festivals:

Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, March, April
(Ex. 11-12 ; Lev. 23:14; Deut. 16:3)

Feast of Weeks, or First Ripe Fruits, concluding in Pentecost
May, June (Ex. 23:16).

Feast of Trumpets, subsequently New Years, "Rosh Hashanah", in
the seventh month, (Lev. 23:23), and within ten days,

Day of Atonement, "Yom Kippur", (Lev. 23:27-28), and following
in fifteen days,

Tabernacles or Booths, (Lev. 23:34-43), September, October

We pause to mention certain significant developments in further detail which the age following Ezra and Nehemiah, as the founders of the Jewish community, bring to mind.

The Diaspora or Dispersion. After the Chaldean conquest of 587 B.C., the inhabitants of Jerusalem found life to be precarious indeed. They were never again permanently independent or economically secure. The exile of the Jewish leaders to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th Century grew in succeeding periods into a

general exodus or dispersion of Jewish emigrants from the old home site in Judah. Jewish life was expelled by political catastrophe, and pulled by economic necessity, out upon the gentile cities of the eastern Mediterranean. Many descendants of the original captives remained in Babylon and Mesopotamia; others migrated to Egypt and Alexandria; to the islands of the sea; to the cities of Greece, and to Rome.

The Synagogue System. Synagogues were churches or places of worship which grew up in the cities of the diaspora during the Exilic and post exilic period. Sacrificial worship in the meanwhile continued only in the Temple at Jerusalem until New Testament times. After the Temple institution was destroyed, however, in 70 A.D., animal sacrifice became a prescription of the past. The informality of Synagogue worship took its place; prayers replaced sacrifice; lay readers substituted for the priesthood. The synagogue stressed social life and moral conduct, with continuation of traditional ceremonial, such as circumcision, Passover, and other feasts. Although Temple worship, animal sacrifice, and official priesthood were absent in the synagogue system, it realized a significant portion of Ezekiel's ideal and program in retaining and emphasizing the ethical side of Torah and much of the Law's ritual prescription. Stressing a religion of ethics, inner spirit and prayer, as flowing through one side of Ezekiel's thought, the synagogue gave important expression to the message of the 8th and 7th century prophets from Amos to Jeremiah.

It carried to supreme heights, and continued for succeeding Jewish history, the spiritualization of religion and stress on its interiority and individualization before God, in essence the prime characteristic of a free and churchly community. We find these noteworthy developments in Jeremiah, at an earlier age, and in many of the Psalms, for example Ps. 40:6; 51:15-17; 141:1-2, where spiritual prayer has taken the place of official sacrifice:

"I call upon thee, O Lord;
make haste to me!
Give ear to my voice, when I
call to thee!
Let my prayer be counted as
incense before thee,
and the lifting up of my hands
as an evening sacrifice!

The Pharisees, while stressing observance of the Mosaic Law concerning ritualistic detail, understood religion to be a union of ethical righteousness and ritual formality.

Some of the Pharisees took to an extreme the concept of religion as performance of minute and numerous ritualistic duties. It was such groups that came under the criticism of Jesus and the New Testament authors. Other ancient Pharisees, and numerous former and modern Rabbinic scholars, while acknowledging the role of ritual in Jewish life and faith, have emphasized the ethical side of religion as primarily characteristic of Jewish piety. In the New Testament period the school of Hillel was the more liberal group of Pharisees; that of Shemmai the more conservative or strict. Kaufman Kohler summarized the significance of the Pharisees in memorable terms:

"...Jewish life was regulated by the teaching of the Pharisees; the whole history of Judaism was reconstructed from the Pharisaic point of view, and a new aspect was given to the Sanhedrian of the past. A new chain of tradition supplanted the older, priestly tradition...Pharisaism shaped the character of Judaism and the life and thought of the Jew for all the future. True, it gave the Jewish religion a legalistic tendency and made 'separatism' its chief characteristic; yet only thus were the pure monotheistic faith, the ethical ideal, and the intellectual and spiritual character of

the Jew preserved in the midst of the downfall of the old world and the deluge of barbarism which swept over the medieval world."¹⁰³

The age of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, or Rabbis, witnessed the development of those common laws of Jewish ethical and religious life enshrined in the Talmud. The Talmud was derived from the oral tradition which had grown up in both Jerusalem and Babylonia in post-exilic times, concerning the interpretation of the Pentateuchal or written Law -- modifying it as conditions were done according to changing needs. The Rabbis were busy continuously with an oral interpretation existing side by side with the written text which helped to interpret the text. For example, where the old lex talionis law of Moses read "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", the liberal Rabbis understood it to mean the substitution of a money payment as proper or humane redress.¹⁰⁵ In Jewish eyes, virtually equal to the Old Testament itself, the Talmud has remained the commanding source of authority and inspiration for Jewish life and culture.

We next cite four sources indicative of the narrower nationalism that characterized part of the outlook in Israel. These follow from the later time of the great writing prophets. We refer to two prophets, an example from the Psalms, and a narrative writing, with mention of two earlier apocalypses.

NAHUM, a late contemporary of Jeremiah in the 7th century, wrote against the people of Nineveh apparently when the city was captured and destroyed by the Chaldeans, 612 B.C. The Assyrians were indeed a bloodthirsty and imperialistic nation, possibly deserving of the judgment depicted by Nahum, as the inevitable result of aggressive, warlike, and heartless policy. But in spite of this general truth uttered by Nahum, that a violent nation will meet with a violent end, there is no note of God's concern for the Assyrians as individual people (Compare I Isaiah in this respect). We have to wait for the book of JONAH to declare the Divine concern for the Ninevites as men. Note NAHUM 1:1; 2:6-8, 13a; 3:1, 5a, 18-19.

OBADIAH, composed at some later time in the same spirit of vengefulness, breathed out against the people of Edom, Ch. 1:1, 2, 8, 10-11, 15-16, 18, 19-20. It is brief, and another poignant example of the narrower nationalism to which recurrently the Hebrews fell victim. The date of this writing is unknown; some scholars suggest it was written late in the 5th century; others feel it must come from mid-6th century, somewhat after the fall of Judah, 587 B.C., which it depicts. Oesterly and Robinson suggest that the date could be any time between the sixth and the middle of the second century.¹⁰⁶ At the latter period the Jews under John Hyrcanus finally subdued the Edomites.

At the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. the Edomites had jeered (see Ez. ch. 35), and for this the Hebrews never forgave them. The ancient grudge festered,

¹⁰³The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX Funk and Wagnalls 1905, p. 666.

¹⁰⁴Composed of the Mishna, or study, and canonized at the end of the 2nd century A.D.; and of the Gemara, a further commentary, completed about the 5th century A.D.

¹⁰⁵In this and other prescriptions the Sadducees are reputed to have retained the more literal interpretation. See discussion in the New Testament section, p. on the Pharisees.

¹⁰⁶Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit., pp. 369-70. The name "Obadiah" means "worshipper of Yahweh" and as title of the book may simply be appellative, rather than a proper name.

as has so often been true in human history. The sentiment of Obadiah reflects these relations between Jew and Edomite (or descendents of Esau). It is virtually a hymn of hate against Edom; and what is more serious, it attributed this deplorable human attitude to God.

We find the same kind of prophecy against the Edomites, and for the same reason, with hardly less vindictive spirit, in the great Book of Ezekiel. Humanly speaking we can understand something of this feeling of hatred the Jews developed against their neighbors to the south for the jackal-like trick they played. The lion of Judah lay prostrate and mortally wounded under the spear of the Babylonian, while these Edomite neighbors nipped and devoured the flesh. As high prophecy, however, it falls far short of the spirit of suffering-love, divine forgiveness of human misdemeanor, and concern for the welfare and happiness of all men, expressed in Deutero-Isaiah and again in Jonah.

Edom is also denounced by such notable prophets as Amos (1:11 & 12), Isaiah (34:5,6; 63:1-6), and Jeremiah (49:7f) for the spirit of hostility and vengeance toward their kinsmen, the Jews, that had characterized border relationships since the very earliest time (Num. 20:14f). Amos, however, denounced Edomites and others along with his own Israelites for evils and corruption universally prevalent in his day. He did not single out Edom in any special way for his prophetic attack. The Book of Obadiah is best understood, then, as a reflection of the ancient rivalry between Jew and Edomite. It must be understood within the larger context of ethical prophecy's rebuke of human injustice, of which foreign nations sometimes became the symbol. The author of Obadiah, rendered his ethical rebuke much less valid by making it so onesided. In this he was similar to the earlier prophet, Nahum, who spoke in similar terms against Nineveh in Jeremiah's day.

Contrary to their opening pronouncements the books of Nahum and Obadiah breath forth the anger of men, rather than the ultimate kind of justice and relationship between nations that God would desire. They express the natural human reaction rather than a Divine attitude.

Psalms 137 illustrates an "imprecatory" Psalm, that is, one that breathes a spirit of national vengeance and malediction upon the enemies of Israel. This Psalm obviously reflects the bitter human emotions of the captivity in Babylon. Its sentiments are perhaps to some extent understandable, but it is a far cry from the spirit of II Isaiah. We will later study the book of PSALMS and certain problems in connection with some of them that seem excessively nationalistic. We will observe that many others of the Psalms and the "wisdom literature" as a whole, especially the books of JOB and ECCLESIASTES, enshrine a universalistic outlook that characterizes the best thinking in post-exilic Judaism.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER has its historical background in a pogrom against the Jewish community of a Gentile city somewhere in the Persian empire -- a circumstance repeated many times in Jewish history since that day. The story, which has been called a little historical novel, is a colorful and intriguing one up to the point at which the Jews wreak vengeance on their enemies. The scene is laid in the time of Ahasuerus or Xerxes I (484-465 B.C.). The king has a feast. Queen Vashti refuses to attend. She is therefore deposed. A substitute is sought, and Esther, a Jewish maiden, is chosen to be queen. Mordecai, Esther's former guardian and confidant, incurs the enmity of Haman, a non-Jew whom the king has advanced to the position of prime minister. Haman takes offence because Mordecai refuses to pay him deference and uses this as an excuse to plot against the Jews (3:13). (How often personal grudges have wrought misery in human life!). The plot is revealed to the king by Esther, and the outcome is that Haman is hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. Now, with Esther and Mordecai in power, permission is given for the Jews to avenge themselves on their enemies, to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate any armed force

of any people or province that might attack them, with their children and women, and to plunder their goods..." (8:11). When the destruction is accomplished a holiday is instituted among the Jews, which is to be called Purim (9:17-28).

The purpose of the book seems to be to account for the origin of this particular Jewish festival. "Thus the feast of Purim had obtained an assured position in the calendar before the middle of the first century B.C., and the Book of Esther must be dated about a century earlier...as we now have it the book breathes a spirit of ruthless vindictiveness which reflects the age of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) better than any other known Jewish history."¹⁰⁷

In Part Nine of this Study Guide we shall be concerned with the Apocalyptic Literature of the Old Testament. In some respects, apocalypse carries the spirit of nationalism to its highest peak. The complexity of Apocalyptic thought, however, necessitates independent treatment. We mention it here in passing as the culminating expression of the nationalistic spirit which we have begun to trace in the post-exilic era. The student at this place might profitably read the brief selection suggested from Zechariah and Joel as indicative of apocalyptic nationalism in more exacerbad form than we believe appears in the late and incomparably greater writing of Daniel.

¹⁰⁷Oesterly & Robinson, op. cit. p. 136-37.

II. Religious Internationalism

The age which produced the books of Haggai -- concerned with the rebuilding of the Temple -- Nehemiah and Ezra focused every practical concern upon the problem of physical restoration of the nation. Indeed, we may sympathize to considerable extent with the outlook of that day when we realize that a good deal of nationalistic spirit would be required to put over the program of national rehabilitation. In many other historic eras and circumstances nationalism has, of course, played an important, and a continuing service. However, lest we obtain the notion that the whole of the post-exilic period was burdened by a spirit of national prejudice, we should be reminded of the hearts in Israel who were not sympathetic with some of the narrowness in outlook that characterized the day. It is in this setting that we are able to understand the Books of Jonah and Ruth. These writings freshen the waters of post-exilic nationalism with clearer streams of universalism. In the greatly significant literature of Wisdom and Psalms, which we have yet to study, we will recognize further the universalistic side of this post-exilic time.

Indeed, we recall, and should mention again in the present connection, the universalistic religious spirit inherent in the synagogue churchly system, which was developing outside the community at Jerusalem in the diaspora of the post-exilic age, and was giving birth to the spiritual Judaism that was to be the sister religion of Christianity.

THE BOOK OF JONAH. The background of the Book of Jonah is the conflict between the particularism and universalism that we find in the post-exilic period. It is a prophetic sermon or poem in the form of a parable. Like the parables of Jesus it is not intended to be true in fact but true in moral. The story describes the way in which the proud nationalist, Jonah, was led by providential accidents to see the people of Nineveh (i.e., the Gentiles at large) as also the children of God. The famed interpreter of the prophets, George Adam Smith, has summarized the message of Jonah and the form in which it is delivered in the following memorable way: "That God had granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life is nowhere in the Old Testament so vividly illustrated. This life is the teaching of the book to equal rank with the second part of Isaiah...The form in which this truth is insinuated into the prophets reluctant mind, by contrasting God's pity for the population of Nineveh with Jonah's pity for his gourd, suggests the methods of our Lord's teaching, and invests the book with the morning air of that high day which shines upon His parables."¹⁰⁸

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP. It is generally conceded today that the book was written sometime during, or even later than, the fourth century. The book neither claims to be by the Jonah of the eighth century, who is mentioned in II Ki. 14:25 as a prophet, nor by a contemporary of that Jonah. Indeed the use of the past tense of the verb in Jonah 3:3 suggests that the book was written sometime after the city had ceased to be great: "Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city." The main reason, however, for claiming that the book is late is found in the Aramaic quality of the language in which it is written.

The anonymous author took as his subject the figure of Jonah, who evidently stood in Hebrew history as an example of national fervor and faith (see II Ki. 14:25), and at a period when the Assyrian empire was becoming a great power. Oesterly and Robinson suggest that "this may well have been one reason why the

¹⁰⁸ Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol II, op. cit., p. 485.

writer of our book chose the name of Jonah the son of Amittai as that of his hero...¹⁰⁹ The great Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire, would be just the place to which the reluctant missionary, Jonah, should be made to go! The divine order to Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach is distasteful to the latter's exclusive religion. He seeks to evade God's command. But misfortune overtakes him, and in the experience he learns a great lesson which Israel as a whole needs to be shown.

THE LITERARY AND PARABOLIC BEAUTY of the story of Jonah is brought out in inimitable way by George Adam Smith. The man Jonah is a symbol of Israel. The narrative is divided into several episodes or scenes by means of which the plot is developed. First, there is the divine command and Jonah's (Israel's) great refusal. Second, there is Jonah's (and Israel's) conversion. Third, there is the swallowing by the great fish. Does this symbolize Israel's captivity? That it may is suggested by a simile of Jeremiah, who likens Babylon to a devouring monster, from whose belly Israel will be coughed up (Jer. 51:34,44,45). Literal interpreters of the Book of Jonah might urge the point that certain kinds of whales could swallow a man, and have even quoted accounts of fishes that have done so and, in one case, cast the victim up again alive!^{109a} If Jonah is Israel, which surely he is in terms of the basic symbolism of the book, the literal interpretation of the great fish could not possibly apply. Is the fish motif, then, a literary device by means of which the author gets his character back to land? Fourth, there is the repentance of the great city. To the author, Nineveh is "the vision of monotonous millions. He strips his country's foes of everything foreign, or provocative of envy and hatred, and unfolds them to Israel only in their teeming humanity...For this teeming humanity he claims the universal human possibility of repentance - that and nothing more."¹¹⁰ Fifth, and last, we have the little parable of the gourd within the larger parable of the story itself. The author's ironical humor is displayed in his description of Jonah's booth outside the city of Nineveh, and of the manner in which God finally convinces him that the Ninevites as well as the Jews are people. Israel's jealousy of their God is dispelled by the teaching of the gourd (see 4:10-11).

The other great lesson of the Book of Jonah (which is the message of the OT at large) is that revelation or inspiration comes by way of experience. Israel's new insight into the universal applicability of ethical monotheism came through the experience of the exile and general dispersion. Forced to sojourn with the heathen they came to see that all men were children of God as they themselves were. This is the larger intent of the book. However, we are not sure whether the character Jonah, is himself converted to the larger international outlook. Perhaps he remains asymbol, as is sometimes pointed out, of the stiffnecked in Israel who fail to be moved by the new humanitarianism.

THE BOOK OF RUTH. Nehemiah's and Ezra's campaign to break up mixed marriages did not go without challenge. From an unknown author of the same period comes the Book of Ruth. Rather than direct attack he chose to write a story to convey his message of the universal God and of man's universal humanity. It was a surpassingly beautiful story he wrote of Ruth the Moabitess (a people disliked by the Israelites of that day) and of her fidelity beyond all call of duty to her mother-in-law, and of her consequent inclusion among the forerunners of Israel's greatest King, David. The point of the story (which indeed might be based on an old tale coming down from the time of the Judges) is carried by the sheer beauty and eloquence of the work. Can you imagine the attitude with which it was received by Ezra and Nehemiah? The Book of Ruth was placed after the Book of Judges in the OT because the story is about the pre-Davidic period. And the Rabbis that included it

¹⁰⁹Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit., pp. 376-77.

^{109a}G.A. Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol II, op. cit., p. 514, note For a revival of such stories Smith cites the London Daily Telegraph, 17 Feb. 1928.

¹¹⁰G.A. Smith, Ibid., p. 520.

must have been moved by a spirit other than Ezra's and Nehemiah's!

Graham believes that the author of the Book of Ruth wished to symbolize in the characters of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz the three principal parties in the dispute between natives and foreigners.¹¹¹ Naomi typifies the character and attitude of returning Jewish exiles, intellectually superior, calculating, self reliant, exercising every strategem to reinstate themselves into the home community. Ruth is the foreigner, who is confronted by the difficult task of adjustment of life among an exceedingly patriotic people who tend to be suspicious of all others. To the author she is worthy of great sympathy. He describes her as beautiful in body and character in order to break down the prejudice of the community against aliens. Boaz's personality is the idealization of what the native should be: unprejudiced, characterized by a wide, hearty humanity, truly "the big man" in his life and outlook. In broadest terms the teaching of the book is that of the interdependence of human life and that "the way to happiness lies through intelligent cooperation with others"¹¹² motivated by good will.

¹¹¹Abingdon Bible Commentary, op. cit., pp. 379-80.

¹¹²William C. Graham, Ibid., p. 380.

Study Questions

1. How do the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Nahum, and Obadiah reveal the trend toward nationalism? To what does Obadiah 1:10 refer?
2. In what way and to what degree do you think the point of view of these nationalists can be justified, viewing the historic situation of their day? How would you evaluate nationalism as an historic force? Do you see a possibility of balance and harmony between "nationalism" and "internationalism" in the future of our world?
3. Summarize the teaching of the book of Jonah. What does the character of Jonah symbolize? What alternative interpretations of the account of the great fish are there? Which do you prefer and why -- defend your position. Do you think "Jonah" is converted to internationalism in the story or not?
4. As you read Ruth 1:22; 2:2,6,21; 4:5,10, what major interest does the author seem to have in stressing Ruth as a "Moabitess"? How do the characters Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz seem to fit the post-exilic situation in Israel? As you read Ruth 1:1 and 4:7 what would you say as to the time lapse between the setting of the story in the time of the Judges and the actual writing of the account? The custom referred to in 4:7 is recorded in Deut. 25:8-10. Scholars point out that the book of Ruth shows the influence of the Aramaic or late Hebrew dialect. Aramaic was the universal popular language at the time of Jesus.
5. What difference in outlook do you note between Ruth 1:16; 4:10-17 and Ezra 10:2-3, 10-19? What was the estimate of "Moabites" according to Deut. 23:3?
6. What general truth does Nahum 3:1,2,5,18-19 utter? As you read Nahum 1:1-3, Jonah 4:10-11, and Hosea Ch. 11 and 14:4 what differences in the concept of God's attitude toward sinners do you note?
7. What does Fosdick mean by the description: "inwardness, humaneness, and universality are the three major goals of ethical development in the thought of the Bible", Guide to Understanding the Bible? Illustrate briefly from your knowledge of the OT thus far.
8. What is the historical significance of Nehemiah 8:1-3,8?

PART EIGHTThe Wisdom and Psalms of Israel

Reading Assignment:

1. RSV PROVERBS Ch. 10.....Early proverbs
 Chs. 1-2; 7-9.....Wisdom's instruction to sons
 Ch. 31:10-31.....The Good Wife
- JOB Chs. 1-2.....Prologue
 Ch. 3.....Job in misery
 Chs. 4-8; 19.....Speeches of friends: the orthodox theory of suffering.
 Ch. 21.....Job's reply: prosperity of wicked belies the orthodox theory of evil.
 Ch. 31.....Job asks God for an explanation of his suffering.
 Ch. 32; 34-35.....Elihu speaks: Alleges Job's sin is pride.
 Ch. 38-42.....The answer of the Almighty
- Ch. 28:12-28.....A hymn to Wisdom
- ECCLESIASTES Chs. 1-4.....The vanity of life
 Chs. 5:1-7; 8:16-9:1; 12:1-8 Reverence to God enjoined, though His ways are inscrutable.

2. Study Guide Part Eight

- I. The Wisdom Literature: The Philosophers of Israel
 Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes
 II. The Problem of Suffering: Job
 III. What is the meaning of Life? Ecclesiastes

3. Fosdick, op. cit., chap. 4 The Idea of Suffering

Study Questions

4. RSV PSALMS 90, 139.....God is a Personal Being whose presence fills heaven and earth.
 19:1-6; 104.....Nature is God's creation, an expression of his constant supporting activity.
 8, 24.....Man is God's special creation and is responsible to God.
 1, 19:7f, 33, 85, 95, 96...Moral law has its source in God as supreme ruler, judge, and savior.
 103, 130.....He is a God of universal compassion, love and forgiveness.
 9; 22:27-31; 67.....Time will come when all nations will acknowledge God and the rule of justice and righteousness will be universal.
 23, 15, 24, 25, 27, 40, 42, 46, 51, 121, 130...Psalms of the inner life: contrition, support, salvation
 2, 89, 132.....The messianic mission of Israel and the figure of a kingly Messiah
 109, 137.....Psalms of personal and national vengeance

5. Study Guide Part Eight

IV. The Sweet Singers of Israel: Psalms and Songs of Songs.

6. Fosdick, op. cit. chap 5: The Idea of Fellowship with God.

Study Questions

I. Wisdom Literature: The Philosophers of Israel

The practical philosophers of Israel remind us of the sages of other ancient cultures -- Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Babylonian. What is their relationship to other Biblical groups, such as priests and legalists, prophets and psalmists? The priests were churchly administrators who were chiefly responsible for the extensive legal passages of our Old Testament. Prophets and psalmists, whom we may classify together for the moment, were the great interpreters of history, stirring moral poets who saw and felt the reality of moral law judging human events. They aroused men's consciences and moved their wills. In them we find men who were anxious to walk closely with God in a personal way. If the prophets spoke for God to the people, the wisemen or practical philosophers spoke for man to God. We find them on the one hand to be critics of men's opinions and of accepted dogma, and on the other we often hear them in the name of men asking searching questions of God himself about the meaning of life, and destiny, and suffering. If the prophets spoke through moral reason the wisemen spoke more through the revelation of critical reason, and attempted to let their wisdom bear upon the problems of daily living.

In general the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job may be thought of as dealing with the relation of goodness and happiness in life. Proverbs placidly suggests that if you are good, you will be happy; Job cites the case of a good man who was not happy. Ecclesiastes centers our attention on a man who seems to question the value of life itself. Although there is in these three works a persistent dealing, from an argumentative and utilitarian point of view, with the practical situations of daily life, it is usually with a sense of the divine presence, standing behind things and is phrased with a philosophic profundity that has made these books immortal.

The wisemen have been called the most cosmopolitan group of thinkers in Israel. There is no nationalistic emphasis in their message. They are sometimes referred to as the "humanists of Israel" who "applied themselves...to the observation of human character as such...to analyze conduct...upon the basis of principles common to humanity at large."¹¹³ It is known that our Biblical wisdom books are a part of a wider wisdom literature common to the ancient Near East. The Babylonians and Egyptians were famous for books of proverbs; for example, the teaching of Amen-em-ope in Egypt (c. 600 B.C.) was such a book of proverbs. The Sumerians, the pre-Babylonian civilization, had a poem about a righteous sufferer and a dialogue on pessimism, which remind us of our Books of Job and Ecclesiastes. The practical philosophers of Israel took for granted, and wrote from the standpoint of, prophetic, ethical monotheism, which had done its leavening work throughout Israel by the time these wisdom books had reached their final stage of formation.

The books of wisdom in our OT play a distinctive part in preparing the way for the NT in their broad humanitarian mode of thought and universalism. Unfettered by "narrow bonds of nationalism" they make "no distinction between Jew and Gentile before God."^{113a}; their prevailing modd is simply that of "man before his Maker." They are not concerned with the problem of God in relation to the nation, but with God in relation to his individual child. The personified conception of Wisdom in passages in Proverbs and Job we find reflected in the NT doctrine of Christ as the Wisdom come from God.

The literary form of these books is poetic, synonymous parallelism, in

¹¹³ Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, op. cit., P. 393. ^{113a} C.F. Kent, The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs, New York: Si er Burdett, 1889, p. 30.

which the same thought is expressed in parallel lines, usually in couplet. This type of poetry is a rhyme of ideas rather than of syllables as in our Western poetry. Let us now examine the three books separately.

Proverbs is Everyman's book. "We can see our neighbor's folly and our own sagacity reflected on every page."^{113b} Its homely sayings instruct, amuse, reprove, encourage, as our case or mood may be. Its simplicity and common sense has inspired generations of readers to endeavor to bring their daily living into conformity with that Spirit of Wisdom which it extols.

The various chapter headings indicate a number of sources: "Proverbs of Solomon" stands at the top of chs. 1, 10, and 25, the last adding the commentary, "which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied." Ch. 30 claims to be "the words of Agur"; and 31 those of king "Lemuel", and adds "which his mother taught him." We also find the further titles, "hear the words of the wise", and again, "These also are sayings of the wise." (22:17; 24:23). Various sections of the book come from varied times in Israel's history. For example, chs. 10-22 are commonly thought to be the earlier proverbs judging by their simplicity of style, and their enthusiasm for the monarchy; whereas the personification of Wisdom theme in chs. 1-9, and the more complex essay form, are often taken as indicative of Hellenistic times.^{113c} I Kings 4:30-34 states that Solomon spoke proverbs, and perhaps some of the sayings in the older parts of the book do originate with him.

Other considerations, however, suggest a post-exilic date for the book as a whole.^{113d} For example, it contains the universalistic conception of God of the great writing prophets, rather than the narrower national idea of David and Solomon's time (e.g. see Prov. 3:19,20 vs. I Sam. 26:19). Relative to the status of women, it has been pointed out that Proverbs reflects the monogamous ideal of later times, in contrast to the polygamous practice of Solomon's day (12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 21:9; 25:24). Reference to the predominant national interest of earlier times is conspicuously absent in Proverbs. Like the book of Job, there is no reference in Proverbs to the nation by use of words like "Israel" and "Judah", as would be expected if the book came from the national period. Finally the presence of Aramaisms in the word usage reveals its late composition or editing.

Message: If the prophets spoke more to the nation as a whole, the Wisemen of Proverbs counsel the individual on specific temptations of life. "Robbery, murder, and sexual misconduct are mentioned, but in general it is the so-called lesser sins which occupy the thought of the authors. Greed, folly, indiscreet acts, laziness, disrespect for parents, subtle or surreptitious dealings, unneighborly attitudes, pride, covetousness, quick temper, sharp tongue, scoffing, garrulousness, nagging wives, one's reputation, zeal to be rich, drinking, revenge, boring your neighbor, bragging, speaking falsely, resisting the truth, cruelty"^{113e} -- such are the concerns

^{113b} The discussion above on Proverbs, and on Ecclesiastes following, reflects in some part the original College of Wooster Bible Syllabus. The discussion of these topics in that brochure was edited and used by the present writer in the composition of chapter 16, on the Wisdom literature, in Anderson, et.al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, The College of Wooster, 1951. Accordingly, we wish to acknowledge such debt to the original Wooster material as is evident in the text or format above, and following on Ecclesiastes.

^{113c} While conceding this general view of scholars, Charles T. Fritsch suggests that some signs of chapters 8-9 point to an earlier origin. Interpreters Bible, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 775. The theme of Wisdom as Personified is continued in other late books of the Hellenistic period, such as Ecclesiasticus (c.180 B.C.) and the Wisdom of Solomon.

^{113d} E.B. Cross, Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., pp. 605-6.

^{113e} Anderson, et.al., Intro. to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., p. 125-26

of Everyman that come in for comment in Proverbs.

Though Proverbs is addressed to the individual it strikes at the heart of the social problem -- at poverty and wealth. The disadvantages of poverty are set forth (10:15; 14:20; 18:23; 19:1,7,22). It recognizes that the popular ambition is for wealth (19:4; 8:18,19; 18:11), but emphasizes that the good life is far better than wealth (4:7; 10:3; 11:4; 13:22; 15:27; 22:1,4; 23:4,5; 28:6,11,20). Hence a golden mean should be sought (30:7-9). Benevolence and diligence are the more important aims (3:9; 10:4; 11:25; 13:4,11; 19:17; 21:17; 28:19). "The wrongs and evils of society grow for the most part out of a false attitude of the individual toward wealth...Therefore the sages sought to solve the great problem of society, not by enacting national statutes, but by an appeal (1) to the highest and best interests of the individual, and (2) to the religious instinct within man...The teachings of the wise are very simple but they strike deep down to the very springs of life and conduct."¹¹⁴ On the individual side they felt that the good life began with the right domestic relations, and on the social side like the prophets they did not hesitate openly to denounce injustice (13:23; 28:3; ch. 29).

The climax of the book is found in chapter 8 where the Personified Wisdom speaks of her role as "master workman", beside God from the very beginning, as that very moral truth, or personal Purpose for good, which stands prior to all created things and from whom they spring. Scarcely a lovelier line appears anywhere in the entire Scripture than the following, announcing in the eyes of God the goodness, or the intrinsic value or worth in essential nature, of the entire created world, of life, and of man:

"The Lord created me at the beginning
of his work,
the first of his acts of old." (8:22)

"then I was beside him, like a
master workman;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the sons of
men." (8:30-31)

The connection of Proverbs with Job is found in the problem of suffering:

¹¹⁴C.F. Kent, Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs, New York: Silver Burdett, 1889, p. 175.

the prevailing answer of the former book is that suffering is retribution for sin committed (Prov. 10:3; 11:20; 13:18; 15:29; 19:15, etc.). Sometimes in Proverbs there is frank recognition that the sages do not understand the connection between life and its consequences (20:24). Let us now turn to Job's profounder treatment of this problem.

II. The Problem of Suffering

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB is, Why do the righteous suffer and how must a pious man react to suffering? Some of the earlier Proverbs (Example, chs. 10-22) had answered in a naive way: suffering is a sign of the divine displeasure. Those who do evil pay in sickness, loss of fortune, and death. Those who are good are healthy, wealthy, and happy. This theory of evil is sometimes called the retribution dogma. It is often the popular conception of morality; prosperity is proportional to piety, adversity to wickedness (See for example, Prov. 10:2-3, 6-7, 24-25, 27-30):

"The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked." (10:3)

"The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous will stand." (12:7)

Is this true? The question arises inevitably and becomes acute as religion advances in Israel to a high ethical monotheism. In polytheism each ill in life is attributed to some special demon, or evil spirit. The universe is grounded in many conflicting forces, represented by the pagan deities; therefore the existence of evil would not give rise to any grave intellectual problem. Rather with diverse supernatural powers regarded as the causes of things, conflict and pain would be expected. Suffering, however, "becomes a problem only when it conflicts with the religious theory of a single ruler of the whole universe, who is at once omnipotent, wise, and good...the question is an inevitable corollary of that ethical monotheism in which Judaism stood alone."¹¹⁵

LITERARY FEATURES. The Book of Job is a dramatic poem. It is not drama in our Western sense of plot and action. Rather plot and action are subjective; they are mental and emotional. Though we like to think that the tradition goes back to some real personage whose sufferings became famous -- as it well may -- the "Job" of our present book is not intended to be an actual man so much as a characterization typical of all men in their moments of suffering and gloom. Job is "the studied product of the author's leisurely reflection"¹¹⁶ about an experience that humanity as a whole faces -- the reality of evil in the world.

The structure of the Book of Job is composite. For example, there are the prose prologue and epilogue (chs. 1-2 and 42:7-17) which scholars generally agree seem to be fragments from an earlier Job story -- primitive in ideas, inferior in

¹¹⁵Oesterly and Robinson, Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament, op. cit., pp. 167-68.

¹¹⁶Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 411.

quality. The epilogue restores the retribution dogma, that prosperity will eventually come to the good man, after Job, in the body of the book, complains to heaven that this is not necessarily true. Furthermore, scholars generally agree that the poetic body of the book (chs. 3-41) is, in many respects, itself a composite work of more than one hand. For example, the Elihu speeches have been thought to be an editorial insert (32-37). Why? Job asks God to answer him in 31:35; yet the natural climax, the Lord's reply is deferred until ch. 38. This postponement is thought by some commentators to weaken the dramatic connection; on the other hand, the Elihu speeches are regarded by others as the crucial part of the Job story. Also, there is the self-contained chapter in praise of Wisdom (28) that interrupts the dialogue in this section of the book. It is possible also that some lines and phrases have been inserted by pious redactors to tone down Job's rebellious audacity.

Concerning the problem of dating the Book of Job, the story itself is very ancient. If we think of the Sumerian narrative of the righteous sufferer as an example, the theme would go back to the third millennium B.C. In any case, the patriarchal setting of our own Job story may reflect an ancient source. The situation reminds us of the age of Abraham. It is interesting to note in this connection that "Job" is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel along with "Noah" and "Daniel" as ancient heroes who were famous for their righteousness (Ez. 14:14,20). This would suggest that as early as the Exile (sixth century B.C.) there was a tradition about Job the sufferer. Our present Hebrew version, however, is generally regarded as advanced in its theological ideas and coming sometime after the great prophets. The fact that there is no mention of the Law in Job has led some authorities to say that the Book is not later than Ezra's time, after which the Law was regarded as the central guide to life and thought. On the other hand, the absence of reference to the Law may be due to the Hellenistic lack of interest in the Law, and consequently the book has been placed by other authorities late in Greek times.

In spite of the fact that Job, like many others of the OT books, is composite, with possibly several editors responsible for our version, on the whole it is a masterful unity. It grows in thought and depth as it proceeds to the stirring climax -- the answer of the Almighty out of the whirlwind. First we should note that the characters of the friends are delicately distinguished. Eliphaz is the dignified, orthodox wiseman -- kindly, but over pious. Bildad is the commonplace mind who finds in the outworn proverbs of the past the basis of life's philosophy. Zophar is the know-it-all, serene in his dogmatism. Elihu is the impulsive young philosopher, profounder than the other three, who comes nearer to the heart of Job's problem, without really answering it.¹¹⁷ The cycle of speeches of these friends reveals the ingenuity with which the indictment of the hero is developed. Thus in chs. 4-14 the nature of God is expounded from the orthodox point of view: they say that God is strictly just, and hint, therefore, that Job suffers because of some secret sin. The cycle in 15-21 is on the whole a lurid picture of the fate of the wicked. Chs. 22-31 directly charge Job with flagrant sin. In chs. 32-37 Elihu declares that Job's "sin" has been self-righteousness, pride and presumption before God. Elihu's accusation emphasizes again an aspect of the OT message that the basis of human sin may be found at times in pride.

THE RELIGIOUS MESSAGE. The central position of Job himself is brought out in chs. 21 and 31. In ch. 21, in the midst of the dialogues depicting the fate of the wicked, Job replies with an impatient realism that the wicked, far from suffering, are often prosperous, while it is the righteous who seem to suffer. In ch. 31 Job doggedly affirms his integrity and asks why God allows the innocent to suffer? Finally, in 31:35, he turns directly to God for an answer to his question,

¹¹⁷See A.B. Davidson, Job, Cambridge Bible Series.

How could this be a universe of justice and moral law? He, Job, has fulfilled all the moral duties which the great prophets had demanded (see 31:16f which reflects the message of the prophets). Yet his question is a challenge to their interpretation of history: that calamity comes because of wickedness. The truth found in both Job and the prophets at this point may possibly be clarified in the following way: Job quite correctly calls our attention to the fact that in individual cases the law of retribution is not necessarily applicable; while the prophets teach, also with much truth, that in the long run it is applicable to the collective action of men and is revealed in the destiny of nations. Job's problem, however, concerns the individual.

None of the answers intimated before the Almighty's speech really satisfy -- for example, that evil is for the purpose of testing faith (the idea of the prologue); or that particular evil stems from some particular sin (the solution of the friends); or that evil is discipline, especially a judgment on human pride, in which way Job had really, but unwittingly sinned (Elihu's theory). Then comes the Almighty's answer out of the whirlwind, ch. 38ff.

There is much more to the divine answer than that evil comes as the workings of an inscrutable providence or fate. Some interpreters leave the Book of Job here, but in so doing they leave the issue in as profound obscurity as it had at the beginning. To say that evil is simply the result of fate is to answer in a manner like the classic dramatists of Greece. Not so the Hebrew sages and our present dramatists, whose faith was grounded in ethical monotheism. Far from believing the universe to be just an impersonal machine, they have advanced the conception that ultimate Personal Goodness lies behind all existence, and find in this insight some light on the great problem. It is in this spirit that the argument of the Book of Job finally ends. The Almighty's speech is certainly not the vindication and consolation Job had anticipated, and in this sense the divine reply transcends the problem as developed earlier in the book. The Almighty's answer, however, moving on a level profounder even than Job himself could have imagined (or than we can fully grasp) answers the problem for the ages in the only way possible. There are two levels to the answer.

The first is that the Book of Job hints at our modern conception of natural law and the balance of nature. The magnificent speech of the Almighty comes as near as the Hebrew imagination could to the idea of an ordered cosmos, whose laws are, on the whole, beneficent, conducing to life and preservation, ch. 38. Disease, Job's particular problem, is to some extent understandable in this setting. We may think of disease as a disturbance of the normal balance of the reign of nature's law. This is the only satisfactory approach to the problem of natural evil, of which disease is an acute expression. The ultimate place of disease germs in nature's economy we do not fully know -- but when disease invades the human body we do know that the balance is upset, and that the part of medical wisdom is to restore that natural balance. The wind that blew down Job's house moves by the same meteorological laws that bring Spring and make possible the crops of another season. Man can count on these general laws of nature to his own benefit. Far better that nature's phenomena move by an impartial regularity than by caprice. Only in an ordered environment does finite life have the chance to make habitual the most favorable adjustment for survival, to grow in body, mind, and spirit.¹¹⁸ We are indeed hedged about with dangers, yet with numberless possibilities of overcoming dangers. These possibilities are inherent in nature's laws themselves and the fact that we can interpret and react intelligently to them. To many the impartiality and order of nature's laws indicate an infinitely wise and divine plan behind our world.

¹¹⁸See D.C. Macintosh, *Theology as an Empirical Science*, Macmillan, 1927, Part III, chap. 5, p. 216f; and D. Straton, "God, Freedom, and Pain", *Harvard Theological Review*, April 1962, p. 143f.

Such would be, at least, one modern interpretation of what Job . sensed at a moment of supreme poetic insight when he said to God,

"I had heard of thee by the hearing
of the ear,
but now my eye sees thee;" (42:5)

Ruskin in his Stones of Venice says that Job teaches "the holy and humbling influence of natural science on the human heart."

Second, it is a treatise on faith. The Book of Job teaches that God is not some inscrutable fate; but that man's faith must transcend the physical circumstances of life. The greatest gift of religion is that it gives man a sense of transcendence over nature. Unless the spirit of transcendence is forthcoming we are ultimately bowed down by the weight of nature. Only from the standpoint of faith do we get the courage to say that nature shall not have the last word over us. Thus Job's insight about immortality is a fitting part of the message of his book (18:25-27). Though the interpretation of this particular passage is much disputed, it might have been quite like Job to look for a transcendent vindication in the conception of a future life. "It is perfectly possible that a great genius such as our poet was, as he sought for an adequate theodicy, should have let his thought take this great flight of faith."¹¹⁹ The deepest message of Job and the meaning of the divine answer is found in personal religion. Personal faith must rise above the difficulties our finite intellects fail to understand. Job teaches "that it is in the realm of religion and not in that of the intellect that the solution of life's mysteries is to be found.

"In presenting this solution he portrays at once the function of the intellect in religion and its limitation. He shows that it is the function of the intellect to keep theology in touch with facts, and compel the abandonment of dogmas which have ceased to be satisfactory explanation of experience and are thus seen to be false. On the other hand he pictures with equal clearness the inability of the mind to fathom life and the universe, and shows that the one way to peace and strength is in a personal experience of God, which begets faith and trust."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹G.A. Barton, Commentary on the Book of Job, Bible for Home and School series, N.Y.:Doran, 1922, p. 11.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 12.

III. What is the Meaning of Life?

Ecclesiastes

The author of Ecclesiastes addresses himself to this question -- the perennial, age-old, individual concern: "For what purpose, meaning, or value am I here? Is life, after all is said and done, worth it?" Students reading Ecclesiastes for the first time are not likely to find a ready or a positive answer. One student is reported as saying that "it would be unwise for anyone to read it who is not already a Christian."¹²¹ The author is impressed by life's monotony and the futility of much of man's effort -- possibly even all of it. Accordingly, he has been called the great sceptic of the Old Testament.

The title in Hebrew is "Koheleth", and may be a personal name. It was translated into Greek by "Ecclesiastes" and is commonly understood to mean "preacher" or the leader of an assembly. We will call him Koheleth.

The book, like others in the Old Testament is not a systematic philosophic treatise. It is a casual discussion, and strikes the reader as haphazardly constructed, sometimes with striking contradictions of sentiment and outlook.¹²² This is no doubt due in part to a composite nature, like so many of its companion books in the OT. Recall that the theme of this book has an ancient pedigree, like that of Job, in the dialogues of the righteous sufferer and of pessimism, found in the Sumerian tales.

Author: The superscription commends the book as the work of King Solomon. Many authorities believe the reference to Solomon is a literary impersonation. Recall our discussion of "Moses" as the author of Deuteronomy, and we will review later a similar problem in connection with the book of Daniel, and other apocalypses. It was a common practice in ancient times to write an anonymous work such as these under the pseudonym of some ancient worthy. In the case of Ecclesiastes, this fact may be given away in one reference to the king himself, where 1:16 implies that there were a number of kings or rulers in Jerusalem prior to him. In the case of the historical Solomon, however, there were only two earlier kings, David, and Saul. Also the strange phraseology of 1:12 has puzzled interpreters. Does the wording, "I...was king" (KJ) or "I...have been king" (RSV), mean that he is now no longer king? But again the historical Solomon continued to be ruler until his death. Does the further puzzling expression in 2:12, "...what can the man do who comes after the king?" mean that the author is dropping his loosely held identification with Solomon?¹²³ Verse 7:27 refers to "the Preacher", as if someone other than the author. The most suggestive fact, however, that the reference to Solomon is a pen name or title comes to light in the many places where the author writes as a subject rather than a king. Would the historical Solomon have described his own regime in such scathing criticism as this book employs? The author is stingingly satirical of the administration. The social order is in a mess; government is

¹²¹Anderson, et. al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., p. 129.

¹²²E.g. see 2:24 vs. 7:2; 9:2 vs. 8:12-13; 4:2 vs. 9:4; 1:13 vs. 2:13. Obviously pious redactors have been at work in an original text of unorthodox scepticism in an effort to make it more palatable.

¹²³See O.S. Rankin, Interpreters Bible, Vol. 5, op. cit., p. 26.

despotic; justices are corrupt; oppression is rife; bribery and wickedness prevail; appeal is useless in the effort to buck a corrupt political hierarchy; the power structure of oppression is deplored; secret police and informers make life a nightmare (3:16; 4:1-3; 5:8; 8:9,11; 10:6,20). Driver has summarized concerning the author and his times:

"The author of Qoheleth evinces no kingly or national feeling; he lives in a period of political servitude, destitute of patriotism or enthusiasm. When he alludes to kings, he views them from below, as one of the people suffering from their misrule. His pages reflect the depression produced by the corruption of an Oriental despotism, with its injustice its capriciousness its revolutions its system of spies its hopelessness of reform. He must have lived when the Jews had lost their national independence and formed but a province of the Persian empire,---...perhaps even later when they had passed under the rule of the Greeks (3rd cent. B.C.)."¹²⁴

Finally authorities have found that Aramaisms and other signs reveal that the language is late Hebrew.¹²⁵

The message: The author tries numerous paths in the maze or mess of life, in order to see which of them may lead to a haven of firm meaning or value. He is not successful with any one and ends his journey generally disillusioned. Yet this book holds our attention to the end and inspires us in many lines along the way. Its over all theme is life's vanity and emptiness -- with this he begins and with this ends.

It is symbolized by the monotonous repetition of nature's processes. After all things are considered, do these processes alone represent the totality of meaning? Is life to be evaluated by an apparently purposeless material order? Earth, sun, wind, sea -- we might add, stars, atoms -- are these the ultimate realities? Here is the age-old question of materialism alluring the human mind as no doubt the best philosophic territory to prospect (1:2-11). But after the opening and ending announcement that all effort or toil is vanity or emptiness in this material world, what has he found between? Or attempted to find in various aims or pursuits?

Koheleth tries successively Knowledge, Pleasure and Mirth, Work, Wealth, and even Piety.¹²⁶ These sound terribly modern: science, sensual enjoyment, enterprise and money making, even religion. Such values have often been the patron gods of mankind. Do we lay up our supreme treasures in these terms? We may, and often do. Though seeing worth in each of these pursuits, Koheleth warns, however, against placing ultimate concern in any one of them. These proximate values in life are only partially satisfactory at best; more often he believes they leave us weary in their feverish pursuit, and disillusioned. Curiously enough he questions even over-much goodness, or piety. Does he here mean that casual church-going, and superficial morality lead to smugness and spiritual pride? In any case, let us consider two or three of these values of particular relevance to a sophisticated society.

Knowledge left him disillusioned. Modern physics and astronomy have taken

¹²⁴Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the OT, op. cit., p. 471.

¹²⁵E.g. Ibid., pp. 473-74; Oesterley and Robinson, Introduction to the Book of the OT, op. cit., pp. 209-10.

¹²⁶James Anderson, et. al., Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit. p. 130.

us to the very boundaries of physical "knowledge" and point to obscure hinterlands beyond the galaxies, where space is "curved", time eats back upon itself; and within the atom nucleus materiality dissolves into illusive indeterminacy, but has revealed nevertheless a compressed power that could blow the very world to bits. Is man capable of the moral wisdom requisite to the use of such knowledge? Some philosophies today have urged that knowledge is mere word analysis, and that any logical pursuit of "value meaning" is pointless. Are such examples the knowledge that, like Koheleth's, leads to the "increase of sorrow" (1:18)? Yet he claims "wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness" (2:13). There is the undertone that Koheleth will continue to pursue wisdom, and somehow muddle through, though he believes that the same fate awaits him as the fool (2:14-16).

Science and wealth, in point of achievement, have been the peculiar modern values, which we have thought may subsume the meaning of life; physical pleasure, mirth and work are the more ancient, unsophisticated, human or obvious possibilities. We have just spoken of Koheleth and the problem of knowledge. What about wealth?

"What of the modern trend? Does not wealth bring with it the answer to life? Koheleth does not find it so. 'There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt' (5:13). It is not according to the nature of man to give up wealth voluntarily. He may be altruistic, but he will not give it all up with what he thinks of as security, prestige, and power. Yet Koheleth is a keen observer. For many, wealth robs life of its simplicity, complicates it with burdensome social expectations, diverts life's interests from other more ennobling enterprises, reduces to a minimum self-discipline, insulates one from the shocks of life, and isolates one from a sympathetic understanding of his fellows. Wealth does hurt men, and men will not give it up. Another observation on the futility of money-making as a goal in life is found in 5:9: 'He who loves money will not be satisfied with money; nor he who loves wealth, with gain: this also is vanity.' Many a person who thought \$1,000,000 would be ample, discovers strangely enough that the first million merely whets the appetite to do it again. Moreover, a man may pile up "...wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them...this is vanity; it is a sore affliction." (6:2)¹²⁷

Finally, what of goodness, piety, or the religious note in life? Even piety comes in for criticism:

"In my vain life I have seen everything; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evil-doing. Be not righteous overmuch, and do not make yourself otherwise; why should you destroy yourself?" (7:15-16)

He warns us against going to any extremes, and counsels the middle of the road. Do we find influence here from the Greek sages?

God. An underlying religious faith to some extent relieves Koheleth's skepticism and pessimism. In the larger setting of the book we catch the timeless message of religion that our eyes must be lifted ultimately above merely mundane or finite values such as wealth, pleasure, even work, or education -- important as these may be -- and perceive them, in a dimension of humility and faith, as given by a higher source of wisdom, strength, and purpose for good than our own, which really sustains them. Perhaps this is the message of Koheleth's book for which, either he or his pious redactors are responsible. If the latter, then it may be

judged that they have improved on the original work.

The¹²⁸ most positive thing we can say about his conception of life is that values can be found but that they are partial and fleeting. For example, the conscious awareness of life itself (11:7-8); wisdom, (1:13ff; 2:3; 7:12; 8:1; 9:13ff); pleasure (2:21; 3:12,22; 5:18ff; 8:15; 9:7ff; 11:8ff); contentment (3:22; 4:4ff; 5:3,10f; 7:10,13,21). His sincere lament that there is oppression and injustice in the earth reflects the common Hebrew faith in the worth and integrity of individual life and the ancient rebellion against the tyranny of rulers. After a statement on the uncertainty of life the book closes with a poem famous for its literary beauty, advising young people to enjoy life and live it fully, but to keep in mind also at all times the fact of God, the Creator. This is necessary, the author maintains, for a full enjoyment of life, and also because of the certainty of Life's limited duration, and the precarious nature of existence -- in short, the inexorable claim of death upon mortal beings, whether it be by old age or by sudden accident. Koheleth reminds us of our finiteness as men and enjoins humility before God. Yet the book presents us with no easy or well systematized theology. Deity puzzles Koheleth.

After all is said and done there is orderliness in the world. "As though he had read Confucius he feels that there is a certain propriety in life!"^{128a} There is an appointed time for things and all should be done appropriately (see ch. 3:1-8). As a part of this order stands a sovereign god, inscrutable predeterminer of a man's destiny (3:9-15). In this deterministic world not only are all men treated indiscriminately, regardless of the effort of any, but man and the beast are treated in exactly the same manner. "For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity." (3:19). The most positive thing that can be said about Koheleth's theology is his firm conviction at least of the impartiality of God. A summary of his views of God would be: God is in final control of the world (ch. 12). His ways are inscrutable (3:10-11, 14; 6:10; 9:1). He is the author of such joy as is attainable (5:20; 9:9), though his gifts may not prove enduring (6:1ff). He desires of men that they fear him (3:14). One must be cautious in his dealings with God (5:1ff).

In sum, we might say that Koheleth is a brave skeptic about the worthwhileness of life's effort as a whole, who believes nevertheless in God, but ponders the Divine inscrutability. Does he also believe in immortality? Some have said "no" (3:21; 9:10); but what then do we do with such lovely lines as "God...has put eternity into man's mind", and "the spirit returns to God who gave it" (3:10-11; 12:7)?

His reply, then, to the youthful inquirer is

Life's purposes and goods are proximate: "I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live..." (3:12). Moral value is uppermost: though there be injustice, and life a frustration at best, one "must sturdily follow the path of rectitude and resolutely accept the blows and thwartings without whimper or resentment."¹²⁹ Reflections of Stoic Philosophy? Perhaps.

In any case, Koheleth was indeed an ancient existentialist -- uncertain about any ultimate meaning or purpose to life, but nevertheless doggedly determined to pursue worthy work, to live life well, and to live it justly withal. He would

¹²⁸

See note 113b.

^{128a}Anderson, et.al. op. cit., p. 130.

¹²⁹Anderson, et. al., Ibid. p. 131.

be accounted, however, as resembling our modern-day theistic existentialists, rather than the non-theistic breed.

"...The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (12:13)

Study Questions

1. What is the over-all teaching and outlook of the Wisdom literature? In what way is it allied to that stream of thought we have been calling "internationalism" or "universalism" in Israel? In what way is it like ethical prophecy; in what way different?
2. Do highest virtue and reason always coincide as the Wisdom books proclaim? What do you think is the significance of the personification of Wisdom in these writings? What do these books mean by "wisdom"?
3. Read Prov. 8:22-31. What over-all philosophy or view of the universe does the author here seem to set forth? Is moral truth eternal and "before the beginning"? Explain your position.
4. Can Prov. 31:10f be a guide for modern women?
5. What are your five favorite Proverbs? Explain what virtue each is proclaiming, and why it is important.
6. Do you think that the observance of "wisdom" will bring happiness in the long run? What theory of evil is set forth in Prov. Ch. 10?
7. What is the philosophical problem of the book of JOB? How is this a refinement of the problem as understood by the ethical prophets?
8. What kinds of evil are there in the world? What theological problem does the presence of evil raise?
9. What theories of evil are presented in JOB? What is your evaluation of each of these as satisfactory theories or not?
10. What is the largest solution to the problem of evil as hinted in Job? Do you think this concept that ours is a universe of law a satisfactory solution to the problem of evil?
11. Read JOB Ch. 31. What influence of the great writing prophets, Amos, et. al., seems to be present in this chapter?
12. What is your favorite passage in JOB, why?
13. Why may we judge that the book of JOB is a composite work? In the body of the work does Job ever appeal to Satan as the cause of his suffering? Whom ultimately does he charge for an explanation?
14. What solution to the problem of evil does ECCLESIASTES offer? Do you think life warrants such "pessimism"? With what view in the early Proverbs and prophets regarding evil does Koheleth's position stand in contrast? Read Ecc. 3:11b; 12:1f: does life have discernible meaning or not? What are some of the meanings of life?
15. Do you agree with Ecc. 1:18? What kinds of knowledge are there in life?
16. Do you agree with Ecc. 5:9,13? What is the place of wealth as a "value" in life? What are values? Can you distinguish between two primary kinds of value?
17. Koheleth is sometimes interpreted as lacking a philosophy of immortality. Yet read Ecc. 3:10-11a; 12:7. What about, or in, man's mind might be conceived to be "eternal"? Does this throw some light on the meaning and possibility of "immortality"?

18. Do you think Ecc. 7:15-16 dangerous advice or not? Can we be "moderate" in all virtues?
19. In what major ways does the Old Testament attempt to solve the problem of evil? Do you agree with Fosdick's last paragraph about evil and suffering?

IV. THE SWEET SINGERS OF ISRAEL:

Psalms and Song of Songs

"In the Book of Psalms we meet the religion of Israel at its greatest depth and its most passionate intensity."¹³⁰

CLASSIFICATION OF PSALMS. The first problem in studying the Psalms is that of classifying them for coherent reading. Several types of classification are possible. First, to the person who may not be interested primarily in historical information and scholarly matters concerned with the origin of the literature, a devotional-type classification is doubtless most useful.

Second, there is the functional-type of classification, which seeks to understand the Psalms in terms of their historical setting. The question is, for what occasion were the Psalms originally written? If we can get at the original milieu, then we can understand what each psalm means. For example, some scholars have gone to the extreme of holding that the Psalms were not intended for private edification but for high occasions of public worship centering in the temple and around the great feasts -- something like our Christmas hymns. Some of the Psalms are undoubtedly of this character (for instance, 24, 65, 67, 81). Further, some seem to have been written for functions of state, and have been called the Royal Psalms. They concern the coronation of the king, his marriage, his dominion, his character, entreat for his welfare and success (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 61, 63, 72, 101, 110). Still others of the Psalms seem to be national lamentations (44, 74, 79, 80, 83, 106, 125). However, in addition to this public character of some of the Psalms, many interpreters feel that the aim was by no means simply liturgical. About this controversy, Fleming James has stated that the "I" of the psalms has been thought by some to be almost always the congregation or the nation but that the truth is many of the psalms were written by individuals, expressing individual emotions and experiences.

Third, there is the traditional division of the Book of Psalms itself in a fivefold way -- possibly in imitation of the division of the Torah into the five books of the Pentateuch. Finally, if we examine the traditional headings that have come down to us, which appear at the top of each psalm, we notice that different groups of psalms are attributed to different people.

THE WRITING OF THE PSALMS. The Book is composite. Though the origin of the headings is unknown, and their significance may be discounted, they do, however reflect an ancient tradition that there were many authors. For example, some of these suggested psalmists are Moses (90); Solomon (72, 127); Asaph (50, 73-83); Heman (88); the sons of Korah (42, 44-49); David (3 and others); and Ethan (89).

Did David write the psalms attributed to him by the headings? Many of these imply a later age than the period described in the Books of Samuel. For example, 5:7 implies the existence of the Temple, which was not begun until Solomon's time. Ps. 51:18 and 69:35 refer to an approaching restoration of Jerusalem and thus suggest a post-exilic period for their composition. Many psalms ascribed to David reflect a maturer theology than I & II Samuel contains. We do know, however, from I Sam. 16: 14f that David was a musician, and we have two death odes attributed to him -- those for Saul and Jonathan and for Abner (II Sam 1:19f and 3:33f). A man of inten-

¹³⁰ E.A. Leslie, Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 509.

sentiment, of deep convictions about right and wrong, and of great reverence, such as we know him to have been from the characterization in Samuel, might have been an early psalmist of distinction. Some scholars have assigned specific psalms to David (so Selin, who attributes 18 of them to him, or Ewald who suggests 12). As we have seen, even tradition does not ascribe all of the Psalms to David. But his best known one, according to tradition, begins: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want!..." (23).

The dates of the Psalms can only be fixed approximately. The general principles used to date them are: (1) Psalms containing crude religious ideas, especially in the conception of God (for example, note the primitive deity of 18:7-10) probably precede the Exile. References to "the king" presupposed the time when there were still kings in Israel, in other words, before the Exile, (though some of the Royal Psalms have been attributed to the Maccabean period). (2) Psalms containing references to the Dispersion of the Jews or to captivity in a foreign land would be exilic (for instance, 137). (3) Psalms which emphasize personal religion, the suffering of the righteous, the emphasis on the Law; psalms in which a universalistic note is heard; psalms about the Messiah -- these suggest post-exilic origin. Such themes would be prominent after the two Isaiahs, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had left their marks on the thought of Israel. The Book as it now exists, then, is a compilation of the Maccabean period (c. 150 B.C.). It contains a body of literature, however, that has come by long growth, beginning very likely with David and ending in the post-exilic age. Like the books of Wisdom, the Psalms are a part of a wider oriental literature. There were Egyptian and Babylonian psalms similar to ours. Allusions in our Psalms may reflect ancient religious ideas of these other peoples. For example, it has been suggested that the representation of the Lord as the Sun in the famous 19 Psalm relates it to Assyria and her Sun-god, Shamash.¹³¹

POETICAL FORM OF THE PSALMS. In order fully to appreciate the Psalms as great literature, we should become aware of the fundamental principle of Hebrew poetry, the so-called parallelism of its ideas. This principle balances lines that belong together and makes it possible to appreciate much of the poetic beauty of the psalms even in translation, which may disregard the rhythm of the original. Below are listed the important types of parallelism with illustrations. The simplest and most common form is the couplet or distich. In it we find the synonymous parallelism, in which the same thought is expressed in parallel lines:

"Thou hast given him his heart's
desire,
and hast not withheld the request
of his lips." (21:2)

Tautological parallelism in which the same words are exactly or almost exactly repeated:

"O Lord, how long shall the wicked,
how long shall the wicked exult?" (94:3)

Antithetical parallelism, in which the thought of one line is contrasted with that of the other:

"For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning." (30:5)

¹³¹ed. Simpson, The Psalmist, p. 16-17.

Synthetical parallelism, in which the second line supplements the thought of the first:

"I cry aloud to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy
hill." (3:4)

The triplet or tristich is not so common:

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their
voice,
the floods lift up their roaring." (93:3)

The tetrastich (four lines), usually a combination of distichs, is very melodious in its rhyme of ideas:

"His speech was smoother than
butter,
yet war was in his heart;
his words were softer than oil,
yet they were drawn swords." (55:21)

We also find the pentastich (five lines) and hexastich (six lines), which are combinations of distichs and tristichs (for example, 6:6f and 99:1-3). In addition to the principle of parallelism, it is interesting to notice the use of the Hebrew alphabet. In Psalm 3 each of the 22 lines begins with successive letters from the alphabet; in Psalm 25 the first word in each couplet; in Psalm 9 each tetrastich. In Psalm 119 each of its 22 stanzas consists of eight lines which begin with the same letter. (There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet). These are acrostic psalms. Some of the psalms seem to have been written to be sung. The word Selah may have indicated the place where the music was to join in, or a doxology to be sung, or a prostration to be made, but the exact meaning cannot be determined. More significant than their form, is the content of the Psalms.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS. On the whole the Psalms reflect the mature period of Israel's religion. The fact that the various compilations date from the post-exilic period explains why we have such a wide variety of religious and moral ideas reflected in the Psalms. For the spiritual outlook of that age runs the gamut from barren legalism and narrow nationalism to profound personalism and broad universalism. Before the return to Jerusalem and the restoration of the Temple, where traditionally Yahweh had dwelt, the Jews in Exile had learned, as never before, of the possibility of personal religion. The only temple available in captivity was the temple of their hearts, where they learned to commune with God as with a universal Presence. This deepening of their religious sensitivity, brought on by the great crisis of the sixth century, was to leave its permanent mark. Not political history, as with the prophets, but religion in its purest sense "supplies the key to the meaning of the majority of the Psalms."¹³² They reflect the intense search of the individual heart for the meaning of life and existence. One of the teachings of Ps. 103 is that life has meaning only in a Divine Source of Existence. It has been said that "the prophets utter the mind of Israel concerning God", while "the Psalmists utter the heart of Israel in experience with God."¹³³

The Psalms are intimately related to the rest of the OT -- to Prophecy,

¹³² W.E. Barnes, The Psalms, N.Y.:Dutton, 1932, pp. xviii-xix.

¹³³ E.A. Leslie, Abingdon Commentary, op. cit., p. 514.

Ceremonialism, Law, and Wisdom. They "belong to the ages in which the Jews occupied themselves with deep pondering over their past history and its meaning"^{133a} They are related to the prophetic tradition in the fact that many are preoccupied with moral character. They are joined with ceremonial tradition in the fact that they are deeply concerned with worship, and in many cases seem to be hymns intended for this purpose (see II Chr. 29:30). A psalm such as 119 reflects devotion to the Law. In the tone and format of many others of the Psalms we recognize Wisdom literature like that of Proverbs or Job. It is as if the Psalms bring the OT to a fitting close. "They are the response of the human heart to God's revelation of Himself in law... History and Prophecy."¹³⁴

In the following H.W. Robinson has described the inner life of the psalmist: "In the Psalms, man looks up to God through four concentric circles of human experience. The nearest to his heart is the Temple and its worship. The Temple is the magnetic center of a passionate devotion, not yet rivalled by the Jewish passion for the Law...Round about this Temple was drawn the circle of Jewish society, that of a small community sharply divided from its numerous neighbors, sharply divided in itself, proudly conscious of a high destiny, yet helpless to give adequate political expression to it...A circle still wider than that of contemporary society was the arena of history...the story of Jahveh's redemptive purpose and His manifest deeds of deliverance of Israel...The outermost circle of life, for Israel as for all men, is nature, though a nature never conceived as a rival or a barrier to God. Nature is God's creation and constant activity, the direct and immediate expression of His power and will."¹³⁵ These concentric spheres -- Temple, Society, history, Nature, God -- represent concerns in the order of their importance to the psalmists.

In so far as there is an over-all message of the Psalms it might be expressed in the following series of ideas: (1) God is a Personal Being, whose Presence fills heaven and earth (for example, 90, 139). (2) Nature is God's creation and an expression of His constant, supporting activity (see 104). (3) Man also is God's creation and is responsible to Him (8, 24). (4) God is supreme ruler and judge (2, 33, 95, 96), and His will is the source of moral law (19). (5) Time will come when all nations will acknowledge his sovereignty, and the rule of justice and righteousness will be universal (22:27, 138:4). (6) The messianic mission of Israel and the figure of a kingly messiah, reminiscent of First Isaiah, appears (2, 89, 132). Some psalms recall the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah (see Ps. 22). (7) Some of the loveliest Psalms concern God as universal compassion, forgiveness, and care (23, 103, 130).

PSALMS OF NATIONAL VENGEANCE AND MALEDICTION. The following are examples of psalms that contain objectionable nationalistic elements or show a spirit of personal vindictiveness: 2, 9, 18, 20, 33, 35, 46, 47, 58, 59, 69, 72, 83, 109, 137. Many of these are post-exilic expressions of what you find in the pre-exilic period as lex talionis (see Deut. 19:21). However, in many of these "imprecatory psalms" the enemy alluded to is the wicked man and the evil which he embodies. "It must be remembered that we have been taught to distinguish between the evil man and evil: to love the sinner while we hate the sin. But Hebrew modes of thought were concrete. The man was identified with his wickedness; the one was a part of the other; they were inseparable. Clearly it was desirable that wickedness should be extirpated. How could this be done except by the destruction of the wicked man?"^{135a} The vindictiveness and the belief that God is only on "your side" is mixed with a sense of loyalty to right and to justice, which God must vindicate in the world. For

^{133a} W.E. Barnes, The Psalms, op. cit.

¹³⁴ A.F. Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, Cambridge Bible, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1901, p. x.

¹³⁵ In The Psalmist, ed. Simpson, pp. 48-50.

^{135a} Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, op. cit., pp. xci-xcii.

example, compare 21:8-10 with 21:11-13; 35:1-6 with 35:7 and 35:19-24; 69:1-21 with 69:22ff; 72:9-11 with 72:1-8, 12ff; 109:6-15 with 109:1-5, 16ff. The reason for the appeal to divine vengeance is the "evil" devised by the "foes" (21). Although from one side these psalms suggest a crude and often barbaric code, from another they reflect belief in moral law, express willingness to leave vengeance with God, and look for the justice that would come from the divine government of the world. In Ps. 45 the warfare of the "king" is "for the cause of truth and...right" (45:4). Happily, because of the composite nature of the Book, we are free to omit the morally questionable psalms from our repertoire of favorites. These psalms may be contrasted with others which point toward the higher expression of God's way with men through love and forgiveness which we find elsewhere in the OT and in the NT period.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love.
He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger for
ever.
He does not deal with us according
to our sins,
nor requite us according to our
iniquities." (103:8-10)

"If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark
iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
that thou mayest be feared...
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is stead-
fast love,
and with him is plenteous
redemption." (130:3,4,7)

The 8th Psalm summarizes the Hebrew doctrine of MAN. Let us study this one psalm. The vastness of the physical universe is depicted. And the question is asked, what is man, in the face of all of this? This is the great question from the standpoint of Materialism. In reply, the psalmist re-orientes our sense of values. Not the vast system of the stars, flaming suns, and dead satellites -- not matter and rock -- but life is the significant thing. Above all there is human life. Man stands above nature in the scale of values, unique in creation, and directly beneath God. Man does not stand alone, or in darkness in an alien Cosmos. His self-confidence is thus restored. Man is to have dominion and ultimate victory. His life is meaningful and his destiny is peace and glory. Yet the source of his existence and his ultimate inspiration lies in One above him. Man is not self-sufficient. He must be humble in his high station. He must look up for help and guidance to the Author of Being. It is one of the high water marks of the OT announcing that life is good and human personality supremely worthy.

"O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is thy name in all
the earth!
Thou whose glory above the heavens
is chanted
by the mouth of babes and
infants,
thou hast founded a bulwark because
of thy foes,
to still the enemy and the
avenger.

When I look at thy heavens, the
 work of thy fingers,
 the moon and the stars which
 thou hast established;
 what is man that thou art mindful
 of him,
 and the son of man that thou
 dost care for him?

Yet thou hast made him little less
 than God,
 and dost crown him with glory
 and honor.
 Thou hast given him dominion over
 the works of thy hands;
 thou hast put all things under his
 feet,
 all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,
 the birds of the air, and the fish of
 the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths
 of the sea.

O Lord, our Lord,
 how majestic is thy name in all
 the earth!"

SONG OF SONGS, like the apocalyptic books of the Bible, has often been the subject of fanciful interpretation. The reason is obvious. At face value (and this is its true significance) it is a love lyric of the purest and most human kind. It found a place in the sacred canon of the Jews in 90 A.D. only because the rabbis believed they saw in it an allegory of the love between Yahweh and Israel (see IV Ezra 5:24,26). To them it was a story with a hidden, religious meaning. Allegorical interpretations have been frequent. In the Christian tradition it has been thought to symbolize the love of Christ for the church, or the mystical relation of the individual soul with God or with Christ.

Actually its proper interpretation is the literal one above suggested. It is generally agreed today that it is a group of love songs rather than a single poem held together by the theme of the beauty and sacredness of love, the golden thread upon which the separate pearls or poems are strung. This suggestion of literary unity is doubtless the work of a single editor. Due to the Aramaic quality of its language, Biblical interpreters believe that the book as a whole cannot be earlier than 250 B.C. Some of its separate songs, however, may be older than this time. Some interpreters, both ancient and modern, have found elements of the drama in the Song of Songs. There has been a drama based on the Song of Songs entitled The Shulamite Maid.

ITS MESSAGE. The Song of Songs describes with "a rare appreciation of nature's charms, the thrilling anticipation, the rapturous delights, and the exquisite torments of two lovers."¹³⁶ It is unabashed realism, though without vulgarity. As an ecstatic description of physical ecstasy, it assumes a natural place in the Holy Scripture, part of whose greatness and inspiration lies in its

true description of humanity.

Though the "Song of Solomon" speaks of the "sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number" (6:8-9), it may not be read as merely a song of the oriental harem. Rather we may read it as pointing toward the monogamous ideal in its ravishing preoccupation on the love of the one man for the one girl, "the perfect one", and on the monogamous psychology as fundamental human trait, although perhaps in only poignant or aspiring terms:

Eat, O friends, and drink:
 drink deeply, O lovers!
 I slept, but my heart was awake.
 Hark! my beloved is knocking.
 "Open to me, my sister, my love,
 my dove, my perfect one;
 for my head is wet with dew,
 my locks with the drops of the
 night."

I had put off my garment,
 how could I put it on?
 I had bathed my feet,
 how could I soil them?

My beloved put his hand to the
 latch,
 and my heart was thrilled within
 me.

I arose to open to my beloved,
 and my hands dripped with myrrh,
 my fingers with liquid myrrh,
 upon the handles of the bolt.

I opened to my beloved,
 but my beloved had turned and gone.
 My soul failed me when he spoke.
 I sought him, but found him not;
 I called him, but he gave no
 answer." (5:1c-6)

"Set me as a seal upon your heart,
 as a seal upon your arm;
 for love is strong as death,
 jealousy is cruel as the grave..." (8:6ab)

Study Questions

1. Name the main criteria by which we can determine the general date or period of some of the Psalms? Illustrate by the Psalms. How do we know that the book as a whole was not written by King David?
2. What is the poetical form of the Psalms?
3. What various occasions called forth the writing of the Psalms?
4. What is the main characteristic of the Psalms in some distinction to Prophecy and Wisdom? How do the Psalms relate to Prophecy and Wisdom?
5. What is the larger, or over-all message of the book of PSALMS as a whole? What is the conception of God, Man Duty and Destiny in the finest Psalms? Illustrate from them.
6. Read the 8th Psalm. Do you think man is "unique"? In what respects? Do you think this is a true picture of man's status and of the universe as a whole in its levels of being?
7. Read Psalms 8, 19, 104. What evidence do these psalms cite in their poetical way that there is God "above" man and nature? Can you differentiate two or three "arguments" for God in these psalms? What might we call these arguments? What value or weight do you give each of them? What in your opinion is nature's relation to God?
8. Read Psalm 103. What picture of God do you get? Relate it to the thought of the great prophets we have studied.
9. What is your favorite Psalm? Why?
10. What is your feeling about the psalms of vengeance, such as 109, 137? Do you think they are of equal moral value with, e.g. 103 or 130? How may we understand in its largest light the theme of vengeance and the "enemy" found in some of the Psalms? Illustrate. How does 67 contrast with 137?
11. What conceptions of the Messiah do you get in 2, 89, 132? What Chapter in Isaiah does Psalm 22 remind you of?

PART NINE

Apocalyptic Thought

Reading Assignment:

1. RSV JOEL Ch. 2:30-3:21.....Apocalyptic vindication of Israel
 DANIEL Chs. 1-6.....Six stories about Daniel and his three friends.
 Chs. 7-12.....The visions of Daniel: symbolic discussion of the tyrant Antiochus IV and his certain doom.

2. Study Guide

- I. Characteristics of Apocalyptic Thought and Writing
- II. Comparison of Apocalypse and Older Ethical Prophetism
- III. The Book of Daniel

Study Questions

I. Apocalyptic Thought and Writing

We should become acquainted with the apocalyptic thought of the Old Testament for two principal reasons:

First, it constitutes one of the main thought forms toward the end of the Old Testament era. In the second and first centuries B.C. numerous apocalyptic books appeared. Apocalyptic ideas suffused the thinking of New Testament times, and, indeed, even the New Testament itself. In its extreme vintictive form, however, along with the narrower form of Phariseism, it constituted the major element in late Jewish thinking to which we believe the religion of Jesus, and the Christian reformation as a whole, was a corrective.

Second, the apocalyptic books such as DANIEL a resubject to fanciful and erroneous interpretation, unless the precise nature of their historic background is understood. Because of their highly imaginative, and often obscure language, they are frequently the "happy hunting ground" of religious literalists and extremists, who read into them exact "prophecies" of modern times, and even the future which lies yet before us. Such interpretation of these books misses their true message, and accordingly their true greatness.

Apocalyptic ideas were not solely the possession of the Jews. Apocalypse constitutes one of the main features of the Persian religion, Zoroastrianism, with which the Jews undoubtedly became acquainted when the Persians were the

overlords of the entire Middle East. Recall that Cyrus the Great was the first Persian conqueror, whose capture of Babylon began the period of Persian ascendancy, 538-332 B.C.

The overall and striking feature of the Persian philosophy of religion was its cosmic dualism. The world was divided between light and darkness, God and Satan, with a constant warfare raging between them for possession of the allegiance of man. At the end of a twelve thousand year period Mazda and his angels would be victorious over Ahriman and his demonic hosts, and with all evil destroyed, establish an immortal kingdom of good. This idea of a cosmic warfare between good and evil describes the over-all form which Jewish and Christian apocalypses took. Furthermore, such features as elaborate angelology, the figure of Satan, the fiery purgation of the world at the end of time, the last judgment, the bodily resurrection of the dead, the coming of a supernatural-type messiah at the end of the world, the millennium, or age of superabundance and supernatural life, form further striking similarities between the two systems. To many interpreters such resemblances between the Persian and Jewish apocalypses have suggested borrowing by the latter when the Persians, or Zoroastrians were masters of the Jews. It may be significant in this connection that the first half of the book of Zechariah, so definitely apocalyptic in thought and form, should have appeared early in the Persian period. Be the connection as it may between the Persian and Jewish-Christian apocalypticism, we have to reckon with the latter from here on as a major type of thought and literary form of late Old Testament times.

To describe apocalypse more precisely, the Greek word "apockalypsein" means to "unveil" or "uncover". Apocalyptic writings purport to unveil, that is, to reveal the time of the end.

They were characterized by cryptic symbolic figures of speech, such as those encountered in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, and in Revelation in the New Testament. As the important Biblical examples of apocalypse, a study of the book of Daniel, or of Revelation, will disclose that they were written at a time of persecution by a foreign power. In Daniel's case the tyrannous regime is most evidently that of the Syrio-Greek ruler Antiochus IV, (175 B.C.-164 B.C.) Revelation suggests one of the Roman persecutions of the late 1st century A.D., perhaps that of the Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.). The purpose of such books was to inspire courage and hope in a persecuted people, by proclaiming that the end of their suffering was near, and a time of glorious deliverance at hand, to be executed by God's supernatural intervention in the affairs of men. God's angelic agent, or "Son of Man" would appear on the clouds of heaven, at the head of supernatural armies, to perform this work.¹³⁷ Was this a transmutation of the "Messiah" concept to that of an entirely supernatural hero, a transcendent being, to whom divine powers were delegated. (Recall the god-like endowment of the Kingly-messiah of I Isaiah). In any case, other important features of apocalyptic thought and writing follow:

- Israel would have opportunity to take vengeance on her foreign enemies, who would be overthrown by the Son of Man.
- Cosmic signs and dire portents would indicate the end of this world age, such as:
 - stars would fall,
 - moon would be turned to blood,
 - sun would be darkened,
 - supernatural beasts would come up out of the sea,
 - human calamities and distress would increase

¹³⁷We draw a composite picture here and in the subsequent description we draw a composite picture from Daniel, Joel, and other apocalypses.

- A new, immortal age would be issued in, in which the old world would be supernaturally transformed, history ended, the dead resurrected to stand at the Last Judgment, presided over by God Himself, "the Ancient of Days".

In the canonized Old Testament, in addition to Zechariah, Joel and Daniel, the book of Haggai, and parts of Isaiah and Ezekiel contain apocalyptic ideas

In addition to Revelation in the New Testament, Mark, chap. 13, is often thought to be an apocalyptic tract embedded in that Gospel. Among the non-Biblical or non-canonical apocalyptic works of this age we mention¹³⁸

- The Book of Enoch, c. 64 B.C.
- The Assumption of Moses, c. 1st century A.D.
- II Esdras (4th Ezra), c. 1st century A.D.
- The Apocalypse of Baruch, 2nd century A.D.

Such names in their titles as "Enoch", "Moses", etc. indicate that these books were written as pseudonymous works. Many scholars believe that such is the nature of the book of Daniel.

By way of summary from Biblical writings, Joel 2:30-3:21 and Daniel chap 7f present us with the main features of the apocalyptic outlook:

- (1) Final Judgment when the fortunes of Israel will be restored at the end of this Age or Worldly time.

Joel 3:1-2

Daniel 7:9-10

- (2) Foreign enemies destroyed by heavenly, angelic hosts -- supernatural warfare between the heavenly forces of good and the satanic or demonic forces of evil, embodied in the foreign enemies of Israel:

Joel 3:10-11, 19-20

- (3) Vengeance and lex talionis seem the main moral standard used:

Joel 2:30-31; 3:15-16 (Contrast 3:10 with Is. 2:4f and Micah 4:3f)

- (4) Supernatural, cosmos shaking portents in the sky and on earth:

(Incidentally we have in this feature the main colloquial meaning of the word "apocalyptic")

Joel 2:30-31; 3:15-16

- (5) Extravagant visions of angels who reveal divine secrets and of beasts, etc., which symbolize nations and kings to be destroyed.

Daniel 7:1f; 8:16

- (6) The vision of the "Son of Man", who would come on the clouds of heaven, as a kind of supernatural hero or divine general, to lead the forces of good against those of evil:

Daniel 7:13-14

The Son of Man idea was developed by the theology of the New Testament

¹³⁸Apocalyptic writings have been collected in the Oxford Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, edited by Charles.

authors into the concept of the Messiah as regnant, and returning. (Perhaps the most perplexing problem of the New Testament study is to ascertain to what extent this view stemmed from the historical Jesus himself.)

II. Comparison of Apocalypse and Ethical Prophetism

i.e., 1. Similarities between apocalyptic thought and the older ethical prophecy, of Amos, Hosea, etc. are the following:

(1) Both claim to be revelations of God.

(2) Both claim to speak of His purpose for men and declare that history is purposive, moving toward a wonderful culmination or outcome. Both have an "eschatology", that is, a doctrine of what is to take place in the last times. We shall summarize below how the eschatology of ethical prophecy and that of apocalyptic thought differ.

(3) A highly ethical or moral perspective constitutes the framework of both ethical prophecy and apocalyptic thought; both declare that good will triumph in the end over evil. Apocalyptic thought, as well as ethical prophecy is staunchly opposed to moral evil, to human sin, and corruption and to tyrannous government. At this point, however, we should acknowledge that all of the apocalyptic books are not of the same value. Possibly the best of them have found their way into the Biblical canon, such as Daniel and Revelation.

Paterson in a thoughtful evaluation writes, "...Apocalyptic definitely takes the place of Prophecy (ethical prophecy); in Haggai, Zechariah, and their successors we can observe the gradual drying-up of the prophetic stream...Apocalyptic is related to Prophecy but it marks a real descent." On the positive side, however, "It expresses a deep and abiding faith in God and it well knows that 'Salvation is of the Lord'. The final victory is his, and his ultimate purpose is the redemption and renewal of his people"¹³⁹; and, we might add, of the world.

2. We list the differences between apocalypses and prophetism in the following schematic outline:

<u>Ethical Prophecy</u> (i.e. Amos, Hosea, et.al)	<u>Apocalyptic Thought</u> (i.e. Joel, Daniel, et.al)
(1) Delivered in spoken oracles under the prophet's own name. Written in plain language so that hearers will immediately understand.	Often circulated as written tract material under a pseudonymous title, a pen name, usually of some ancient worthy like Moses, Enoch, Daniel, etc. Written as a code -- in an esoteric idiom.
(2) Aims to speak forth God's ethical will. The doom predicted was dependent upon the ethical repentance of the	Aims to unveil ("apokalyptein") future events regarding the overthrow of this evil age. The doom of the present world is inevitable.

¹³⁹The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, op. cit., pp. 266, 270.

people. The world was not inevitably doomed.

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|---|---|
| <p>(3) The triumph of good will take place within earthly history, by God's spirit acting through human instrumentality, e.g. Is. 32:1f. The kingdom of God to be within this world, Is. 2:2f.</p> | <p>Triumph of good to take place only by the ending of history, by God's supernatural intervention, e.g. <u>Joel</u> 3:11f. The kingdom of God lies beyond this world.</p> |
| <p>(4) The Messiah to be an Ideal King (Son of David), or a Suffering Servant. As the latter type of person he is to work through gentleness, persuasion, and longsuffering, in the hope that the nations will repent, and turn to Israel's God. Israel is to have a missionary vocation, to evangelize the world. All men and nations are to be brothers together. II Isaiah</p> | <p>The deliverer is to be a transcendent heavenly or angelic figure, the "Son of Man", who will come on the clouds of heaven to overthrow the enemies of Israel and the forces of evil, by supernatural military power. The possibility of the repentance of the Gentiles and divine forgiveness for them seems lacking. The picture is one of the Jews triumphant above the Gentiles, Joel 3:8, 19-20. Stresses a crude nationalism and imperialism.</p> |
| <p>(5) God moves within the realm of the normal or natural: drought, famine, plague, foreign invasion; and God speaks through men's ethical conscience, and appeals to their freedom of will. Freedom stressed, e.g. Is. 1; Jer. 31:34, etc.</p> | <p>God enters by supernatural cataclysm and catastrophe: sun darkened, moon turns to blood; speaks through extravagant dreams and visions, through supra-mundane signs and portents. Deterministic in outlook.</p> |
| <p>(6) In sum: prophetism was universal and ethical in outlook. The Day of the Lord was a day of judgment upon Israel; Israelites were condemned for their sins as well as others, e.g. Amos, 1-2.</p> | <p>Much apocalypse was nationalistic, imperialistic, and racially exclusive in outlook. It presents the Jews alone as the forces of good; whereas the Gentiles represent evil. The Day of the Lord is a day of vengeance of Israel upon her enemies, Joel 2:10-11.</p> |

The right-hand column of this analysis points to characteristic features, and the worst aspects of some apocalypses, in contrast to the earlier type of ethical prophecy.¹⁴⁰ We are to acknowledge presently, however, that in the case of Daniel the above suggestion of racial narrowness and ethical inferiority of foreigners does not apply.

¹⁴⁰A recent source for examining non-canonical apocalypses illustrative of some of the above points is C.K. Barrett, The New Testament Background: Selected Documents, Macmillan 1957, p. 227f.

III. The Book of Daniel

1. Historical background. The book of Daniel reflects the Hellenistic age, which extended from 333 B.C. to 63 B.C. Briefly we point out the major facts of that period that will help us to determine the date of its writing and something about its authorship. After Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. his empire fell apart, eventually emerging as three kingdoms: The Macedonian in Greece; the Seleucid (Seleucus I 312-280 B.C.), comprised of Southern Asia Minor, Syria and the eastern section of Alexander's domain; and the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt (Ptolemy I 323-283). The Romans conquered Greece in 146 B.C. and Syria and Egypt respectively in 63 and 30 B.C.

In the meanwhile, reminiscent of so much of her tragic history, the Jewish community in Palestine continued to be pressed by two greater powers, Egypt and Syria, both of which successively wrested control over the Palestinian territory during this epoch. At first the Ptolemies annexed Syria in 320 B.C.; and for about a century thereafter the Jews enjoyed favorable treatment by the Egyptian occupation, which lasted, almost without interruption, until 204 B.C.

At this time the Jewish religious life and theocracy continued under the organized priesthood, while Judaism attempted to maintain its puritanical culture against an increasing tide of Hellenism. Even some of the Jews, among them high priests themselves, caught the Hellenistic contagion which threatened to compromise their way of life, both in religious belief and moral practice. "A spirit of frivolity and of scepticism seemed to haunt the Greek culture of that age; and it was inevitable that this spirit should eventually come into collision with the austere puritanism and deep religious seriousness of the Jew."¹⁴¹

The attempt of the Hellenizers, indeed under the leadership of the high priesthood, to introduce Greek customs, manners and beliefs into the life of Jerusalem of course scandalized the Chasidim or loyal religious party.¹⁴²

Measures to Hellenize the Jews came to a head in the reign of Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.), Seleucid king, now in control of Palestine. Both with and against the connivance of the Jewish high priesthood, now ridden with intrigue, and even murder, in the effort to curry favor with the Syrian overlords, Antiochus ruthlessly attempted to carry out his policy of integrating the Jewish community into his Hellenistic state, indeed to wipe out Judaism altogether. The upshot was that many Jews lost their lives. Under pain of execution, the Syrian tyrant forbade the most cherished practices of the devout, such as Sabbath observance; circumcision; the reading of the Torah; sacrificial worship in the Temple. All copies of the Law that Antiochus's police could find were destroyed; the Jews were compelled to participate in pagan ceremonies, centering around an altar to Olympian Zeus that had been set up in the very precincts of the Temple. The last indignity was that the Jews must eat pork! These outrages were imposed in all Syrian cities with a Jewish population, even those in Egypt, now in Syria's control.

The devout struck back under Mattathias and his son Judas Maccabeas (meaning the "Hammerer") in an utterly courageous and fierce religious war, against

¹⁴¹R.L. Ottley, A Short History of the Hebrews, Macmillan, 1940, p. 258. quoted by Anderson, et.al., An Introduction to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁴²Jason, a high priest at the time of Antiochus IV, and whip for the Jewish Hellenizing faction, had bribed his way into office; established a Greek gymnasium; and even sent financial support for the Hercules sacrifices at Tyre!

great odds, that freed Judea of the Syrian garrisons about 162 B.C. The Maccabean revolt paved the way for at least a precarious Jewish independence, which lasted until the Romans captured Palestine in 63 B.C. This stirring story is recounted in I Maccabees of the Apocrypha, and celebrated in Judaism today by the Hanukkah festival, or feast of lights signifying the rededication of the Temple.

In the meanwhile a great book had been written. It was the clarion tract of the underground party in Israel expressing its fervent prayer for the overthrow of the tyrant, and a call to courageous patience until the certain doom of his evil -- the book of Daniel.

2. For the authorship of Daniel notice the following details of the text:

(1) It is interesting to note that chapters 1-6 are in the third person: they speak about Daniel, as if a figure of the past, 6:28.

Ezekiel 14:14 and 20 speak of "Daniel", along with Noah and Job, as a hero of earlier times, not as a person of the Exile in the court of Nebuchadnezzar; although Ezekiel himself was such an exile in Nebuchadnezzar's time. In mentioning "Daniel" twice in the same context, along with such ancient worthies as Noah and Job, apparently Ezekiel is thinking of Daniel as a national hero of former times.

(2) The author of Daniel makes erroneous statements about the history of the 6th century, which, as Oesterley and Robinson point out, "would be incredible on the part of one who had really lived during that period."¹⁴³

For example, as we read II Kgs. 24 we learn that Nebuchadnezzar's main siege of Jerusalem and deportation of the Jewish nobility to Babylon took place when Jehoiachin became king of Judah, 596 B.C.; whereas the suggestion in Dan. 1:1f is that the main siege and deportation took place when Jehoiachim was king, i.e. about 605 B.C. (The final siege and deportation took place under Zedekiah of Judah, 586 B.C.). An even clearer mistake in historical reference is the allegation by the author of Daniel that Darius was the first conqueror of the Chaldeans and first king of the Medeo-Persian empire, 5:30; 9:1 -- whereas we know that Darius was preceded by two Persian kings, Cyrus the Great and Cambyses. Again in Dan. 5:2 Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as the father of Belshazzar; whereas Nabonidus was the father of Belshazzar, and, according to the inscriptions, Belshazzar was not king, but "Crown Prince".¹⁴⁴

(3) In contrast, however, to the above mistakes about 6th century history, the author has a very accurate knowledge of the Greek period, as the numerous allusions in Dan. 7f make clear. For example, he specifically mentions the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks, under Alexander the Great -- "The great horn between his (the he-goat's) eyes is the first king", 8:20-21 (332 B.C.); he alludes to the break-up of Alexander's empire into four main divisions,^{144a} and the fact that Alexander did not enjoy for long the fruits of his victories. He alludes to the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus; and the erecting of the statue of Zeus in the Temple in Jerusalem by which Antiochus tried to force the Hellenization of the Jews. He mentions how the Jewish sacrificial rites were forbidden by the king. Scholars feel that since he does not mention the death of this terrible ruler in Ch. 12, but speaks as if during a great persecution, the book may be dated sometime prior to the tyrant's death in 164-63 B.C. -- let us say 168 B.C. For passages reflecting these events and Antiochus's persecution see Dan. 7:8, 25; 8:8-14, 20-24; 9:27; 11:2-4, 31-36.

3. The pseudonymous character of the book. Why does the author purport to be one of the exiles at the court of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors in the 6th

¹⁴³Intro. to the Books of the OT, op. cit., p. 335.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 335.

^{144a}Very probably the author means here the major divisions of Alexander's empire after the battle of Ipsus in 301: (a) Macedonia and Greece under Cassander; (b) Asia Minor under Lysimachus; (c) Syria and Babylonia under Seleucus; (d) Egypt under Ptolemy Lagus -- roughly defined by the four winds of heaven (8:8) or West, North, East, and South. See Interpreters Bible, vol. 6, p. 472.

century B.C.? The history which we have just reviewed makes the reason evident. If the book is a product of a period of intense persecution, as it itself makes abundantly clear, we can at once understand why the author believed he had to publish his work under an assumed name; it was, simply, in order to hide his identity from the secret police of the dictator. Thus like many other apocalyptic books, which persecution called forth in the history of the Jews, this author publishes his work under the name "Daniel". Why Daniel? As we learn from Ezekiel 14:14 Daniel had been an old Jewish hero noted for his integrity and steadfastness to the cause of Yahweh, like Noah or Job. A telling pen-name then, for the author. We have already pointed out the parallel cases of other apocalyptic books, written under assumed names of ancient worthies, such as "Moses", "Enoch", etc. The practice of using pen-names has been a common device in the literary history of the world, when for some reason authors wish to hide their true identity. We noted similar instances in the writing of Deuteronomy under the name of "Moses", Ecclesiastes under "Solomon", and again in the case of the book of Jonah.

A further reason, however, why the author of Daniel relies on this old device as a necessity in his day and age, is clarified by Oesterley and Robinson:

"In common with all apocalyptic writers our author issued his book under an assumed name. Various reasons have been put forward to account for these pseudonymous titles: the most convincing is that given by Charles. He points out, firstly, that when once the Law had assumed absolute supremacy, 'the prophets were practically reduced to a position of being merely its exponents, and prophecy, assuming a literary character, might bear its author's name or be anonymous'. Then, when the Law claimed to be 'all-sufficient for time and eternity...there was no room left for new light and inspiration, or any fresh or further disclosure of God's will; in short, no room for the true prophet...' So that if a servant of God felt that he had a message to offer his people, there was no chance of his obtaining a hearing unless he wrote under the name of one or other of the great ones of the past. He might, moreover, well feel convinced that what he had to say expressed what the patriarchs of old and other worthies of the past would have thought and said. That would seem to account satisfactorily for the pseudonymous titles of this and other apocalyptic books."¹⁴⁵

4. The true artistry and greatness of thought of the book of Daniel may be suggested in part by the following comments.

(1) In the first six chapters we are told how Daniel and his friends, in the Court of Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean, and his successors, staunchly withstood the attempt of kings to brainwash or otherwise tyrannize them into giving up their Jewish practices and beliefs; how God delivered them; and how we now, under Antiochus, may take courage, and, if we do not falter, may expect a divine deliverance. C.S. Knopf has clarified the place and purpose of these first six chapters, with their charming stories, in the overall message of the book.

Ch. 1. 'Shall we keep the Law faithfully?'	Answer: 'Daniel did.'
Ch. 2. 'Is Jewish wisdom and law superior?'	Answer: 'Daniel had it, and was the wisest man in Babylon.'
Ch. 3 and 6 'Will God ever deliver us?'	Answer: 'He delivered Daniel and his three friends.'

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 336-37.

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|--------|-----------------------------------|---------|--|
| Ch. 4. | 'But has God the power to do it?' | Answer: | 'Nebuchadnezzar admitted it.' |
| Ch. 5. | 'Will God thwart Antiochus?' | Answer: | 'He is already Mene, Tekel, and Peres' (numbered, weighed, divided.) ¹¹⁴⁶ |

(2) We have previously indicated that the main message of Daniel, like the themes of other apocalyptic books, concerns God's providential guidance of human affairs no matter how dark the present era may seem. As summarized by Robert Bonthius, "Through its stern pages we see the spirit of resistance to the tyrant as an idolater and a blasphemer... Viewed in this light it takes its place as a significant chapter in the history of man's age-long struggle for freedom under God."¹¹⁴⁷

Essentially, therefore, Daniel is a great document of democracy. Daniel, along with the Christian Apocalypse of the New Testament, Revelation, are the finest examples of apocalyptic literature. Neither book breathes the extreme nationalism and vindictiveness of some of the other apocalyptic writings, e.g. Joel Ch. 3. Indeed Daniel looks for the ultimate victory of Israel and Israel's God of righteousness and his cause in the earth. But both books are opposed to evil, tyranny, human wickedness as such, rather than to specific enemies of Israel (or of Christians), and each proclaims that the purposive movement of history assures the ultimate victory of righteousness over sinfulness and evil. They rise above the narrower conceptions of other such writings, and even within their apocalyptic thought form, embrace a stirring universalism that speaks with the voice of authentic prophetism. Thus in Daniel Ch. 4 it is the conversion of the heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar, to God and the righteous ways of God in desiring "mercy to the oppressed" (4:27), that is the point -- not the destruction and obliteration of the foreigner. Nebuchadnezzar's beautiful acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Hebrew God, 4:34f, after his reason had returned to him, expresses the author's hope of how the heathen world as a whole might turn to Israel's religion, as a returning to their right and deepest human mind after the madness of idolatry. True, the "pride" of the heathen must be "abased" by divine judgment, 4:37; but this is no more than what has happened in the meanwhile to Israel herself for her own sins. (Compare Rev. 21:24-26).

(3) Another unique note in the book of Daniel is suggested by Ch. 2 where the message rises to great heights. In the symbolism of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image, with head of gold and feet of clay, the author surveys the clash of the world empires since Nebuchadnezzar's day. All are finally destroyed by the rock cut from the mountain without hands, which becomes an everlasting kingdom. By this depiction we may well surmise that the author had in mind, by the rock cut out without hands, the new spiritual force that Israel was coming to be in the world, in her new role as a fellowship of love in the synagogue or church. The synagogue or churchly fellowship had come to be a force by the author's time, the late Greek period, indeed a world-wide force as the Jews had begun to spread over the ancient world in the great Dispersion. The Jewish people as a church was a new thing in the world. Israel as a political entity and power had well nigh disappeared (though shortly to have a reprieve under the Maccabees). In the meantime, however, she had developed as a new spiritual power in her church or synagogue. The author in this passage looks forward to the establishment of God's kingdom, which will put an end to the brutal oppression of kingly and imperial sway represented by the ancient

¹¹⁴⁶The Old Testament Speaks, N.Y. Nelson, 1933, p. 341 -- paraphrased in Anderson, et.al., Intro to the Study of the Bible, op. cit., p. 141.

¹¹⁴⁷Anderson, et. al., p. 143.

empires. He is be looking forward to the kingdom of love and brotherhood, which the synagogue-church system has stood for down through the centuries, as the vanguard of God's true kingdom in earthly time and space.

A final puzzling and fascinating problem in the book of Daniel concerns the cryptic numeralology (also used by other apocalyptic seers, see e.g. Revelation). What does the author mean by "Seventy weeks of years", etc. announced in the vision of chapter 9:24? Apparently it was his way of estimating the time when Antiochus or his dynasty might be overthrown. If we assume that he meant the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as the point to begin the reckoning of "seventy weeks of years", then we have the following arithmetic:

A "week" of years would be 7 years.
 Seventy weeks of years would be 7×70
 or 490 years.

Beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign:

604 B.C.
 - 490

114 B.C.

The reconsecration of the Temple took place, however, in 165 B.C. by Judas Maccabbeas, after the Syrians were driven from Jerusalem. Accordingly, the author of Daniel over estimated the length of the Hellenistic tyranny by 51 years.

Study Questions

1. What other great religious culture developed apocalyptic thought? What were major similarities between this thought and Jewish apocalypses?
2. Read the passages from Joel 2:30-31:21 that bring out major features of apocalyptic thought, such as the last judgment, supernatural deliverance from, and vengeance upon, foreign enemies, cosmic portents, etc. Read Dan. 7; what further main characteristics of apocalyptic thought do you note in Daniel?
3. Read Micah 4:1-4. What differences in treatment of foreign peoples, the concept of "judgment", and general international outlook do you note between this passage from Micah and the above one from Joel? What are other major differences between apocalyptic thought and earlier ethical prophecy?
4. Read Dan. 7:13; Is. 11:1-5; 32:1-4; and 42:1-4; 53. Do you note differences in the conception of the Messiah as set forth in these three groups of passages: as to origin of the messianic personality; methods used in righting wrong; attitudes towards foreign peoples, etc.?
5. What major internal evidences suggest that the book of Daniel was written at the time of Antiochus IV? What kind of historical background calls forth apocalyptic writing, according to evidence in Daniel?
6. Why does the author use a pen-name? What seems to be the significance of Ezekiel's reference to "Daniel", Ez. 14:14.
7. In contrast to Joel, what universalistic outlook is expressed by Daniel? Granted its apocalyptic character, how would you evaluate the book of Daniel as a whole -- i.e. what larger themes does it present that establish its greatness?

Part Ten

Old Testament Theology: A Resume

Ideas of God, Man, Right and Wrong, Salvation and Destiny

Acknowledging, of course, the many views we find in the multiplex OT literature, the following study of basic concepts in Old Testament religion, represents the great ideas at their high-water mark in the developing thought of Israel. Many of these ideas reflect the essential teachings of the prophets, whose rise and work we have earlier outlined. Our scheme will be to indicate the most advanced level of understanding about God, Man, Right and Wrong, Evil, and Salvation. Such an analysis will suggest the basic philosophy of the Judeo-Christian religious system.

I. The Idea of God and the Universe:

1. The conception of Deity in the Old Testament: God is one, omnipresent, personal Mind or Intelligence. He is the ultimate source or ground of existence; and is conceived as Personal Being. As we study the Old Testament we note a full definition of God as Personal in the following terms:

- a. He is Self-conscious intellect or Mind, and source of moral Truth.
- b. He is conscious of his world.¹⁴⁸
- c. Has moral character:
 - Righteous intention or will. All moral truth is an expression of God's will.
 - Love or compassion, i.e. outreach toward his world.
- d. He has power to deal with the world's problems:
 - As original creator; and as sustainer, both of nature, and of the individual.
 - As increaser and preserver of value in finite time and historical process -- i.e. His continuing activity is to overcome the evils of life and history. We found such passages as the following represented these ideas:
 - Deuteronomy 6:4 (The Shema of Israel)
 - Psalms 103-104
 - Psalms 139
 - II Isaiah, Ch. 40f
 - Hosea on God's Love.

In the high Old Testament, God's love is often rendered by the term chesed, variously translated "mercy" (KJ), or "steadfast love" (RSV).

2. God's relation to nature:

- a. He creates and sustains the universe, e.g. Gen. 1, Ps. 104, Is. 40f.

¹⁴⁸In Aristotle's system we have a conception of God as Personal Being in respect to point "a", but are left in ambiguity relative to God's awareness of his world (Book XII Metaphysics). Plato, at least on some sides of his thought, was more clearly a "Personalist" in his concept of Deity than was Aristotle (eg. Book X Laws).

Recall that in Genesis Ch. 1 the world comes by orderly stages.

We cannot, of course, press too far the analogy of the ancient Hebrew story of creation in Gen. 1 to modern evolutionary ideas. The Genesis account is written from the standpoint of ancient cosmography, e.g. with "waters" above and beneath a central and stationary earth, a fixed "firmament" of heaven above, etc. The point of the ancient author is not to tell how our world came to be, but by Whom, as a question of ultimate philosophic causality; and for what purpose. His answers were that the world has its origin in a Creative Intelligence, and exists as a good home for man, who is to have an important destiny. If there is "truth" in the creation story of Genesis it should be understood as a possible philosophic, moral, or religious truth.

b. God in his ultimate Being, is not limited to phenomenal nature and her process. The Hebrew conception of God is not "pantheistic". "Pantheism" usually means the idea of God as the impersonal ¹⁴⁹Whole of Nature, like conceptions of the Ultimate found in Hinduism and Buddhism. In Hebrew thought, however, although God is responsible for nature as creative power, He stands in His utmost being "transcendent" to her. To state it negatively, God would be, whether nature were here or not. God is the "author" of lower physical nature, and his "power" is manifest in it. More important, however, He expresses Himself, and is present in, nature's higher levels, e.g. in the human mind on its moral side: in human conscience, in righteous conduct and just social relationships; and in historical process as a whole, where it comes to express true values. In these terms, God's Spirit is "immanent".

In sum: God is creative power, and moral truth, above man, human history, and physical nature. These levels are derived aspects of his power or being. That God may ordain and sustain natural process, or law, either by an immanence of "power" or an immanence of "being" -- Ps. 104 -- is a philosophical type of problem that the Old Testament authors do not directly discuss or clarify. What we hear of such problems is in the graphic language of ancient poetry: "and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." Descartes had the sage insight that it would take as much continuing power to sustain nature as to create her or cause her originally. Some may read the Old Testament as teaching a doctrine of creation ex nihilo, and perhaps it does, in the over-all perspective. We believe, however, the other alternative concept a philosophically viable one, perhaps easier to accept intellectually, namely, the concept of nature or a natural order as the eternally continuing manifestation of the Divine Creative power and love.

Of course in the early days God was thought to be an exterior and often arbitrary force. By the time of the great prophets and psalmists, however, God is found to be an interior presence renewing the soul "whose indwelling Spirit is our unseen friend."¹⁵⁰

c. Hebraic philosophy has a three-fold levels, or echelons conceptions of the world, and existence:

- (1) God
- (2) Man
- (3) Nature:
 - Animal
 - Inanimate

¹⁴⁹These systems also contain the idea of God as Personal being in a number of prominent historical dimensions of their thought.

¹⁵⁰Fosdick, Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 54.

Levels two and three are interrelated, derived planes of existence; the Hebrew philosophy has the conception of the derivative nature of man and the world, Ps. 8. However, there is no hard dualism between the Divine on the one hand and Man, and nature, on the other.

d. Nature or natural process is good; the created world is not an illustory tissue,nor evil, as in certain fundamental notes of the Indian systems,Gen. 1, Ps. 8, Song of Solomon.

Human sexuality is regarded positively, not negatively. Though this aspect of nature and life should be morally ordered, the Hebrew philosophy is not ascetical.

3. How is God known or apprehended? The Old Testament suggests answers in outline to this question, without presenting full-dress philosophical dissertations on the subject. The elements, however, of the three classical types of "reasons" for belief in Gdd are present in the Old Testament. These are not arguments of a logically abstract kind; they are rather dynamically affirmative declarations, representing what the Biblical authors believed to be profound experiences of God, on various planes of awareness, intellectual and emotional.

a. The awareness of God through experience of nature: a mode of reasoning based on external or empirical observation of nature's "order", "perfection", "design" or "purpose", leading to the idea of its intelligent Cause, or Maker, Gen. 1, Ps. 19:1-6; Ps. 104.

In such passages we have the substance of the "casual" and "teleological" arguments for the existence of God. The following further reasons for belief in God are ascending or deepening modes of intellectual experience or perception.

b. The awareness of God through moral experience or experience of moral value: a mode of reasoning based on the inner moral experience of awareness of values and conscience,suggesting moral "law", and Cosmic Moral Mind as Source or Ground of the law; with the added empirical observation that history seems to attest the presence of such law, in the fact that men and groups which do not practice neighborliness and love do not, in the long run, survive; or conversely and positively, when men collectively prattice kindness and love, their society tends to survive. The substance of the classic "moral argyument" for God is found in the prophets, i.e. implicit in the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, etc.

Se cond half of Ps. 19

Amos 5:4-14

Hosea 6:6

Micah 3:8

I Isaiah 1:18

Deut. 30:11-14

Jer. 20:8-9; 22:13-16; 31:33

Is. 26:2,9

Recall our previous analysis, p. 96f

c. Awareness of God through religious experience: derived from a sense of God's help to oneself personally in leading a moral and a well poised or triumphant life.

In discussing this area of the experience of God we are dealing with the Old Testament idea of salvation at its personal, psychological heart. (In a following section we discuss salvation again in somewhat more inclusive or generalized terms.) The Old Testament discloses two primary modes in which Divine Power personally is felt. We have the concept of religious experience:

(1) As beginning and continuing in a sense of moral well-being, sustained by God's presence. Such noted, joyful Psalms as Nos. 1, 15, 19, 23, 24,

26, 27, 100, 119, 121, 139, 141 suggest this type of experience. This outlook is present in part also in such books, concerned with the inner life, as Hosea, Jeremiah, Job, and Ecclesiastes.

(2) As beginning in a sense of moral self-dissatisfaction. Many of the Psalms suggest an experience of God as forgiving love in life, that relieves and renews conscience, when burdened with a sense of moral failure or sin; and that reintegrates, or re-establishes selfhood, in poise, inward security and well-being.

In sum, on such levels of experience, bearing on psychological and mental well-being, the sense of the Divine Reality is accompanied by a feeling of new assurance, a stabilizing sense of all-rightness with the loving Source of Being, regardless of past errors, failures or sins. Such experiences of mental and emotional renewal of the soul were acknowledged as the wondrous uplifting of the Divine Spirit. God's Presence was deeply known in the removal of anxiety and fear. The coming of a new mind, or release from anxiety, could not always be calculated, or scheduled. The Biblical authors realized that the Divine Spirit must work in and through the complexity of our freedom; they often said they had to wait "in patience" to find relief and renewal. In any case, such may be the meaning of many of the timeless lines of the Psalms and Prophets, such as, "Ps. 25; Ps. 42, 46; Ps. 51; Ps. 103; Ps. 130; (Ps. 139) II Isaiah 40:27-31. Add to these references such others as Is. 26:3 or Ps. 40:1-5f; I Isaiah Ch. 6, II Isaiah Ch. 55.

On either of these levels, such experiences, if true, would not mean that God, or the Divine Spirit, is an external, coercive force that destroys our freedom as men. Rather the implication of all such passages would be that God speaks as in inward voice of truth, which strengthens our freedom by giving it new insight and power. This inward working of the Divine would not detract from the belief that God is the objective source of truth and value, in ultimate Mind beyond the finite self.

4. God is the Lord of History: Its ultimate destiny is in His hands. God is present in historical process at two levels:

a. In the major factors of creation or nature itself as the Hebrews came to understand it, that is, in individuality or personal life and its freedom (the "image of God" in man).

b. And in the realm of moral values and truth, of which men become increasingly aware through experience and reflection, and may embody in their personal and institutional life. Such was a further phase of the message of the prophets. We continue this point in our discussion below on Evil and Salvation.

II. The Idea of Man

In the previous analysis we have already suggested some of the Biblical idea of man. Let us summarize in the following way:

1. Man stands on an intermediate or derivative plane between God and nature. There is a creative Mind, above man's mind, upon whom man depends for his being, to whom he owes reverence and love, and whose righteous laws he must obey. The Greater Mind is disclosed to man's mind in the truth experience, particularly moral truth. The derivative nature of man seems a fundamental metaphysical truth that has important ethical consequences: because of God above him, man, or a man, cannot set himself up as

the highest, or as god, and rule over other men, tyrannize and enslave them. Man, in his turn, is above, and lord of, nature; he stands on a higher plane of being than animals and the inanimate realm, Ps. 8.

2. Man is created in the "image of God", Gen. 1. What does this mean? In general, it means that man is a personal being like God, a spiritual being, the elements of which are:

a. That man is free. There is a height or a self-transcendancy, a vertical dimension in his mental nature that puts him above and beyond determination merely by natural, material causality. Though he is in part a natural, determined being, there is an altitude of personal power that makes him truly free in the highest spark of his spiritual being; this enables him in a measure to determine his own course and destiny. He is not solely determined by his natural or physical environment. He knows this higher freedom intimately in the freedom of his thought within, i.e. in his freedom of mental deliberation, and in his freedom of will or action after deliberation.

b. That man is a moral being by virtue of his freedom; he is capable of moral discernment, of developing moral conscience and life; he is capable of moral growth, and is responsible for his acts. Gen. 3, Ez. 18, Jer. Ch. 31:29.

c. That man is a rational being; he is capable of higher intellectual life, of which his moral life is an aspect. He wants to know the reasons or causes of things -- a being of higher curiosity and intellect than the animals, Gen. 1-3; Is. 1.

In sum, man is a being of rational moral freedom. Reason, moral discernment or conscience, and freedom are facets of the same unitary spirit. Reason is free: to think "rationally" is to think freely, or to search for the answers to problems. Furthermore, to think rationally is to search for the best answers: accordingly, man develops a sense of values as the fulfillment of his freely questing spirit, and of his capacity as moral.

Gen. 1 and the 8th Psalm are stirring affirmations of the basic goodness of man, that is, the worthfulness of his person as created object of the creative Love -worthful both in its initial and intrinsic value and in its possibility for further and increasing good. Though often beset by temptation, committed evil, and sin, the Hebrews looked positively and optimistically at man's basic nature and possibilities. Such lines as Amos 5:24, Micah 6:6-8, Jer. 31:29f, proclaim man's moral freedom, look forward to the time, and announce that man can be free of sinful, aggressive life. Such central passages of Hebrew thought state the normative possibility for human life.

As the more general problem of the relation of God's Mind, Being, or Spirit to nature at large is left undiscussed by the OT thinkers, so the relation of the Divine to human freedom more particularly is not consciously analyzed by them. Perhaps the deepest implication of OT thought regarding this ultimate problem is that man's freedom itself is somehow an intimate expression of the Divine Life, a consideration which has appeared in reflective Western philosophy in such noted instances as Immanuel Kant and Josiah Royce.

3. Man is a psychophysical unity. He is not a dualistic being of "soul" vs. "body". Body is not evil inherently. Body is an expression or instrument of the higher controlling spirit, which animates it. Man's will unifies his nature; he is a unitary spirit, not merely a collection of physical and psychic states, as e.g. in original Buddhism. The Hebrews have essentially a "personalistic" conception of man and mind, not a materialistic, mechanistic, or behavioristic view.

4. Being a free spirit, man can choose evil or "sin". The Hebrew definition of sin is evil disposition or malice, and may be expressed socially as aggression

on neighbor, or disrespect for personality. Sin is not bodily passion, as with the dualistic systems; though body and passions may be the instruments of sinful pride. Recall our previous discussion of Gen. 3 and 4, for the concept of sin as aggression and pride, and as having in Biblical thought, a "theological" as well as "social" dimension.

In profoundest Hebraic thought, sin is not an inevitable condition; it may be avoided in life, so that, on the whole, one may lead a life free from sinful pride and aggression. Many of the Psalms already cited, and other passages imply this. (Indeed, some passages in the Old Testament suggest that sexuality, or some other quality not defined, constitutes something originally "sinful" in human nature, as e.g. verse 5, of the famous penitential Psalm 51. Such places, however, should be balanced with other sayings, particularly those of the great prophets, Jeremiah in Ch. 31:29-30f, or Ezekiel in Ch. 18, where the concept of "original sin", in the sense that there is something which inevitably determines us to sinful action, is ringingly repudiated.) The point is, rather, that man should cultivate righteous intention or motive, which will guide him in "paths of righteousness". Such great Psalms as the 1st, or the 19th, or the 23rd, and many others, proclaim this possibility.

We have already mentioned, in our discussion of religious experience, how man may rely on the Divine Spirit for help and sustaining strength, to lead the moral life; and on the Divine Love, for forgiveness and grace when he falters or fails.

Further, the Biblical concept of pride in its relation to sin must be clarified. The Old Testament does indeed recognize our common, or "natural", human tendency toward inordinate pride, in its various ranges: pride of power, of wealth, of position, of class, even of intellect and spirit, that is to say, "prideful" attitudes which tend toward selfishness and unloving relationship with others. Such pride may lead to situations of sinful aggression. In sum, the Hebrew Scriptures point to our common moral sloth, our failure to understand human need, and failure to express or respond to love. In view of this tendency, it urges men to seek the Divine help to overcome these weaknesses. But the Old Testament does not mean, as it is sometimes misinterpreted, that all "pride" is sinful. There is a natural pride, which is not sinful, but psychologically necessary, as normal self-esteem, or self-respect, expressing our very nature as sacred persons under God. Everywhere, both Old and New Testaments teach this sacredness of one's own person, which is source and seat of "normal" or "normative pride". The age old cry of the human heart for the moral establishment and maintenance of its selfhood in "normative pride" is expressed in the familiar lines of the 139th Psalm:

"Search me, O God, and know my
heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any wicked
way in me,
and lead me in the way ever-
lasting." (Psalms 139:23-24)

Likewise, when the Old, or the New Testaments, refer to repentance as a desirable and necessary moral quality, they do not mean that persons need have, or must develop, a hyper- or morbid sense of self-dissatisfaction, or consider themselves gross sinners or criminals in some way, before they may be recipients of the Divine love, grace, or favor; or before they can otherwise know, or have experience of God's presence in life. In addition to contrition for possible gross sin, such as the "blood guiltiness" or crime alluded to in Psalm 51, repentance may stand for the general psychological value of being willing to acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings. It means "to think again", that is, to examine ourselves, and be prepared to acknowledge ways in which we might improve. There could be no

psychological or moral growth or any kind without such normal "repentance" as a natural part of our spiritual experience. To experience repentance need not mean that we must look around within ourselves in order to bring to light some imaginary dark, or gross evil, which we must get rid of. It may mean sometimes, of course, that human beings should feel sorry or contrite for injury done, so that the breaches of fellowship between men and neighbors may be healed, and the full moral will of God realized in, and between, persons.

5. Man is a religious being: He may seek fellowship with God; God's love and forgiveness are available to man, as is God's help and strength to live the moral life. (Recall our preceding discussion on the "religious argument" for God.)

Hebrew mysticism was a moral mysticism. The idea of man's possible oneness with God meant identification of moral will and purpose, with God and fellow men in ethical fellowship, rather than the identification of man's "being" in toto, and loss of his personal nature, in the Divine Being. God speaks to man, and is present in or to human life through moral conscience. The life of God and the life of man conjoin in the common experience of Moral Truth, Jer. 22:11-16.

Religion, in its universal, psychological meaning, may be defined as devotion to whatever is regarded as supreme in value. Using this definition for the moment, the idea of man as a religious being in the classic Old Testament may be summarized in the following way. Over and above any other object or good, the Hebrews came to realize that the supreme values are persons themselves. There is something in individuality or personality as such that suggested to them what is highest in "meaning" or value, and also probably deepest in being. They recognized that persons are the superior order of reality and value. At the apex of this scheme of the supreme evaluation of persons, which may give to it its truth and power, the Hebrews believed they sensed a personal source of existence as such, or a trans-human, but personal Divine Reality. He is the fountain of the humane values considered necessary, if human life is to live on the highest personal, political, and cultural plane. It is, therefore, honor and reverence to Him, fulfilled in our respect for, and help of our human neighbor in his person, as God's supreme creative expression, that defines religion for the classic Hebrew mind.

III. The Idea of Right and Wrong:

The Universe as Moral Place and Process

1. The universe is fundamentally a place of moral process, order, or law. Ex. 20-24; the Book of Amos; Jer. 31:29f.

2. Respect for persons is the basic moral law: the sum of the Ten Commandments of Moses. Respect for persons is put in most positive way as love by Hosea, (Heb. chesed: "steadfast love", or "mercy").

3. Moral law has its source in God's personal will. What does this mean? To respect persons respects God's highest work in creation; therefore, when we love our neighbor we do, or express, God's highest will. This is what the Hebrews meant by God's will as highest ethical standard.

4. Moral law or truth has its human locus too in man's mind and heart, when he finds it there, or lets God disclose it to him in his deeper moral reason or conscience, Deut. 30:11-14; Ps. 40:8; Jer. Ch. 31:33; 22:16; Is. 1:18.

5. Moral law may be observed working as a process in History and life: nations that break the law of love will perish, in the long run; those that keep it will tend to survive. This we found to be the over-all teaching of the 8th and 7th century prophets, and states for them the fundamental law of history. Recall the significant, concrete expression of moral law in the personal and social ethics advocated by these prophets.

The above, of course, is but a bare outline of the Biblical teaching regarding right and wrong. Of what validity is the concept that our world is a place of moral process or "law". Let us for the moment expand on the idea of moral law, adapting it from its ancient Hebrew setting to contemporary experience and terms. Accordingly when the Hebrew Christian philosophy speaks of moral law it spoints essentially to matters of supreme importance.

Conscience has varied in matters of lesser importance to human welfare as a whole. A Westerner has no content of conscience about the eating of meat, while for the devout Hindu, Gandhi, there was a keen conscience against meat eating. In our myriad ways daily we individuals illustrate varying contents of conscience in matters of merely personal taste or in those of less social importance. One man pursues his professional drive or "conscience" as a teacher, another as a lawyer or artist. You may prefer to use your vacation fishing; I mountain hiking. But in matters of supreme importance, in the basic issues, we have, characteristically and historically, tended to act in a uniform way. We may repeat with profit the words of Frederick Paulsen,

"Human life...is possible only where all individuals act with relative uniformity..."¹⁵¹

We offer the following list of some matters of supreme importance or concern in which conscience tends to be the same with all men, defining its common intellectual content. These are matters about which human beings have characteristically tended to make the same decisions, or think, reason or act in a uniform way, as they strive to live on the highest plane possible to man. They are a practical way of stating the content of moral law. Such moral principles or laws root in the central-most drives or desires of personal existence.

1. As a matter of normal human life there is the universal desire for self-preservation and self-enhancement, according to our highest capabilities as individuals. This has given rise to the basic laws against murder, founded in the universal will-to-live and in the sanctity of one's own person.

2. There is the universal desire to have access to facts, or to know and to use truth, to have knowledge, to be informed -- to become "educated", as we often say, in one primary meaning of education. The thirst for knowledge, learning, and science agitating the non-western peoples, as one of the significant social phenomena of our time, dramatically illustrates this human trait.

3. There is the universal desire to have others deal truthfully, trustfully, honorably, or dependably with you, and the consequent realization that we must act reliably with them. No man can long deal with a liar or a promise-breaker. This has given rise to the basic laws against falsehood in the formal codes, and may be positively stated as the law of veracity.

4. There is the universal desire for recognition, for approval, or to have the friendship of others, to be well regarded by one's peers, to be liked, to be loved, and the consequent realization that we must reciprocate friendship and love.

¹⁵¹Frederick Paulsen, A System of Ethics, Scribners, 1900, from pp. 13-21.

This has given rise to the laws of "reciprocity" or Golden Rule principles in many cultures.

5. There has been the standard human desire for, and to keep one's mate. This has given rise to the laws regulating marriage, and has tended in many cultures toward a monogamous ideal.

6. There is the universal desire to keep one's personal possessions, especially when the fruit of one's own labor. This may be broadened to include the principle of economic security. This human drive has given rise to the laws against stealing, and the basic sanctity of personal property. The contemporary ferment of the world's peoples relative to the desire for a better economic lot -- the basic motif of communist revolutions themselves -- indicate this universal quality of life and conscience.

7. There is the universal desire for just judgment or judicial decision at the bar of legal or political authority -- whether tribal chief, king, commissariat, congress, parliament, or court. This has given rise to the concrete laws and structures of "justice" that aim to limit the arbitrary power of rulers and governments.

8. In the desire to live free from arbitrary force or restraint flows the desire to have a voice in the political authority that rules over us. This has its classic illustration in the rise of democracy in the western world, and presently in the convulsions of former colonial peoples in their efforts to secure independence and establish "popular" governments. An important propaganda appeal in contemporary revolutionary movements is to the ideal of democracy. Khrushchev claims to represent the "workers" in the Soviet Socialist "Republics". The Red government of China is hailed as the "People's Republic".

9. There tends to be a universal human admiration of mercy, unselfishness, and love when observed in others, in a St. Francis, a Schweitzer, a Sister Kenney, or Gandhi, arousing in our own conscience the sense of sympathy, and that love should be our own supreme motive.

10. Finally we should cite the universal admiration of such humble virtues as courage, temperance, perseverance at a worthy task, and other such. No society ultimately admires the coward, the uncouth, or the dilettante.

It is true that some of these impulses have not begun to find their expression in social movements and institutions until lately in historic time. But that they are beginning to have realization suggests their age-old and deep seated appeal to the human heart.¹⁵² Others of the above principles are, of course, ancient ideals, and began to humanize men at an early time.

¹⁵²May we not, to considerable extent, resolve the tension between ethical empiricism or naturalism and ethical rationalism or idealism (from which perspective this discussion was begun) in the following way? Empiricism says that ethical truth is learned, by "experience"; idealism has claimed that it is given, interiorly. At least on the plane of the practical interests of both approaches, as we ask the question, What is the relation of moral law to experience, How does the awareness of moral truth a priori (in the ways suggested above) relate to social life?, the following insights may guide us:

1. Man comes to knowledge of moral law through social experience, in the course of personal growth and education; this insight recognizes the importance of the teaching factor, of the authority of elders, of the forces by which social institutions discipline us, and the influences of past generations.

In conclusion, when the Hebrew-Christian philosophy of religion speaks of personality as the criterion of moral law it means the following:

Moral law is founded in the structure and nature of personal being; it expresses the needs of personal life, is integral to the meaning of personality and to the experience of beings who are consciously aware. We hear the Old and New Testaments in their deepest level of ethical thinking, say something like this in many well-known passages:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart...(RSV) (Deut. 6:4-5)

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart...You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." (Lev. 19:13-18)

"For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it." (Deut. 30:11-14)

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds." (Jer. 31:33-34 and Heb. 10:16-17)

"And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Mtt. 22:37-40)

152 cont. 2. But when we come to full rational maturity, we can see the "sense" of these truths, that is to say, "rationally" (i.e. a priori: Kant), as founded in the moral nature of man as a being of higher rational freedom, a personal being, a spiritual being. Man's social experience is such because he is a being of a certain kind. His social experience is founded in his being or nature. On what are the value judgments of ethics based? Our reply is, they flow from some standard "above" or "deeper than" physical nature in the gross or brutal sense, and deeper than social custom. This higher range or source of ethics lies in the nature of man himself as individuality and self-conscious personality. What of the problem of the relation of the White man to the Colored man, so agitating our country, and South Africa today? How are we to draw up some rule which will govern their relationship? Obviously we have to rise above the historic and social experience of the past and look into the nature of man himself, for our inspiration, into his self-conscious individuality or personality and its metaphysical freedom. The Negro must be freed because man is free. Kant was right, in our view, in affirming that there are metaphysical foundations of morals, transcendent to society, logically prior to "experience" and rooted in "human nature", in man as a transcendent personal and rational being.

Knowledge of the laws of morality, relating life to life, may be initially awakened by experience, but they come ultimately to be recognized or discovered in the nature of man's being, which founds his experience, or makes his experience what it is. In sum, the ultimate validity of the laws are discovered or found in reason,

Moral law (or if preferred, we may speak of it as moral duty, truth, or reality) refers to two main things: the fulfilling of all personal lives to their highest possible capacity, and the harmonization of life with life: it is personal fulfillment, love and justice; or, alternatively phrased, it is the fulfillment of persons by love and justice.¹⁵³ At this level of insight the concept of moral law and the concept of life's meaning merge. Gordon Gilkey somewhere trenchantly phrased the idea of life's duty, meaning, or purpose as comprising these responsibilities to realize whatever fine powers are latent within us; and to love and serve those whom life puts together with us. This latter we attempt beyond and above the legitimate concern which we must have for ourselves. To these two levels of meaning in the concept of moral duty or purpose, we add a third, reflecting our nature as beings within or of time, and bringing the first two principles together into their implied creative synthesis; namely, our duty is to do what we can to tip the balance of the human future for good -- a partial definition of the good for persons being suggested by our preceding analysis. "Law" in its highest moral sense does not mean rigid, inflexible structure that judges and punishes. Transcending the idea of judgment, which has a legitimate provisional application at certain levels of process, law for living beings means regularity or orderliness of life according to the nature, and for the welfare of such being. For personal beings "moral law" is subsummed in the respect for personality and the love commandment. It is self-regulation, the highest work of moral freedom.

The above scriptures look to the Divine Mind as the creative source of personal life. For the theistic tradition, we may draw the relation of moral law to the Divine Mind and Will by saying that the fulfillment of persons and the harmonization of life with life would be the highest concerns of the Creative Spirit for men; and where realized, these carry us a goodly way into the meaning, and experience, of the ultimate fellowship with Him.

"He judged the cause of the poor and needy...
Is not this to know me? says the Lord." (Jer. 22:16)

"God is love, and he who abides in love
abides in God, and God abides in him." (I John 4:16)

¹⁵² cont. which is awakened by experience; experience may further test and verify them. In a different context, speaking of ontological concepts, Tillich meant something similar to what we have just here tried to say relative to moral concepts. He wrote that "A priori does not mean that ontological concepts are known prior to experience. They should not be attacked as if this were meant. On the contrary, they are products of a critical analysis of experience." (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, Chicago Univ. Press, 1951, p. 166.) So with moral concepts: they are products of a critical, that is, a rational analysis of experience, which possesses its character by virtue of the rational nature of man.

¹⁵³ "Justice" in broadest sense is the attempt to balance the needs and claims of individual lives as harmoniously as may be possible in our finite human circumstances. Our motive should (and can) be love; we should go out to others and help them in their needs and desires, as much as circumstances permit and sometimes factors in other personality permit. Justice implements love as tolerably as may be possible when the claims and desires of persons conflict.

IV. The Idea of Evil and Salvation from Evil

1. What solution does the OT offer regarding the problem of evil at the level of Historic, social evil, and sin, i.e. man's inhumanity to man?

a. We have found its teaching to be that God deals with this level of evil through moral law working in history as judgment and renewal. Human sin is thwarted and brought to nought by historical forces. We heard Amos and the other great prophets formulate the inevitable outwork of moral law; thus according to them men and nations that are corrupt perish; those that are kind and just survive --- an oversimplified statement of "sociological" principles, no doubt, but one, viewing the larger currents of history, which contains a significant core of truth, if we think in terms of a statistical average.

b. God works in life and history at the heart of things through righteous persons, Is. 32:1f. The saving effect of righteous personality is the root idea of the Messiah in the Old Testament. In Isaiah Ch. 53 the teaching is that love must turn suffering to good account; this is the ultimate positive way that God deals with suffering.

c. Finally the teaching of the OT is that the Divine Spirit works through righteous social order or justice. Recall the early laws of Israel, as enshrined in Ex. 21-24 and in Deuteronomy, setting forth the relations of neighbor to neighbor in remarkably advanced, humane terms; the idea of limited or constitutional monarchy suggested by the coronations of Saul and David; or Isaiah's and Micah's vision of international law and peace under world government.

In sum the Old Testament contains a positive philosophy of history. History is "progressive", developmental, or linear. History for the prophets was like an arrow, rather than a circle (contrast Hindu and Greek cyclical conceptions of history). In spite of sin, historical evil, and reverses, man's history was moving toward a wonderful consummation. Apparently more optimistic about human social forces themselves, and the effect that God's spirit of justice and love would have in moving in them, some of the prophets thought this event would take place within historical time, and defined it as a Golden Age of universal, peace, prosperity, justice, and international law, under the inspired leadership of Israel and her ethical religion. The apocalyptic prophets, on the other hand, who were more pessimistic about the possibility of a happy outcome within history itself, looked for the consummation beyond historical time, in a transcendent or heavenly future, established by a direct, supernatural intervention of God.

2. Recall that the problem of why there is natural evil or physical suffering, why there is pain and disease was the special concern with which the Book of Job wrestles. Job repudiates the idea that disease is a divine judgment for sin, as did Jesus at a later time. He questions the over-all teaching of the prophets that righteousness inevitably brings health and prosperity, while wickedness must always be followed by calamity; for what about righteous individuals who suffer? The prophetic teaching about historical retribution may work for human life as a whole, considering men and human groups in the mass, as a kind of statistical average, over the long haul of time; but how are we to explain particular suffering, if God is good and just? Recall that the book of Job may be viewed as pointing to the scientific idea of the reign of natural law as the largest solution to the problem of natural evil, ch. 38, as well as announcing that existence is at best mystery, and that faith must reach for an ultimate assurance of the goodness and adequacy of God which natural experience cannot fully attain.

Recall that a further dimension of insight into the problem of suffering is given in II Isaiah, chap. 53. The latter book sets forth the idea, which we have already reviewed, that through suffering love and service, salvation and betterment may ultimately come. In both Isaiah and Job in their respective ways the Hebrews escape the pessimistic conception of suffering of original Hinduism and Buddhism. The Hebrew writings suggest a theory of suffering in conformity with their optimistic view of life and existence as a whole in contrast to the pessimistic outlook of classic Indian thought.

Let us now summarize in largest terms the OT concept of salvation and destiny. On the negative side, salvation in all religious systems has meant escape, and the attainment of ultimate security and peace, from evil of some kind or degree. On the positive side salvation has meant the process by which men come to stand within the divine favor or security. What constitutes "the divine favor" is defined differently at different historic levels of the Old Testament, according to varying conceptions of God's nature and requirements. In the highest reaches of Old Testament thought, salvation, or the state of standing in the divine favor and security, is defined as personal, ethical fellowship with men and God. To analyze this development more fully we continue.

By this time you are aware that there are two major streams of thought in the Old Testament that bear upon this theme: the priestly and the prophetic. The former concerned sacrifices and man's ceremonial duties; the latter man's ethical duties. Though they are sometimes rival forces, they are not, in the final development entirely exclusive. On the one hand, we have seen how the highest prophetic insight utilizes the concept of "sacrifice" by turning it to profoundest ethical account in Isaiah 53. On the other, the Old Testament ceremonial-sacrificial tradition, in its later development, as revealed in many of the Psalms, expresses the characteristic Hebrew concept of salvation as ethical communion or fellowship with God.

Salvation in the ceremonial-priestly tradition. Before the stage of such personal fellowship with God is reached, however, we recall the early animistic and tribal interpretations of the divine and the manner of gaining its favor. For example, in the more primitive times, Yahweh was thought to be personally unapproachable, so that the people were warned not to come too near the mountain "lest they break through to the Lord and gaze and many of them perish!" Ex. 19:21. Thus only Moses and Aaron and their priestly successors could address God for the tribe. Ex. 4:24-26 tells us that Yahweh sought to kill Moses because the latter had failed to perform the ancient rite of circumcision upon his son, and how the danger was averted when Moses' wife, Zipporah, performed the ceremony. In such accounts as these we observe that the divine favor was guaranteed when the local dwelling place of Yahweh was not trespassed or some ancient taboo transgressed. To stand within the divine favor was, partially at least, a matter of not provoking an arbitrarily dangerous deity. Furthermore, we recall how divination was employed to learn Yahweh's will or secure his judgment (Ex. 22:9; I Sam. 14:24-46; 23:9-14; 30:7-8). Such "external...methods traditionally used for securing superhuman guidance and support...involved not so much the fulfillment of inward spiritual conditions as the successful working of a magical technique."¹⁵⁴

Of central prominence was animal sacrifice, in which the blood was thought to have a mysterious potency or efficacy. In Ex. 24:8 we read how the blood of the sacrificial victim, thrown upon the people, secured the covenant with Yahweh. We remember that careful reading reveals that in the most primitive times human sacrifice was regarded as a divine command, Ex. 13:2; 22:29; 34:19-20; Num. 3:12; 18:15. We pointed out that the provision of a "redemptive" agent or substitute for the first born of man (which was originally commanded to be sacrificed along with the

¹⁵⁴Henry Emerson Fosdick, Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 203.

first-born of beasts, Ex. 22:29; 13:13, suggested how the Hebrew conscience at an early day struggled to get away from this barbaric custom. We have learned how the great prophets denounced the Baalistic practice of infant sacrifice; Jeremiah declared that such had never been the command of God, 7:31; 19:5; 32:35. (Note Ex. 20:25-26, 31). Infant sacrifice was required by the fertility conception of deity in the Baal religion, which the Hebrews often confused with the worship of Yahweh, and which the above references in Ex. 13:2f may reflect. In any case, for the Hebrews animal sacrifice became the prevailing custom.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of the ancient sacrificial rites, such as the sprinkling of the blood on the altar and the people, Ex. 24:6-8; the sending of the scapegoat into the wilderness laden with the "sins" of the people, Lev. 16; 14:7, 5, 3; or the laying of hands on the sacrificial victim, Lev. 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15; 8:14; 24:14; Num. 8:10; 27:18, 23; Deut. 34:9. The scapegoat seemed to be "a realistic way of representing their sins as now borne away to the evil spirit (Azzazel) to whom they belonged."¹⁵⁵ Some of the references above indicate that the laying-on of hands was an act of benediction. Primitive sacrifice meant various things: gifts and thank offerings to the deity; meals of which the divinity partook; acts of homage or worship to the god -- all moods were included, gratitude, rejoicing, penitence, fellowship.

Relative to the special substitutionary theory, that the central meaning of the sacrifices was the transference of the offerer's guilt to the animal, such facts as the following should be borne in mind: other offerings "atone" for sin, not only blood offerings, Lev. 5:11-13. The victim's flesh was not rendered unclean by the sacrifice, but was made "most holy", Lev. 10:17 and is eaten by the priest. Offerings were not accepted in atonement for some sins meriting death, as for example where Num. 15:30-31 refers to such wilful or "high handed" offenses without defining them. Stevens has observed that the acceptance of an offering for sins deserving capital punishment after sincere repentance "would be most natural if the system contemplated the substitution of the victim's death for that of the offerer."¹⁵⁶ Then why in the case just mentioned was there no substitution provided?

Concerning the general significance of the early sacrifices, Stevens concludes that "they did express contrition and were regarded as the divinely appointed means whereby sin's heinousness should be confessed and attested...It is clear, however, that the Levitical Code assumes that God is not hostile to man or undisposed to forgive, but that, of his own accord, he approaches the sinner in mercy, and himself provides the ways and means of reconciliation...God accepts him (the offerer) in his offering which expresses his intention of obedience and his yearning for salvation."¹⁵⁷

Fosdick reminds us that we may trace the lift of the sacrificial-ceremonial tradition toward the advanced spiritual or inward meaning of personal fellowship with God in the major fact that "after the final destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, Jewish rabbis began teaching prayer as a substitute for the old offerings...(Ps. 141:2)"¹⁵⁸ This development in the priestly tradition no doubt reveals the influence of the prophetic movement upon it. Relative to this transmutation of sacrifice into prayer within the ceremonial tradition, Fosdick continues

¹⁵⁵G.B. Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, Scribners, , p.11.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵⁸Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 205.

in his memorable summary:

"The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, for example, represent the passionate devotion of the post-Exilic community, rebuilding the holy city and temple and restoring the sacrifices... 'Remember me, O my God, for good' (Neh. 13:31). Clearly, to men like this the sacrificial system was not a substitute for the interior practice of God's presence but rather the 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'... It is in the Psalter, however, that the development of personal prayer within the sacrificial system is most convincingly made evident", such as Psalms number 27, 42, 43, and 66 bear out.¹⁵⁹

Salvation in the prophetic tradition. The 8th and 7th century prophets were the chief instruments of transforming the notion of sacrifice from an outward technique into interior and ethical significance. In doing so they came to reject virtually all outward ceremony and sacrifice as not required of the Lord, and thought of them as even odious to him, when practiced without inner ethical sincerity and repentance. Their point was that sacrifice as a substitute for a righteous life was an abomination (Amos 5:21f; Hos. 6:6; Is. 1:11; Mi. 6:8). They stressed righteousness rather than ritual. We observed, however, how Ezekiel restored concern with the ceremonies. To trace the prophetic contribution to the idea of salvation in some detail, by way of review, we may recall their two perspectives:

One prophetic approach treats salvation in external, national, social or collective terms, and looks toward the coming age of deliverance from enemies, the time of happiness and prosperity under a wise and just government, which will be world-wide in its influence or sovereignty. The apocalyptic thinkers believed that the deliverance could come about only by the superhuman intervention of God into earthly history and a supernatural overthrow of evil. We have reviewed the several conceptions of the Messiah as the primary agent of social deliverance or salvation -- the Ideal King or Son of David for the older ethical prophets; the supernatural Son of Man for the later apocalyptists. Highest in the idea of the instrument of national and international salvation was the conception of Israel as a Servant among the nations in II Isaiah; out of this grew the conception of the Messiah as Suffering Servant.

In prophetic thought, however, national salvation is never merely political deliverance -- there are personal, ethical and spiritual conditions at the heart of social salvation (Is 11:4; 32:1-2; 61:1-2; Jer. 31:33). The nation will be restored, if there is personal repentance and inward moral cleansing. Thus prophetic thought, especially in Jeremiah, focused upon individual responsibility, a concern heightened after "the frustration of the national hopes consequent upon the exile."¹⁶⁰

Accordingly the basic meaning of salvation for the great prophets is salvation from sin and its evil personal and social consequences, and to or into the higher ethical fellowship with God (Is. 1:16-18; 43:25; 44:22; 54:8,10; 55:1-3; Jer. 29:12; 31:34; 33:8; Ez. 36:26-27). For the great prophets the Divine Love is the ultimate ground and guarantee of salvation. God antecedently loves and forgives men their trespasses, if they acknowledge and repent of them, and men must let the Divine Love flow through them outward to their neighbor. (Hos. 2:19; 11:9; 14:4; Jer. 31:3; Ps. 103). The only conditions that the prophets prescribe are ethical repentance, faith, obedience (Mc. 6:6-8; Is. 1:11-18; 8:17; 30:15; 57:15; Ps. 51:15-17).

The prophetic idea of God's love as the supreme agency of redemption comes

¹⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 218-20.

¹⁶⁰Stevens, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, op. cit., p. 24.

to climax in Is. 53. Here we observed that the priestly concept of sacrifice is rendered completely ethical and personal in the idea of suffering service. In a sense the priestly concept of salvation and the prophetic meet here; yet in the union the old priestly concept is transmuted into something new. The office of the Suffering Servant of Is. 53 is more prophetic than priestly -- his suffering involves the "substitution" of real life: one person making another's suffering lot his own. By his act of suffering service he expresses the Divine Nature and Compassion, in a measure reflects that larger Life of God, which has taken up into itself the human suffering, bears the consequence of sin in suffering, and, in spite of suffering, or through it, works service and salvation. Since we have previously discussed the significance of this chapter, we need not here deal further with it.

Having now traced the rise of the two great traditions about salvation and having noted their ultimate similarity in the concept of ethical fellowship with God, let us summarize the over-all Hebraic view, using the broad categories of "good" and "evil" to polarize our thought.

In largest Hebraic understanding, the ultimate Good, to or for which men are saved, is the fulfillment of personal life, for oneself and others. Personal life is not to be denied or annihilated, as in some expressions of Hinduism and Buddhism. Unlike much of the emphasis in classic eastern mystical religion, which conceived of salvation primarily as a union of the finite with the infinite Divine substance "in which the personal self is lost"; for the prophetic religion of the Hebrews salvation was conceived without ambiguity as "a fellowship of persons in which the real self is achieved."¹⁶¹ This concept of the ultimate good has as its background the Hebraic optimism about the finite material creation. The first chapter of Genesis declares that the world and man were created good and were intended for good. Finite personal being or existence is regarded favorably in the Hebraic view, because all existence has its source in Ultimate Personality or an ultimate Person, God. The love of God that comes before all other love is recognition of the cosmic status and worth of personality. The fulfillment of personal life for the finite person would be fellowship with the Ultimate Person, as the ground and source of his being. But the sign by which we profess our knowledge and love of God, is the knowledge and love of our neighbor, concern for men as God's highest creative work, the expressions of his very being nearest at hand. Personal fulfillment in fellowship has an earthly realization in our social and historical relationships; and ultimately it has a heavenly and immortal consummation, according to Biblical thought.

The primary evil from which we are saved is ethical, rather than physical or metaphysical. (We have seen how the Hebrews dealt with the problem of physical evil, or pain, in Job.) The evil form which we must be saved would be those inordinate forms of pride that would lead to sins of aggression and injustice. Man may fall into sin through temptation to use his higher spiritual capacities of freedom and reason for entirely selfish purposes.

According to the highest thought of the Old Testament, however, sin is not pre-determined or inevitable (Ez. Ch. 18); men may live, or come to love, prevailing in freedom from sin; and salvation may be expressed in terms of initial and continuing sense of moral well-being, as God's spirit may inspire and sustain the moral life.

This Old Testament doctrine of salvation in its most positive possibility, as freedom from sin, or relative sinlessness, as a legitimate practical ideal,

¹⁶¹Harris Franklin Rall, Christianity, op. cit., pp. 64-65. Care should be taken, of course, relative to a general comparison of this kind, to acknowledge the personalistic developments within the oriental systems.

does not mean, of course, that human beings, in their finitude, or limitation of judgment, experience, moral perception or moral will, do not sometimes fail in duty, or upon occasion blunder, to realize that action has been less than "perfectly ideal". A life is "justified", in the Biblical doctrine, if it is characteristically free from evil or hurtful intention, free from inordinate ranges of pride, and makes continuing effort to live "righteously", that is, humanely and justly, and in integrity.

When men do sin, however, salvation takes place through repentance and inward cleansing, the sacrifices of a loving and yielding heart, and is assured or guaranteed by the ethical nature of God as forgiving love. Thus, in most inclusive sense for the Hebrews, salvation is a fellowship of persons -- it is ethical and personal union or communion. It is love. The "salvation" which the Hebraic mind experienced was indeed "mystical" and "rapturous". but it was the mysticism and rapture of communion: with God and fellow creature. Love and compassion are the dominating emotional and intellectual characteristics of this salvation. In Hebraic thought, moral oneness with God constitutes ultimate assurance of the divine favor or security -- a union of motives, purposes, and acts of will. The most intense expressions of this concept of salvation as ethical fellowship with God are found in the prayers of Jeremiah and in portions of the Psalms.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
Ps. 27:1

"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord:
and who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the Lord
and vindication from the God of his salvation." Ps. 24:3-5

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
in keeping them there is great reward.
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression."
Ps. 19:7-13

"He judged the cause of the poor and needy;...
Is not this to know me? says the Lord." Jer. 22:16