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The Hebrews' Messianic hope down to the close of the Babylonian captivity

Lantz, Marian Gertrude

Boston University

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Boston University
CHAPTER III

ISAIAH

A. Factors which influenced the prophet's message.

After Hosea, prophecy had its home exclusively in Judah. The first of the great southern leaders was Isaiah whose ministry began while Hosea was still prophesying in the north. For more than forty years this great prophet preached continually his one sermon of "trust in Yahweh", and because of his insistence on that point he has often been called the "prophet of faith". His faith was so closely connected with the national history of the period that we cannot understand his Messianic contributions without some knowledge of their political significance. Isaiah was evidently a man of high social rank and belonged to a family of importance. He had extraordinary knowledge of court and international affairs, and was able to speak to the king in terms of comparative equality. Some scholars say he was a cousin of Uzziah, the vigorous ruler whose reign of fifty-two years had been a period of power and splendor for Judah. When this king died in 740 B.C. the young prophet began his active work. He evidently had knowledge of the character of the new king, Jotham, was aware of the critical condition of the nation, the approaching danger of the Assyrian invasions, and was anxious about the future of Judah. His
royal position and his acquaintance with affairs of state would make him feel keenly his responsibility to his country and their relationship to Yahweh. It must, therefore, have been a natural thing for him to go to the house of Yahweh to meditate and ponder on his course of action. While there one day he received a vision which made such an impression on him that his whole life and thought was thereafter controlled by it. He saw the Divine King on His throne in the temple of Jerusalem, an unusual experience, for Yahweh was considered too holy and too majestic for a human being to come in direct contact with Him. But Isaiah had done so. For him, Yahweh was transcendent and exalted in holiness and mystery, but immanent in the affairs of the world and His people, and ever present in His holy city.

"Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of Hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory." (1)

It was a strange message that Isaiah received from Yahweh, but it is understandable when we realize that he knew the character of his people and understood the uselessness of any attempt to change it. Isaiah responded to the divine call of service, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Quickly and gladly he cried, "Here am I, send me." (2) But the commission was one of destruction and hopelessness.

(1) Isaiah 6:3
(2) Isaiah 6:8
"Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." (1)

Isaiah showed no evidence of hope that his words would have any effect. But because he was a messenger of God he had to sound forth his prediction of evil. There was no other course for him to take.

Jotham ruled but five years, so it was in connection with the two kings Ahaz and Hezekiah that Isaiah prophesied. Contemporary with these kings were the four great Assyrian monarchs, Tигlath Pileser IV, Shalmaneser, Sargon and Sennacherib, all noted for their military ability and victorious campaigns. During all the years of the monarchy of the Hebrew nation there had been no more critical time than this. In 734 B.C. the Syro-Ephraimitish War took place, in which Ahaz, panic-stricken at the invasion of Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Ephraim, appealed to Assyria for help. These kings with Philistia were trying to force Judah into a coalition with them. The refusal of Ahaz led to the invasion of Judah by the allies and the attempt to put another king on the throne. Ahaz, against the advice of Isaiah won temporary safety for himself by placing his kingdom under the protection of Assyria. This

(1) Isaiah 6:9,10.
meant greater oppression of the poor and heavy taxation to pay the huge tribute necessary to pacify the greedy monarch. The very next year the Assyrian army invaded the northern part of Israel and in 732 B.C. Damascus, the buffer state between northern Israel and Assyria, was captured. In 722 B.C. Samaria was taken and Israel was carried into captivity. During the next few years there were repeated efforts on the part of the subject nations to throw over the foreign yoke, each effort being met by repeated invasions by the Assyrian king. He was not interested in Judah, but in Egypt, and in order to get there he had to conquer the fortifications down the Mediterranean coast. Neither did he intend to allow Jerusalem to cut off his retreat if such should be necessary. Ahaz had died in 715 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Hezekiah a weak and changeable character. He, with other short-sighted politicians wished to trust in the offered assistance of Egypt and throw off the yoke of Assyria. Through the influence of Merodach-baladan, the instigator of revolutions in Babylonia, Judah joined with Ashdod and other Philistine cities in 711 B.C. in a revolt against Sargon. The result for Ashdod was capture and deportation of the people, although Judah seems to have escaped. In 705 B.C. following the death of Sargon, another revolt took place under Egyptian influence. For a time they were successful, Assyria being busy with uprisings
in the east. In 701 B.C., however, Sennacherib, the new king arrived with a large army and devastated Judah. Even Jerusalem was demanded. But at the critical time, new disturbances in the east appeared, Sennacherib was needed at home, his army was probably incapacitated by a pestilence, and Jerusalem was left uncaptured and independent, although it continued to pay tribute to Assyria as before.

B. Contributions of the prophet.

1. Early prophecies.

This brief survey of historical events shows that a man of Isaiah's type and position was necessarily in close connection with the affairs of the nation. His understanding of the outcome of such instability as Ahaz and Hezekiah showed, pledging loyalty to one nation, only to withdraw it in favor of another less powerful one, led him to the belief in the certainty of disaster. His interest in the social and economic conditions in Judah, and his knowledge of the holiness and righteousness of Yahweh compelled him to preach largely a message of punishment and judgment. He felt himself to be a predictor of evil, rather than of hope. Isaiah, like Amos, believed in a day of Yahweh that would bring disaster for Israel. But since he lived enough later to have seen the approaching doom of Judah as well as that of her northern neighbor, and since Judah was his home, his prophecies were directed mainly against his own nation.
He felt keenly the corruption of the citizens, the pride and shallowness of the women, the injustice of the rich and their oppression of the poor. Such wickedness would have to be punished.

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (1)

"Yahweh standeth up to contend, and standeth to judge the peoples." (2)

"Therefore is the anger of Yahweh kindled against his people. And he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the mountains tremble, and their dead bodies are as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." (3)

Social conditions were unbearable, and the king was but a tool of the politicians instead of a faithful servant of Yahweh.

This judgment was to come to pass by means of the Assyrian army. They were Yahweh's instrument to purge away the evil, they were "Yahweh's wrath to burn out their sin." (4) In fact they were the rod in Yahweh's hand to to punish his disobedient people. In time God would visit judgment upon the self-exalted king of Assyria, for Isaiah always emphasized the point that a nation that exalteth

(1) Isaiah 1:15
(2) Isaiah 3:13
(3) Isaiah 5:25
itself should be brought low. God only should be exalted. Arrogance, pride and trust in material strength and achievement were a sure precursor of downfall. Assyria, then, was the instrument of punishment, but Yahweh was the planner and executor.

"Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traffick-ers are the honorable of the earth? Yahweh of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." (1)

In Isaiah 10:5-15 Isaiah denounced Assyria for not recognizing the fact that it was but the tool in Yahweh's hands, and for overstepping the limits of its power.

Although the punishment was harsh, Isaiah's message was not without hope. Early in his ministry, during the Syro-Ephraimitish war, when the terrified Ahaz was inspecting his water supply and preparing for a siege, Isaiah went to the king with his little son, Shearjashub, as a living message of trust in Divine power. The child had been named "remnant shall return," and this child was proof of Isaiah's hope that eventually a small group of people would remain faithful to Yahweh and be saved. At first this idea of a remnant was emphasized less than the promise of judgment. But as the situation became more hopeless, Isaiah's faith arose to the assurance that Yahweh was all-powerful, and would not deliver His sanctuary over to the enemy. Evident-

(1) Isaiah 23:8,9.
ily Ahaz paid no attention to Isaiah’s warnings and did not believe his declaration that God who controlled all the movements of history would take care of His people in this crisis. Already he had forsaken the divine care of Yahweh for the material assistance of Assyria. Isaiah in desperation offered him a sign.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." (1)

Ahaz had failed to follow Isaiah’s advice and had refused to trust in Yahweh. Therefore, Judah would be laid waste, her country would be desolate, and hunger and suffering should be the portion of her people. Many have tried to give this passage Messianic meaning, and insist that it was a prediction of the miraculous birth of Jesus. But the fact that it was a sign for Ahaz removes any chance of the Immanuel being an agent of salvation. The term Immanuel had been used through many preceding generations to designate the faith of the Hebrew people. It was a phrase and not a name, and in this case carried in its symbolism a popular hope. Isaiah probably used the name to calm the fears of those who lacked faith, to challenge the faith of Ahaz the king, in this important crisis, and create trust in Yahweh.

(1) Isaiah 7: 14f. - 17
rather than fear of neighboring enemies whose land would soon be forsaken. The sign which served as this warning stated that a young woman of marriageable age should soon bear a son whom she would name Immanuel - "God is with us".

Before this child should come to years of discretion and should be able to distinguish good from evil, Judah would be laid waste. There would be no harvests, and the only food the child would be able to obtain would be curds and honey, the food of nomads. Judgment would fall upon Judah by means of the country on whom Ahaz was now depending: viz. Assyria.

2. Messages between 734 and 722 B.C.

Between the fall of Damascus and the fall of Samaria there is only one passage of Messianic significance, and the date of this is very uncertain. Many scholars think Isaiah 9:1-7 is the work of a post-exilic writer. Others think it can very probably be attributed to Isaiah himself at this time of national conflict and danger. Tiglath Pileser IV was the greatest conqueror of his time. He was a marvelous planner of campaigns, a perfect warrior in time of battle, a gatherer of enormous spoils, and a king and lover of war.

Would it not have been natural for Isaiah to have seen a vision of a great ruler for Israel as contrasted with this Assyrian monarch? The glorious reign of David was long past. Ahaz, a weakling, was on the throne of Judah and was not
worthy of his royal authority. This mighty king of Assyria was threatening the safety of Jerusalem, and it was very natural for Isaiah to hope for a time when Israel should again be ruled by a great king. What is his ideal of the future ruler?

"And his name shall be called, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (1)

In other words his first three characteristics are similar to those of Tiglath Pileser, himself. He will be a wonderful planner and statesman; a mighty God, a divine hero, whose worth is measured by his success in battle; and an everlasting Father, hard to translate but probably meaning an overpowering master and father of spoils; but instead of a king and lover of war, he will be a king and lover of peace. He will be a greater warrior than Tiglath Pileser, but he will fight only because he desires Peace and Good-will.

In 726 B.C. Tiglath Pileser died and the great Shalmaneser became the monarch. Again Israel under king Hoshea revolted against her new master, and again met with no success. For in 722 B.C. when Sargon was emperor, Samaria was taken and Israel was carried into captivity. Isaiah still pronounced his message of judgment. Isaiah 9:7-10:4, 5:25-29, 28:1-4, are examples of it. It is a picture of desolation he gave us, for Israel had gone into exile never to return.
Judah did not learn through the experience of her northern neighbors and seemed blind to her own inevitable fate. Hezekiah, who became king in 715 B.C. was strongly in favor of accepting the offered help of Egypt in an effort to regain independence from Assyria. Isaiah saw the futility of such a course, realized his fellow-countrymen's lack of faith in Yahweh, and walked through the streets of Jerusalem barefoot and naked for three years as a sign of the fate that was surely coming soon to Judah. This preaching proved effective at the time, but in 705 B.C. when Sargon died and Sennacherib took his place, the whole country rose in rebellion. Isaiah alone realized the utter hopelessness of it all. More emphatically and more persistently than ever he preached his sermon of faith and reliance on God, warning Judah of the suffering and captivity that would come to her if she did not repent. The enemy was approaching, the danger was becoming more threatening, and then it was that Isaiah preached his doctrine of the Inviolability of Zion. [1] Judah would be devastated but Jerusalem would be saved. Isaiah could not understand the religion of Yahweh without its temple. Some external dwelling was necessary for Him. To Isaiah it was inconceivable that Yahweh would allow His holy city to be destroyed; on the contrary it would be the

(1) Isaiah 29:1-15
Assyrians who would suffer defeat and punishment. Also Isaiah knew that the enemy would be called home to settle other troubles, and Jerusalem would be left in peace. What he prophesied came true, for Sennacherib's invasion was interrupted by uprisings in the east, and Jerusalem was safe for a while longer.

Now it was that Isaiah foretold in words of marvelous beauty and fervor the coming of an ideal kingdom and described the endowments of the ideal king.

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him. . . . for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea." (1)

Some claim that this passage is also post-exilic, and others claim that it is very possible that it could have been uttered at a time like this when Judah was in such need of a leader. If Isaiah stood for the doctrines of the "Inviolability of Zion" and the "saved remnant" of the Hebrew people, he could also have pictured the future condition and ideal ruler of this tiny group of individuals. The succeeding verses, Isaiah 11:10-16, which are collections of material dealing with the future glory of the kingdom of Yahweh under the rule of a Messianic king, are, however, generally conceded to have been written much later.

Isaiah 11:1-9
4. **Summary of Isaiah's Messianic contributions.**

Isaiah preached first and foremost the imminent and certain destruction of his people. Like Amos, he pictured the day of Yahweh in the immediate future in terms of doom and punishment; Yahweh was a god of righteousness first, and a protector of Israel second. But through fiery trial and severe chastisement the nation was finally to be restored on a righteous foundation. (1) This conclusion he reached because of his ever-growing conviction in the inviolability of Zion and the anticipation that a remnant of individuals would remain faithful to Yahweh and be saved. He maintained that "Sennacherib would not enter Jerusalem, because Yahweh would defend it, for His own sake, and for David's sake." (2)

Although Assyria had been the rod of Yahweh's anger, by her arrogance and pride she had made herself unfit to be any longer Yahweh's instrument of punishment. This Zion would be recognized as the center of Yahweh's dominion, and Yahweh Himself would rule His world. A faithful little band of people was to be the nucleus with which He would build a new and glorious City of Righteousness. Out of the remnant would arise a new state.

The question which arises here is how far and in what way did Isaiah elaborate and describe the life in Zion.

(1) Isaiah 1:24-26

after the judgment? Most of the passages inserted which give a glowing picture of the future city are credited to post-exilic writers. Even chapter 11:1-9 is seriously questioned. Charles selects 1:24-26 as the only passage in which Isaiah prophesied the advent of the kingdom, and in connection with this there is no mention of any individual Messiah. If we agree with George Adam Smith and accept 9:6,7, and 11:1-9 as the work of Isaiah, and there are good reasons as we have previously mentioned for accepting them as such, we still must deny that the prophet looked forward to any super-human, religious leader. He merely pictured the need of Judah at the critical period of her history, a national leader with qualities of wisdom and discernment, a true descendent of the royal line of David, whose reign was so glorified and haloed in the mind of every Hebrew. This "anointed one" would rule his people with equity and righteousness.
CHAPTER IV
MICAH
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MICAH

A. Factors which influenced the prophet's message.

In striking contrast to Isaiah was his younger contemporary, the prophet Micah. Born and brought up on the western slope of the hills of Judah not twenty miles away from the home of Amos, he inherited the clearness of vision and thoughtful perspective of the country dweller. He was a peasant, pleading the cause of his fellow peasants against their rich oppressors, a prophet of the poor who championed their cause fearlessly. Because he was this, he saw the injustice and vice of the capital city, Jerusalem, and dared to threaten it with destruction. He also inherited the critical historical background of Hezekiah's reign. His little town of Moresheth-Gath was surrounded by no protecting walls as was Jerusalem, and it is possible that his own farm and those of his neighbors were devastated as the result of the Assyrian invasion. It was after 721 B.C. that his fiery message was called forth, either at the crisis of 711 when Sargon conquered Ashdod, or during the later crisis of 701 B.C. at the time of Sennacherib's invasion. Only a part of the book named Micah is attributed to the period of this period, and even that part has been disfigured by the errors of copyists. Charles assigns chapters 1-3 with the
exception of 2:12,13 to Micah, the whole of which was written concerning one short period of Hebrew history.

During the years 715 to 701 B.C. Judah was the scene of political intrigue and numerous secret treaties. A pro-Assyrian and a pro-Egyptian party fought for the loyalty of the king Hezekiah, and the pro-Egyptian must have met with success, for in 713, and in 705 B.C. revolts against Assyria were attempted and failed.

B. Prophet's contribution.

In the midst of this conflict and political turmoil, Micah uttered his public messages. They were mainly religious and ethical in tone and expressed the passion for justice and social reform.

"The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Yahweh, and say, Is not Yahweh in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us." (1)

voices the wrong conception of Yahweh that was influencing the life of the people. In Micah's effort to change this conception, he set forth his idea of the Day of Yahweh. Divine favor could not be bought with ritual and sacrifice but with attainment of righteousness and ideals of justice. His message was one of denunciation and threatening. Apparently he had no idea that his audience would repent, since no word

(1) Micah 3:11.
is preserved for us that shows any hopes for Israel's future. Samaria and Jerusalem were both to be utterly destroyed and laid waste. Micah was the first prophet to threaten Jerusalem with absolute doom and no chance of ultimate redemption.

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest."

This unyielding statement on his part must have taken courage and daring, for to the citizens of Jerusalem such a thing could not happen. Yahweh would not allow His Holy Sanctuary to be profaned by pagan hands. Isaiah was full of assurance that although at the very gate, the Assyrian army could not harm the city of Yahweh, but must fall helpless before it. Micah thought very differently. He, too, loved Jerusalem, but he was overwhelmed at the thought of her danger. The fact that he lived apart from the city made it possible for him to judge it in moral terms. For Micah the future of Israel did not lay with the church, state or society in Jerusalem. Yahweh's interest in the establishment and enforcement of justice and right was far greater than his interest in any institution, even his own temple." (2)

Although he prophesied the destruction of the capital, there is no proof that he expected the complete annihilation

(1) Micah 3:12
(2) J. M. P. Smith: Micah, (Bible for Home and School) p. 167.
of the whole nation. There are no Messianic promises in
Micah's contribution, but he like Amos must have entertained
such hopes. Yahweh who was Lord of heaven and earth would
not let Israel entirely perish. But like the earlier proph-
et, he also felt himself to be a prophet of doom.

"But as for me, 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."(1)

Whatever prophecies of a future kingdom we find in the later
chapters of the book were lacking in the original message,
and are the additions of later editors and writers.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHECY
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From this survey we find that these four Eighth Century prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah came with a message of religious fervor and spiritual loftiness. They announced that the Day of Yahweh was at hand, that it was to be a day of doom brought about by foreign invasion. They believed, however, that it was not to be simply a political catastrophe, but a culmination of a divine plan inaugurated, managed and purposed by the perfect wisdom and knowledge of Yahweh. Amos at first glance might seem to have been anti-Messianic, so filled are his prophecies with doom and disaster. But in these very prophecies is a vivid portrayal of the Messianic ideas of his time; especially of the contemporary conception of the great Day of Yahweh when all the enemies of Judah were to be overthrown and the chosen people were to live in peace and prosperity, in fulfillment of the ancient covenant between Yahweh and Abraham. This prophet's great contribution to the Messianic Hope of his age was a reinterpretation and reevaluation of the true Day of Yahweh which should be primarily a day of judgment for Israel, and a purification of the nation. He mentioned no restoration of a kingdom of God, but he stressed so greatly the peculiar relation of Yahweh to Israel that we can be sure his anti-
icipation was not without hope. Hosea strengthened the idea that Yahweh had a peculiar love for His people and although there must be purification and terrible suffering as a result of sin, His love was changeless and constant. Isaiah was the first prophet to present definitely a Davidic hope with the assurance that after a period of disaster a faithful remnant should be left to start a new kingdom, founded by Yahweh in the inviolable city of Zion, and reigned over by a king of the House of David. Micah did not mention any Davidic king, nor did he believe in the inviolability of Zion. He taught an ethical survival, that those who had a right conception of Yahweh should be the ones whom He would use for His kingdom. Not the inhabitants of Jerusalem but the simple-minded country folk should be the remnant that would walk in intimate companionship with Yahweh.

The emphasis of these eighth century prophets was on judgment rather than blessing. Yahweh was righteous and demanded righteousness of His people. He had no sympathy with the impenitent, wicked, indifferent leaders, and saw the necessity of using Assyria, a heathen nation, to arouse and awaken the public conscience. Yahweh's purpose was disciplinary but redemptive, and in Isaiah's prophecies hope found comfort in the little group of faithful followers called the remnant.
PART III

THE SEVENTH CENTURY PROPHETS
CHAPTER I

PERIOD OF PROPHETIC SILENCE
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After the hosts of Sennacherib withdrew from Jerusalem in 701 B.C., there was a genuine attempt to carry out the will of Yahweh as interpreted by Isaiah and Micah. The book of Kings would have us believe that it was a complete reform and that all the places of worship outside of Jerusalem and all the ancient Canaanite rites were destroyed. Later conditions showed that it was far from complete as well as brief. For when Hezekiah's son Manasseh came to the throne all the old Canaanitish practices and heathen rites were re-established with new force and vigor. The classes who had resented most keenly Isaiah's denunciations now had the chance to express their discontent. Large numbers of the people had regarded these prophets as heretics and radicals, and were unable to comprehend their new and exalted conceptions of Yahweh. Tradition tells us that many of these religious leaders were put to death by Manasseh and that Isaiah was among the number. Jeremiah 2:30 tells of a bloody and terrible reaction that arose against the prophets. This fact if probably historical, for it would have been impossible for fearless men to have witnessed silently such a religious reaction. Neither was it possible for them to have escaped the results of their protests which must have been considered
treason. It was necessary, therefore, for the disciples whom Isaiah had trained and Micah had influenced to work in silence preparing for the future reformation. History had taught them that Yahweh alone was God and that Jerusalem was His dwelling place. The older prophets had insisted on social righteousness and a purely spiritual religion. These disciples felt that for practical use and for the public good, certain rules and regulations were needed. Worship must still be sincere, whole-hearted and moral, but with a distinct place for a "purified sacrificial system."(1) Therefore they set to work to compose a complete legal manual for the everyday life of the Hebrews. We believe that the great law code of Deuteronomy was the result, kept secret for a time, laid away in the temple and not brought to light until the repairing of the temple many years later. We find then that no prophecy of any kind, much less Messianic prophecy, found expression until 639 B. C. when Josiah's reign began. Then it was that Zephaniah, Nahum and Jeremiah began to condemn existing conditions in unsparing terms.

It has been thought by some scholars that the beautiful passages in chapter six and the beginning of chapter seven of Micah may have come from this time of affliction and persecution.

"O my people, what have I done unto thee? and where-in have I wearied thee? . . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God." (1)

The voice of prophecy might be stilled, but Yahweh was present in the hearts of His loyal followers; their piety was being strengthened and spiritualized for future opportunity.

(1) Micah 6:3,8.
CHAPTER II

PROPHETS OF DOOM - ZEPHANIAH AND NAHUM
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A. Zephaniah

1. Factors which influenced the prophet's message.

We have noticed before that every great prophet's messages were closely linked and greatly influenced by the political situation at the time of their utterance. What then were the national and international conditions that brought forth the condemning prophecies of Zephaniah, Nahum and Jeremiah? Assyria was still enjoying unlimited power. During the reign of Esarhadden the greatest development of the empire took place. Egypt was conquered and Assyria became a world power. Ashurbanipal, the next monarch, maintained his international leadership, exacting huge tribute from Judah and other subject nations. But after his death the Assyrian power rapidly declined and the great Empire that had brought terror to many kings descended into chaos. This was partly due to the great invasion of the Scythians, sweeping down from the north over the western portions of the territory of Assyria, bringing fear and desolation wherever they went, although they seem to have left Jerusalem untouched, both on their journey down to Egypt and on the return. This was the situation that called forth the activity of Zephaniah, probably a citizen of Jerusalem. He was well-acquainted
with the city, its religious and social conditions and the life of the aristocracy. This and the superscription in 1:1 has led to the conclusion that he was a member of the royal family. "His complaint was almost wholly against the privileged classes, the rich and the powerful; yet he did not pose as the spokesman of the poor and there is lacking in his utterances that note of sympathy with their suffering which is so evident in Amos and Micah." (1)

2. His prophetic contributions.

He accepted the doctrine of Amos concerning the "Day of Yahweh" and looked upon the coming Scythian invasion of Palestine as the arrival of that judgment.

"The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation. . . . but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land." (2)

Destruction was to sweep over the entire civilized world from north to south. He, too, agreed that the day was close at hand, that it was a day of terror and darkness and that it was to fall primarily on Yahweh's own people. According to Professor Charles the prophet's contribution consisted mainly in that he extended the judgment to include the whole

(2) Zephaniah 1:14,15,18f.
world. "In Zephaniah the judgment appears for the first time to be universal."(1) J. M. P. Smith holds 2:6-10 and 3:8-10 to be doubtful passages, credits the prophet with no constructive thought elsewhere, and so denies that any universal judgment was conceived of by Zephaniah. He merely inherited the eschatology of his times, and the fact that his conception is wanting in definiteness, consistency and moral discrimination shows that the catastrophic, cataclysmic features were but the background for a definite historical disaster. He in agreement with his predecessors emphasized and interpreted the crises of his own day as "ethical agencies for the purificatory chastisement of Israel at the hand of Yahweh." (2) Zephaniah drew a vivid picture of the religious and social situation which was the result of Manasseh's and Amon's reigns. The sins of the people, the worship of foreign gods and the apostasy from Yahweh were made responsible for the coming judgment. Because Yahweh was moral and demanded righteousness from His people the coming day would be one of gloom and darkness.

Some scholars maintain that Zephaniah was not without very definite hope of a restored nation. "A thorough purgation, the removal of the wicked, the sparing of the honest and the meek; faith, in its simplest form of trust in a

righteous God, and character in its basal elements of meekness and truth - these alone survive the judgment." (1) For Zephaniah the doom was too imminent for the people to have a chance to repent. Only a separation of the evil from the good remained, and from the terrors of that judgment only a remnant would escape. The Messianic hope which states that at the end of the judgment, after the purification has taken place a small but righteous remnant will be left in Israel to worship Yahweh in humility and meekness may or may not be attributed to Zephaniah. It is unanimously concluded, however, that his primary emphasis was on the Day of Yahweh and the terrible and mighty manifestation of Yahweh at that time.

B. Nahum

1. Factors which influenced his message.

Sometime between 660 - 607 B. C., probably around 626 B. C. appeared another prophet of doom, Nahum. It was at the death of the powerful Assurbanipal that Assyria showed her visible decline in strength. Two feeble kings followed him, but the empire rapidly sank until the fall of her capital, Ninevah, in 606 B. C.

2. His prophetic contribution.

Nahum's prophecies were concerned with the single

(1) George Adam Smith: Zephaniah, p. 71.
theme of gratitude and exultation over the prospect of the
speedy end of his people's foe. He and his fellow-country-
men had longed for this very event, and looked upon the
impending fall as the vengeance of Yahweh for the sufferings
of His chosen people. No pleading for reform, no denounce-
ment of sin, no Messianic promises are evident in his proph-
ecies, only a vivid picture of his conception of Yahweh as
the ruler of the nations and the avenger of Israel with the
moral principle that sin brings punishment.
CHAPTER III

JEREMIAH
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JEREMIAH

A. Period of the Scythian Invasion.

It was the moral and religious degeneracy of Judah together with the great Scythian invasion that aroused the activity of Jeremiah. These northern barbarians had wrought wide-spread desolation in the Assyrian empire, were indirectly effecting its downfall and now were appearing on the horizon of Palestine. In Isaiah's time the Assyrian army had been interpreted as the instrument of Yahweh's wrath. Jeremiah and Zephaniah looked upon these invading tribes in the same way. They were the means by which Yahweh would punish His people for their misdoings.

Jeremiah was of priestly descent, the son of Hilkiah of Anathoth, a town about three miles north east of Jerusalem. Like the other prophets he was conscious of a divine call to the prophetic office. It was about 626 B.C. after Josiah had been reigning for thirteen years, that Jeremiah had a vision of Yahweh in human form, who told him that he was chosen to be a "prophet of the nations." This seemed to him an impossible and hopeless task for such a young, inexperienced person. Also being acquainted with the fate of other earlier prophets who had preached a message of doom and despair, he feared the task with all the dread of a retiring,
sensitive nature. But the conviction of his mission persisted and Jeremiah finally obeyed. His whole life, tragic and bitter as it proved to be was completely dominated by his mission and his consciousness of Yahweh's presence.

During this first part of Jeremiah's ministry he saw nothing but an overwhelming disaster impending. The sins of the people, their apostasy from Yahweh, and their ingratitude would bring desolation.

"Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith Jehovah." (1)

Ritual and sacrifice were not sufficient and would not be accepted, therefore punishment was inevitable. We find no trace of any Messianic hope in his words of judgment and doom. It seemed at first that his prophecy of disaster was to be fulfilled, for the Scythians entered Palestine from the north and marched down the coast. When they reached Egypt, however, they stopped, either because of bribes or successful opposition, and retreated, leaving Judah essentially unchanged. The terrible pictures of destruction imagined by Zephaniah and Jeremiah were not realized. Naturally the people discredited Jeremiah's word and mocked his prophecies. But harder to bear must have been the personal strug-

(1) Jeremiah 2:11,12.
gle within his own soul as he tried to understand his apparent failure.

B. Period of the Reform.

Other crises arrived and other events took place that provided plenty of need for further prophetic activity. The Scythian danger had at least frightened Judah, the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah had opened the eyes of thinking people concerning the religious condition of the nation. And the fact that the Temple at Jerusalem was the only one left unharmed by the Assyrian devastation probably led to the realization of the need of reform and the necessity of repairing the temple. This took place in 621 B.C. during which time a law book was found in the temple and taken to the king. We have since come to the conclusion that the book discovered was a large part of our Deuteronomy. A commission of priests was formed to put the new laws into action and Jeremiah may have helped in this work. Jeremiah 11:1-17 would give us to understand that this was the case. At any rate we have no prophecies from him until after the death of Josiah who was killed at Megiddo in 608 by the Egyptians to whom he denied permission to cross Judah to fight with the Assyrians.

C. Period of the Fall of Nineveh.

1. Historical background of prophecy.

From this time on, Judah was the scene of constant
change and upheaval. In 608 B.C. Babylon was besieging Nineveh; and Pharaoh Necho the ruler of Egypt, eager to win his share of the crumbling Assyrian empire, hastened north with an army. He was opposed near Megiddo by Josiah and his Jewish forces, made strong and confident by the belief that Yahweh of Hosts would grant them a victory. Naturally such an unusual contest resulted in the death of Josiah and the scattering of his army. Jehoahaz, the next king, was de-throned and made captive by the Egyptians who put Jehoiakim on the throne under promise of heavy tribute. But Necho was not master of Judah for very long. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon conquered the Egyptian forces at Carchemish and became monarch of all western Asia. Within a few short years Judah felt the pressure of three great empires, Assyria, Egypt and Babylonia, and the burden of a king who was merely a tool in the hands of a tyrant. Religious confusion, disappointment at the failure of Yahweh to grant them victory, and bitterness at the cruel injustice of the new monarch gave plenty of material for prophetic activity.

2. Prophetic contributions.

Jeremiah realized with bitter regret that Josiah's reformation had not taken a strong hold on the hearts of the people. In defiance of the teachings of the prophets and the directions of their new law book, old traditions were again revived and local shrines and sanctuaries restored.
Again he raised his voice in protest against their evil ways. In the face of personal danger he continued to warn his nation of coming evil and punishment. Because of an address he made in the temple court prophesying the destruction of the temple unless they lived righteous lives, he barely escaped being executed. Isaiah had great confidence in the inviolability of the temple, but Jeremiah as did Micah, denounced such confidence.

"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. . . . Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?" (1)

Because Yahweh was a god of righteousness and had power over other nations as well as Israel, and because of the continued sinfulness of Israel, it followed logically that punishment must come. Judah was to receive banishment from Yahweh's presence as had the northern nation.

"And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." (2)

Her destruction was to be complete. But was there no hope in these messages of Jeremiah? There was only "an occasional gleam of hope which made the prevailing gloom the more visible." (3)

(1) Jeremiah 7:4,9,10
(2) Jeremiah 7:15
(3) H.P. Smith: Religion of Israel, p. 176.
His vivid details of the coming terror left no doubt in the minds of his hearers.

"And the dead bodies of this people shall be food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall frighten them away." (1)

3. Dictation of prophecies to Baruch.

When the news came of the defeat of Necho and the advance of the Babylonians, Jeremiah was stirred to even greater activity. But the public persecution to which the prophet had been subjected made it necessary for him to resort to writing. Jeremiah now dictated to Baruch, his secretary, the prophecies he had delivered during the twenty-three years of his ministry, in the hope that his people might still repent and avert the otherwise inevitable judgment. After these prophecies had been read to the people they were taken to the king, Jehoiakim. But even before the reading of the roll was completed, he threw it in the fire in an attitude of contempt and defiance. Jeremiah nothing daunted, dictated once more the contents of the roll, adding much that was not in the original copy.

D. Period of the Fall of Judah.

1. Historical background of prophecy.

After the battle of Carchemish, Jehoikim paid tribute to Nebuchadrezzar for three years; then he rebelled, trusting

(1) Jeremiah 7:33.
in the false promises of the Egyptians. At first the Babylonian monarch merely sent bands of soldiers who had been stationed in Syria, to punish the rebellious subjects. But upon the death of Jehoiakim and the accession of his son Jehoiachin, in 597 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar came himself with an army and completed the siege of Jerusalem. The young king, seeing the futility of further resistance hastened to surrender and was carried captive to Babylon with the royal household, the nobles, and the chief officials of the land. Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah's was made king, and Jeremiah was left behind to repeat his messages of warning and prophecies of ruin.

2. His prophetic contribution.

In chapter twenty-four in the form of a vision of two baskets of figs, Jeremiah gave a slight expression of a future hope. Evidently those who had been left in Jerusalem looked upon themselves as the righteous remnant, for Jeremiah denounced this belief by saying that the good figs typified the exiles and the bad figs the Judean remainder. With the Babylonian captives had gone Israel's hope as a people. "Over them Jehovah promised to guard if they would but learn from their trying experience to turn to Him with contrition and trust." (1)

In a later chapter (2) in a letter to the exiles he

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(1) Kent: Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, p.268.
(2) Jeremiah 29.
voiced a hope and encouragement that in a generation or two they would be permitted to return (his belief being expressed in the concrete terms of a seventy-year exile). The reason for his prediction was not so much to picture a happy future as it was to separate these captives from any false hopes of an early return. His advice to them was to settle in Babylon as faithful citizens, recognizing in the prosperity of that empire, their "present peace and future hope. . . . With the sublime faith which rose triumphant above the calamities of the moment, he saw that his race still had a mission to perform in the world, and that the God who had led His people through the great crises of the past would not forsake them, when once they had learned the vital lessons which the exile was intended to teach." (1)

A practical expression of Jeremiah's faith in the future of his country was his response while in prison to the request made by his nephew who was desirous of selling a piece of land in Anathoth, the prophet's birthplace. Jeremiah who was given the first opportunity to buy the field saw in the offer an indication of the gracious purpose of Yahweh and bought the property.

"For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land." (2)

(1) Kent: Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, p.269.
(2) Jeremiah 32:15
"Had Jeremiah refused this opportunity to demonstrate in this practical way his faith in Yahweh and in the future value of real estate in Judah, his preaching of hope and promises of restoration would have been worse than useless."

E. Period of the Destruction of Jerusalem.

1. Historical background of prophecy.

Zedekiah was a weak king who lost his crown and brought the nation to its end by his vacillating policy and willingness to accept the advice of self-seeking politicians. Jeremiah urged obedience to Babylon as the only safe and sane conduct, but the king, under the influence of the pro-Egyptian party joined a coalition of neighboring rulers and rebelled against Babylon. For over a year the siege was maintained and in July, 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell for the last time before the Babylonian conquerors. Zedekiah was blinded, his sons slain, and both king and people were sent into exile. Jerusalem, with its temple, palaces and houses, was burned, and the walls of the city broken down. Gedaliah was appointed governor over the few who were left, and Mizpah was made the seat of his government. For a while all was well, for Gedaliah was a man of high character and capacity, generally trusted by the people. But through the jealousy of Ishmael, a descendent of the Judean royal line, Gedaliah

was treacherously slain. Terror-stricken at the possibility of Babylonian vengeance, the survivors fled to Egypt, taking with them the protesting Jeremiah and his secretary, Baruch. Tradition tells us that the tragic life of this great leader was brought to an end in Egypt at the hands of his own countrymen. Through his sufferings and martyrdom he truly symbolized the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." (1)

2. His prophetic contribution.

Because the people were so lacking in righteousness, Jeremiah foretold a pessimistic future for the nation. Their light-heartedness, their sense of security, their conviction of the inviolability of Zion blinded them to reality. They needed this prophet whose eyes saw clearly and whose soul was heavy with responsibility for his people. They needed him and his messages of pestilence and famine and exile, but they rejected him. Punishment came as we have seen, the gloomy prophecies were in general fulfilled and the confidence and complacency that had been built up through centuries of conflict and national loyalty was crushed and broken. Then an element of hope appeared. Chapters 30, 31, and 33 which portray the glorious future of Israel and Judah have been thought by many to have been post-exilic. The greater number of scholars however, credit Jeremiah with

(1) Isaiah 53:3
the original ideas which were colored and glossed by editorial additions. Certain expressions reflect the ideas and language of Isaiah 40, but much is undoubtedly original material.

While a prisoner in the royal palace and after the prophet had seen the exile of the choice spirits of Judah, he expressed his hope in the future of his race.

"At that time, saith Jehovah, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the hills of Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto Jehovah our God."(2)

"There are fewer sublimer scenes in human history than that of the aged and lonely prophet, spurned by his contemporaries, facing death at every turn, calmly viewing the overthrow of his land, of the sacred city and of the temple about which centered the faith and religious institutions of his race; yet absolutely confident that all the passing ruin and desolation were but the door which led to a larger and nobler life."(3)

Jeremiah had lived a long while and had suffered as no other prophet. He had seen the effects of Josiah's reform, had come to understand the superficial and temporary character of reform by authority, and had learned that only

(1) Creelman: An Introduction to the O.T., p.167
(2) Jeremiah 31:1,6.
(3) Kent: Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, p. 293.
through a personal acceptance of law, a relationship between the individual and God could Israel truly be the people of Yahweh. His conception of a restoration, then, was one preceded by repentance and accompanied by a change of heart wrought by Yahweh.

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ... I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (1)

Following the beliefs of the former prophets he connected this renewed kingdom which should gain its rebirth through a long period of purging through captivity, with the Davidic dynasty. This Messianic king was described as a righteous Shoot who would fulfill the ideal of a just and wise monarch, and keep his people in security and peace. (2) But in comparison with his emphasis on the calamities that should befall the nation he spent little time elaborating on the conditions and glorious features of the restoration. The Davidic king was to bear the name, "Yahweh our righteousness." Not only would he be a righteous king but a moral and spiritual redeemer of his people. In striking contrast to the character of the present corrupt leaders of Judah should be the king whom Yahweh would place over His people.

(1) Jeremiah 31:31,33f.  

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." (1)

The scattered captives were again to be established on their native soil, and the name of Yahweh would be honored among all people.

Jeremiah preached a prophecy of hope when one was needed. Beyond the darkness of the present he saw the coming of a brighter future. From the hardships and loneliness of exile some would remain faithful to Yahweh.

Such was the Messianic contribution of the suffering prophet. But greater than any definite Messianic predictions was Jeremiah's gift of a life devoted to truth, a religion that was individual, spiritual and intimate. It is little to be wondered that his sufferings largely shaped that ideal for the nation expressed by Deutero Isaiah and constantly in the minds of Jesus' contemporaries. "His characteristic policy of submission to the Babylonians may be regarded as a proff that he had conceived religion on a higher level than national pride, whilst his confidence in the future restoration of the nation reminds us that his individualism was never uprooted from its social environment." (2) At this crisis in the life of the nation he pointed the race to a worthy future and a noble mission yet to be fulfilled.

(1) Jeremiah 33:15.

(2) Robinson: Jeremiah, (Peake's Commentary), p.475.
PART IV

PROPHETS OF THE EXILE
CHAPTER I

EZEKIEL
CHAPTER I

EZEKIEL

A. With the exile an emphasis on hope rather than doom.

Up to the time of the exile we note that the prophetic message was mainly one of condemnation. Only in rare cases are we given a glimpse of a regenerated national life. While the people slumbered in ignorance of national affairs, lived in rebellion and indifference to the laws of Yahweh, the prophets thundered forth their doctrines of punishment and disaster. When, however, the people were broken by suffering, scattered through captivity and separated from their Holy City, these men of God preached consolation and hope. With the Exile, a different type of judgment was preached, and a message of promise and blessing took the place of doom and destruction.

B. Factors which influenced the prophetic message.

Those Israelites of the northern kingdom who had been deported at the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., were swallowed up by their neighbors and never again played an important part in the religious history of the world. When the nation was destroyed, the religion was lost also. In Judah, Jeremiah had individualized and spiritualized it to such a degree that many came to see that they could go on worshipping Yahweh without His temple. Only a few of these
faithful ones were left in Judah, scarcely any were found among the fugitives in Egypt, but a goodly number were in the groups of Jewish captives that were exiled in Babylonia, both in 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. As Jeremiah had prophesied, upon these "good figs" depended the future of the Jewish race and the Jewish religion. Many conformed to Babylonian customs and forgot Jerusalem; others, because of their disapproval of Yahweh's treatment, began to worship the idols of their new neighbors. But there were earnest pious souls who desired to keep their faith in Yahweh, and whose bitter experience had but made them more loyal to the God of their fathers. They, under the leadership of the prophet Ezekiel preserved the religion of Yahweh and strengthened the conception that true worship consisted of a right relationship between the individual and God.

Nebuchadrezzar was the "most towering personality in the whole history of the ancient Orient."(1) He loved his people and considered their welfare; he spent much time improving his own country, building fortifications and creating wonders that are still the marvels of historians and artists. (The Hanging Gardens of Babylon). The exiled Hebrews were not persecuted, and prospered as they never had done in the barren land of Judah. But they were lonely and hungry for

(1) Cornill: Prophets of Israel, p. 128.
their homeland. To be separated from their native soil was to be separated from their god Yahweh, greatest of all calamities. Heathen influences and pagan customs surrounded them, and the Yahweh worshippers were almost paralysed with the fear that they, like their northern neighbors Israel, would be absorbed by their conquerors. They needed consolation and comfort and they received it. No longer did the prophets denounce and rebuke, but sustained the sorrowful and counselled the weak. Yahweh who had led His people a long and weary way had to be justified if this remnant were to be filled with hope and courage for the future.

Such a task required a master mind which was found in the prophet Ezekiel. He was a man of broad culture, both a prophet and priest, a son of a priest of the temple at Jerusalem, and a member of the aristocratic class. When quite young he was carried captive to Babylon with a group at 597 B.C. and for many years assumed the responsibility of "watchman" over the fortunes of the people, to warn them of the just consequences of their acts.

Like the previous prophets, he received a very real vision that dedicated him to his high and holy task. "In a trance he saw the throne of Yahweh in a great storm-cloud that came from the north and flashed lightening in all directions. Four mysterious beings, looking like men but each with four heads, that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle,
with four wings shining in unearthly brilliance, bore aloft
the throne which had four glittering wheels whose rims were, (1)
covered with eyes. As they approached with a deafening roar
Ezekiel saw "the likeness of the glory of Yahweh." (2) This
mystical experience dominated the prophet's entire ministry.
He had seen the vision of the majesty, glory and holiness
of Yahweh, a new realization of the divine ideal for his
sinful countrymen came to him, and he consecrated his entire
purpose to the fulfillment of this ideal.

C. His prophetic contribution.

1. Before the Fall of Jerusalem.

It was, therefore, that his earlier messages were
dominated by judgment. No other prophet was so severe in
his denunciations of the sins of his countrymen or so vehe-
ment in picturing the long history of apostasy, idolatry and
immorality with their resulting punishment. The remaining
inhabitants in Jerusalem were entertaining plans of rebellion
and the dissatisfied exiles were urging them on. With strange
symbolic actions Ezekiel announced the coming catastrophe of
Judah and Jerusalem, and with elaborate allegories he sur-
veyed the past history of the nation. Isaiah had walked
barefoot and naked for three years as a symbol of the coming

(1) Bewer: Literature of the Old Testament, p. 169
(2) Ezekiel 1:28f.
captivity of Judah. Jeremiah had dashed an earthen jar to pieces to impress his audience with the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel surpassed them all in his dramatic actions. About four years before the actual siege of Jerusalem he carefully measured out war rations of food and water upon which he lived for many days. At another time he represented the fall of Jerusalem by preparing a bundle of clothes and other necessary articles and piling them against the wall surrounding his house. In the night after digging a hole in the mud wall, he crawled through the opening, thrust his goods through, and carried them off as if escaping from a besieging army. Such an action was symbolical of the fate that awaited the remaining inhabitants of Jerusalem who should also be forced into captivity and exile. (1)

The judgment was to be individual as well as national. Religion was a matter of the individual, reward for righteousness was individual, and suffering for wickedness must be the same. A proverb of the people was,

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (2)

Ezekiel taught them that they suffered for their own sins. Sanctuaries had been defiled by pagan sacrifices.

"For when I had brought them into the land, which I swore to give unto them, then they saw every high

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(2) Ezekiel 18:2.
hill, and every thick tree, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there also they made their sweet savor, and they poured out there their drink offerings." (1)

Even the temple itself had been profaned by idolatry. (2)

Bloodshed, oppression, bribery and fraud together with the ritual offences of Sabbath breaking and despising of sacred things were equally denounced by this prophet-priest. In his rebukes we see that Ezekiel had broken with the tradition that children suffer for their parents' sins, and that sons are forgiven through the merits of fathers. According to his theory,

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (3)

False prophets had arisen, leading people astray with their promises of peace and future joy. But destruction would overtake them. Zedekiah had proved disloyal to the king of Babylon, but he and his people would suffer. In fact, Ezekiel went through the entire list of faithless people, the king, the nobles, the idolaters, the lying prophets, the unrighteous individuals, the city of Jerusalem and the entire land of Judah. All were included in his prophecy

(1) Ezekiel 20:28
(2) Ezekiel 8.
(3) Ezekiel 18:20
of ruin. Judah had been rebellious and must be punished.

Toward the close of this period the prophet's wife died. He had loved her dearly but instead of mourning or lamenting as was the eastern custom, he treated her death in a symbolic manner. His experience was a living prophecy of the grief that was to fall upon Judah. As had had suffered so they would suffer when the news should arrive of the downfall of their beloved city. As he had received his loss in silence so their grief would be past all power of expression.

Seven nations are mentioned in his prophecies of doom concerning foreign people. Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt were all to be destroyed. Ammon had mocked Jerusalem in her calamity and Tyre had boasted of her riches, power and wisdom; but both would be punished for their arrogance. Through these chapters we see clearly the desire for revenge on the nations who had gloated over the disaster of Judah, the conviction that Babylon was to dominate the civilized world, and the assurance that Yahweh would vindicate his honor and power. People had been saying that the "way of Yahweh was not fair", (1) so Ezekiel was insistent in his conviction that Yahweh would win back the prestige he had lost,"that the nations may know that I am God." (2)

(1) Ezekiel 18:25,29
(2) Ezekiel 36:23f
2. After the Fall of Jerusalem.

With the capture of Jerusalem the whole tenor of Ezekiel's message was changed. Instead of emphasizing the wickedness of Judah and the consequence of punishment he preached a coming deliverance from exile and the dawn of a glorious future. Turning to those who were crushed and hopeless, the prophet assured them that Yahweh did not desire their death, but their righteous consecrated lives.

"If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; . . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die." (1)

"Weak despair was as fatal now as was vain hope before." (2)

When Ezekiel discovered that the people were ready for a message of encouragement, he gave it to them, seeking to sustain the despairing exiles with the promise of the ultimate restoration of the divine favor to all who truly desired it.

Ezekiel was firmly convinced that true repentance was the fundamental condition of the restoration of Yahweh's goodwill.

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live." (3)

Israel's sin had been the cause of her disaster, but each had an individual responsibility, regardless of past errors.

(1) Ezekiel 33:14f, 15f.
(2) Fowler: The Literature of Ancient Israel, p.240
(3) Ezekiel 18:32.
Yahweh was holy, and only as His Holiness was reflected in the life of the people could real and permanent fellowship between Israel and her God be possible. Israel would be chosen anew and would become gladly obedient to Yahweh. Instead of a misunderstanding, stupid people unable to comprehend the ways of God, would be an understanding remnant who would desire to obey the commandment of Yahweh.

After this preparation the exiles were to be restored to the promised land, there to live forever in prosperity and in the fear of Yahweh. The cities would be inhabited, the waste places built, and the survivors of northern and southern kingdoms were to be united in this new commonwealth where Israel's true ideal would be reached. The land would be made rich and fertile, the nation would become strong and numerous, and prosperity and peace should be their portion.

In the past Israel had suffered from unjust and faithless rulers. Not so in the new kingdom, for Yahweh Himself would be the great Shepherd of His flock who would lead them back to their home and give them green pastures. Over them he would appoint a descendent of David to rule as His earthly representative.

"And my servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them. . . . . and David my servant shall be
their prince for ever." (1)

In these passages "prince" and "king" are used without distinction. Since he is called "David" it is probable that Ezekiel had in mind a scion of the Davidic line, although some scholars think he merely meant one of the spirit and power of David.

During Ezekiel's earlier messages he had portrayed very vividly Yahweh leaving His temple, refusing to make His abode in a place of idolatry and paganism. His holy name had been profaned. But at the time of the restoration the "sanctuary would be rebuilt, Yahweh would reenter it, and establish an eternal covenant of peace with His people."

"My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (3)

Israel was too weak to resist invasion before. Her sin and faithlessness had left her defenceless, but in the future Yahweh would protect her. Though nations from the farthest ends of the earth should come, He would destroy them. Ezekiel remembered the experience of his childhood when the dread Scythians had swept down from the north, and he foresaw the danger in which the new kingdom would be placed unless its enemies were reduced to helplessness. The Hebrews' future security was dependent on the downfall of

(1) Ezekiel 37:27
(3) Ezekiel 37:27
these people. Also, the nations of the distant north would need an overwhelming proof of Yahweh's sovereign power. The prophet craved a complete vindication of His might that all people might recognize His supremacy. So Ezekiel pictured the oncoming invasion under the leadership of Gog from the land of Magog. They would arrive in Palestine, but Israel would not need to strike one blow. "By an act of God and without human intervention they would be exterminated, and with them all danger for the future would disappear." (1) Yahweh is represented as saying,

"I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." (2)

In all these prophecies we see the prophet's conviction that Yahweh could do anything that ought to be done and that His supreme motive for restoring Israel and destroying the other nations was to bring glory to His name. This idea was due to Ezekiel's lofty conception of Yahweh, that He was a God of one people with those destinies His name was linked, that His rule of them was the revelation of Himself to the eyes of mankind.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Now will I bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous

(1) H. P. Smith: Religion of Israel, p. 207

(2) Ezekiel 34:16
for my holy name . . . and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God." (1)

D. His priestly contribution.

Ezekiel was a priest as well as a prophet. He realized that the fundamental question regarding the future of his race was not whether they would be restored to their home but whether they would guard against their past mistakes and live according to Yahweh's commandments. With infinite pains and detail he developed a theocratic government in which a hierarchy and not a monarchy was in supremacy, and for which government he prepared a constitution and ritual. "Ezekiel regarded it as the aim and task of his prophetic and pastoral mission to educate individuals not only to be religious, but also to be members of a community." (2) His vision of the new Jerusalem was a picture of the kingdom of God in its final and perfect state. He had been a priest in the temple, was a friend of ritual and law, so his legislation for the approaching Messianic age was legalistic and ceremonial. The center of the new order was not to be the royal palace but the temple in which Yahweh would dwell in majesty and glory. Partly from his remembrance of the old temple in Jerusalem and partly from the great temples in Babylon, he developed a plan of a restored sanctuary. His

(1) Ezekiel 39:25,28b
(2) Cornill: The Prophets of Israel, p. 120
chief purpose was to impress upon the minds of the people the transcendent holiness of Yahweh which he did by emphasizing ritual and ceremony. In order to guard that holiness from any contamination with profane objects, only the priests were allowed to enter the inner court, thus making a sharp distinction between them and the Levites. The land next to the temple was given to the priests and Levites; the prince, in order that he might not oppress his people with huge taxes as former ones had done, received a portion of territory which he should till like every other Israelite; and each tribe was to obtain its determinate portion of the sacred land. The chief duty of the prince was not to rule as had the selfish and inefficient tyrants before him, but was to protect and support the temple service supplying the materials of worship and acting as a representative of the people.

Of course Ezekiel's plan was never fully adopted. It was rather a Messianic picture of what ought to be, a constructive plan of the priestly ideal of holiness. Amos had declared Yahweh's scorn for offerings and sacrifice; Isaiah was equally vehement in his denunciation of festivals and vain oblations; Jeremiah denied that Yahweh had given a law concerning ritual; but Ezekiel, ignoring all this, made ritual and ceremony Yahweh's chief concern. (1)

(1) H. P. Smith: Religion of Israel, p. 210
Ezekiel has been termed the father of Judaism. He made Yahweh more transcendent, his interest in ceremonialism developed into legalism, he centered the interests of the people around the temple and ritual, he imperiled the supremacy of the ethical element in the religious life. But the Messianic hope as set forth by this prophet "formed one of the most powerful impulses that made for the reconstruction of the Jewish state." (1)

(1) Skinner: Ezekiel (1970) vol 1, p. 819
CHAPTER II

DEUTERO - ISAIAH
CHAPTER II
DEUTERO - ISAIAH

A. Factors which influenced the prophetic message.

While Nebuchadrezzar ruled the Babylonian empire, the Jews were apparently subjected to no serious persecutions. But when he died in 561 B.C., their conditions were not so happy. Evil Merodach reigned but two years and was murdered for his wickedness by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who had been a general in the army that besieged Jerusalem. His reign lasted but four years, his son's but nine months, and Nabonidus ascended the throne in 555 B.C. as the last of the Babylonian kings. He had none of the prestige nor executive ability of the mighty Nebuchadrezzar. Instead of paying attention to the problems that concerned his subjects, he spent his time excavating sites of ancient temples and unearthing the treasures of the past. The result was that the civil and military organization of the state fell into decay and the whole empire was exposed to the invasion of a foreign enemy.

Cyrus, a king of the little kingdom of Anzan, had raised himself to high power in his own country. He seized the throne of Media and made himself master of an enormous territory, extending from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, taking the title, "King of Persia." After conquering
Croesus, king of Lydia, he turned his attention to the supposedly impregnable Babylon. It seemed to the exiles who were no doubt watching these political movements that the destruction of the Babylonian empire was but a question of time. As the captivity had lengthened the material condition of the Hebrews had grown worse, the Babylonian yoke had become more oppressive, and the longing for their old home increased with the years. It was, therefore, that they saw in Cyrus a deliverer and a bringer of vengeance on their oppressors. Anxiously and full of confidence they waited for the saviour who would destroy Babylon and again restore Jerusalem.

B. Problem of authorship.

It is believed by many scholars that chapters 40-55 of the book of Isaiah were written at this time. In all probability these chapters were copied on the same roll as the writings of Isaiah, and being without a signature came to be considered his work. Their author is called Deutero-Isaiah, (deutero meaning second) and he is generally thought to have written his beautiful messages in Babylon towards the close of the exile when hope of a return was brighter and more imminent. Some scholars attribute chapters 56-66 to Deutero-Isaiah also, while some claim that these chapters are a still later addition, the work of a Trito-Isaiah, or a
compilation from various sources. Chapters 40-55 seem to be a distinct unit as far as ideals, beliefs, style and diction are concerned, and fit in the disorganized loneliness of captivity rather than the post-exilic period. The author has been called the "Great Unknown", for we have no clue to his identity. It has been suggested that some editor may have considered the book of Isaiah inadequate for such a great prophet, and so desired to add to it; or he may have feared that the writings of the anonymous prophet "would be lost sight of unless given a protecting name and made a part of the canon." (1) Who he was we do not know, but that he was a man of great tenderness, sensitive to nature and life, courageous and patient in adversity, is revealed in his prophecies.

C. The Prophet's Messianic contribution.

His Messianic purpose grew out of the social and political conditions of his day. His messages were intended for all scattered Jews everywhere, to arouse and encourage them, so that when the opportunity came they would go back and rebuild Jerusalem. He believed that the time was at hand, for he saw in Cyrus the future conqueror of Babylon.

Deutero-Isaiah has often been called the prophet of consolation for the keynote of his entire message is found

(1) Cheyne: Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, p.238
in the opening words of his book.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." (1)

Israel need not despair, for Yahweh their God would not permit His words of promise to be unfulfilled. He had chosen Israel and would never forsake her.

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (2)

Like Joshua, Deutero-Isaiah had to encourage his compatriots. "Fear not!" he cried again and again; and each time he gave a reason for the faith that was in him. Because of the nature of Yahweh and the mission of Israel, he was able to convince those despairing exiles of a happier future.

Since it was Deutero-Isaiah's mission to comfort, to stimulate faith and encourage hope, he paid much attention to the thought of God. Yahweh was the creator of all things.

"I am Yahweh that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." (3)

"I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil." (4)

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens; and all their host have I commanded." (5)

(1) Isaiah 40:1,2. (3) Isaiah 44:24
(2) Isaiah 41:10 (4) Isaiah 45:7
(5) Isaiah 45:12
He was also eternal.

"Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, the first and with the last, I am he." (1)

He was all-powerful. A particular evidence of Yahweh's power was in His ability to plan the future.

"I am God and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done." (2)

If the Yahweh was an eternal Being, creator of all things, governor of all events, what need was there for other gods? Deutero-Isaiah felt keenly the utter powerlessness of all other gods and the futility of idols. How foolish it was for a man to plant a fir tree, chop it down for firewood, warm himself as it burned, bake his bread and roast his meat in its heat, and then to make from what wood remained uncharred a graven image to worship! (3) Idols had no power to predict the future or to do either good or evil. Yahweh was the only God.

"I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." (4)

Not only did the prophet make Yahweh eternal and omnipotent, but just, faithful, holy and merciful. He used Hosea's figure of Israel as Yahweh's wife and even added the suggestion of the motherhood of God.

(1) Isaiah 41:4  (3) Isaiah 44:12-20
(2) Isaiah 46:9c-10a.  (4) Isaiah 44:6f.
"Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, that have been borne by me from their birth." (1)

Yahweh was the shepherd, feeding the flock and carrying the lambs in His bosom. He was the strength for those who were weary. He was the Redeemer of Israel. With such a God, Israel should have a great future. As prophets were called and annointed, so Yahweh had called Israel and annointed her with His spirit.

Having thus interpreted God to his people, Deutero-Isaiah found himself face to face with a difficult question. If Yahweh could do all things, and if He truly loved Israel, why had He allowed her to suffer so? The four Servant Poems contain the prophet's answer and give his beliefs concerning Israel's mission to the world. These poems are found in Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12.

As Cyrus was considered the human instrument of Israel's external redemption, so the Suffering Servant was pictured as the "human agent through whom her inward or moral renewal was affected." (2) But in a far greater sense than Cyrus, was Israel the Servant of Yahweh. Sometimes this Servant is pictured as the whole of Israel, the seed of Abraham.

"But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend, . . . I have

(1) Isaiah 46:3
(2) Knudson: Beacon Lights of History, p. 270
chosen thee, and not cast thee away."(1)

In another passage the nation is considered too unworthy, too worthy, too deaf and too blind to be assigned to such a holy task, and the Servant appears as the personification of the pious remnant of the people; the true effective Israel. Many have thought that this is too broad an interpretation and would see in the Servant an individual Messiah. "In the great final passage, Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12, the figure seems individualized as that of one who has for the sake of others borne cruel punishment, pouring out his soul unto death, so that it has been made an offering for sin."(2)

Since the Servant of these poems is an exalted figure, interested in a world program, and destined to carry the salvation of Yahweh to the end of the earth, it is probable that he was not intended to represent the Israel of prophecy or history, the wayward, sinful Israel, but an ideal Israel embodied in the faithful remnant. He was a personification of the righteous exiles who, having kept themselves free from idolatry and degeneracy were destined to accomplish Yahweh's purpose for the world.

The first Song, 42:1-4, emphasizes the mission of the Servant, which was to bring the true religion to the nations

(1) Isaiah 41:8,9f.

(2) Fowler: Origin and Growth of Hebrew Religion,p.136
of the world. The second, 49:1-6, describes his divine equipment for this mission and the vain labor that he has so far expended. The third song, 50:4-9, is a splendid picture of the invincible faith and confidence of the Servant during his suffering and extreme opposition. The fourth, 52:13-53:12, is the climax of the four passages and describes the Servant’s martyrdom and future exaltation, when he is crowned with glory and honor.

Thus Deutero-Isaiah took the Messianic ideal of the pre-exilic prophets, interpreted it in universal terms and made it concrete by picturing it as Yahweh’s ideal servant. All the sufferings and humiliations of Israel’s past had been but the training for future service. Their suffering was vicarious, for the self-sacrificing service of redeeming mankind must be their highest ideal. With such a conception the Davidic prince of earlier prophecies seems insignificant; the victorious warrior of Isaiah 9:6 appears unimportant in comparison with this heroic sufferer “destined to be crowned by later generations simply because he had proved himself a faithful servant of God and his fellowmen.” (1)

The problem of Israel’s suffering was bound up inseparably with her future and the conception of her mission to the world. The prophet was not merely describing what

(1) Kent: Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel’s Prophets, p.46.
the distant future would bring, but was appealing directly to the afflicted, scattered members of his race, that they might have the courage to leave the opportunities and material luxuries of Babylon and Egypt for the seemingly hopeless task of rebuilding Jerusalem. It would take supreme faith in Yahweh and confidence in the Hebrew mission to the world to accomplish such a seemingly hopeless task of making Jerusalem a Holy City that would "win for Yahweh the homage of all the world."  

With vivid pictures of material and spiritual greatness the prophet aroused the despairing exiles to enthusiasm and faith. Their return to Judah was to be more marvelous than was the exodus from Egypt. Palestine would be no longer barren and fruitless but abounding in rivers and glorious vegetation.

"For Yahweh hath comforted Zion; he hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Yahweh; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."  

But best of all, Yahweh would be with them, and would be manifest in them. Deutero-Isaiah's details of the restoration are very general. There is none of the priestly element as there was in Ezekiel, no directions are given for the

(1) Kent: Sermons, Epistles, and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets, p.47.

(2) Isaiah 51:3
rebuilding of the temple, nor is there any emphasis on sacrifice and ritual. The restoration as this prophet conceives it does not simply concern itself, but is part of the conversion of the world, resulting in every knee bowing to Yahweh and every tongue confessing Him.

Israel had been chosen from the moment of her conception to be the Servant of Yahweh. He had taught her, had made her a "polished shaft", and kept her close in His quiver. Israel knew she was chosen of God, but persecutions had made this Servant lose heart. Suddenly, and in the midst of national despair, God announced that the most glorious period of her career was yet to be. Her mission was to extend beyond herself and include the nations of the world. Jerusalem was to be the religious center of this world and the farthest people were to come to it to worship Yahweh. Here racial barriers are broken down and the religion of Israel becomes the religion of the world.

"Behold, my servant whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." (1)

(1) Isaiah 42:1,4.
CHAPTER III
SUMMARY OF EXILIC PROPHECY
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF EXILIC PROPHECY

Just as we found the emphasis of the earlier prophets to be on judgment and doom, so we find the exilic prophets preaching a future restoration. Influenced by the teachings of Ezekiel and the great unknown prophet called Deutero-Isaiah, the Israelites came to believe that Yahweh had not cast them off, nor was He powerless. For a while it had been necessary for them to suffer, their sins had demanded punishment. Now Yahweh was ready to forgive them and promise them a glorious future if they were willing to obey His commandments. From this time the Jewish people became a forward-looking nation, conscious of a great destiny. The purpose of their lives was to please Yahweh which they did according to the laws contained in the book of Deuteronomy. Their golden age was in the future, and this hope proved an incentive and a constant source of strength when the hardships and discouragement of rebuilding the Holy City actually came to pass.
PART V

CONCLUSION
PART V
CONCLUSION

A. Summary of Messianic Prophecy.

From our survey of the prophetic teachings we discover that these religious leaders were always concerned with the needs of their own day. At times the worthlessness of ceremonialism was emphasized and at other times the importance of the temple and temple ritual. Whatever the needs of the people, so were the messages of the prophets. When the Hebrews were wayward and indifferent, a message of judgment was hurled at them, that they might repent of their sins. When they were discouraged and hopeless, a mere remnant of the original Israel, a message of hope and redemption was preached to comfort and console. As the prophets came more and more to stress the ethical factor in the restoration it came to mean redemption from sin as well as from suffering. The Messianic hope in its broader application was to encourage the despondent, show them the deeper meaning of their present afflictions, open their eyes to Yahweh's gracious purposes, give the race a goal for which to live and strive, and above all to arouse them to effective action. The figure of an individual Messiah occupied a very subordinate place in the minds of these great religious leaders. In a number of books that deal with the future of Israel he
is not even mentioned, and in others as in Ezekiel, he is considered of relative unimportance. "His coming was not an essential element in the national hopes." (1) At times he was thought of as an ideal king. (2) Evidently he was to be connected with the line of David, but this was less important than the righteous character of his life and rule. At the close of the exile he was pictured by Deutero-Isaiah as the Suffering Servant, the personification of the refined, cleansed and purified Israel. (3) The prophetic conception was larger than that of an individual and embraced the final accomplishment of God's purpose for them. We have no complete Messianic picture, for various features were emphasized at different times. But whatever form it took, whether the reign of an individual Messiah or a renewed nation living in obedience to Yahweh, "The Messianic hope kept the Jews faithful to their religion and obedient to their Law." (4)

B. Value of Messianic Hope.

We no longer try to find references to Jesus as the Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, nor do we attribute to the prophets a supernatural ability to foretell the coming of Jesus and the sacrifice of Calvary.

(2) Isaiah 9:2-7; Ezekiel 37:24-28.
(4) H.P. Smith: Religion of Israel, p.249.
Rather are we interested in their ethical contributions, their attitude towards the social problems of their day. "But the ethical idealism of these ancient seers and singers was born out of and sustained by their Messianic hope." (1)

For in the messages of these courageous leaders we see a growing, developing conception of Yahweh as the only true God and a God worth worshipping and loving. They gave to the world a larger vision of Yahweh's character. Reliance on God was the basis of their national hope, and their faith in Him the foundation of their dauntless optimism. This larger view of Yahweh increased their appreciation of other nations in His plan, and their own relationship and responsibilities to them. It showed them the need for ethical and righteous living as an offering acceptable to Yahweh. It gave them a vision of world influence and service.

We marvel at the persistency of the Messianic ideal. Through the long suffering there burned constantly this undying optimism, which was but the beginning of a hope which grew rather than dimished in the course of time. The restoration was not the end of Israel's unhappiness. It was but the beginning of new sufferings and greater struggles. But their faith in a glorious future gave them the steadfastness with which they endured untold misery and cruel persecutions.

(1) Knudson: Religious Teachings of the O.T., p.380.
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APPENDIX

"Babylon, which properly indicates a city, is used for the country (Babylonia) pp. 54, 58, 86). Babylon and Babylonia are used interchangeably by many Old Testament scholars, including H.P. Smith (Old Testament History, pp. 276, 342) "The siege between Babylon and Nineveh" is implied in the assertion of J.M.P. Smith (Prophets and Their Times, pp. 122, 123)

"The current assumption that Gomer was untrue to Hosea and that she is identical with the unnamed woman of Hosea 3 (p. 18)" is the conclusion arrived at by George Adam Smith (Minor Prophets - Expositor's Bible, pp. 236-240), by J.P. Peters (Religion of the Hebrews, p. 217) and by Knudson (Beacon Lights of Prophecy, p. 101)

The writer of this thesis recognizes the fact that it is not at all certain that the name "Shearjashub" represents a message of great future blessing, but even the recognition "only a remnant will return" implies a hope of at least "a remnant" and not complete annihilation.

It seems to me that Isaiah 11:1-9 and Micah 5:2 do not rise and fall together. Fowler (Literature of
Ancient Israel, pp. 158,165,) and Barton (Religion of Israel, pp. 109, 105) accept Isaiah 11:1-9 and only credit Micah with chapters 1-3.

Concerning the date of the siege between Babylon and Nineveh, the writer is aware of the discussion. Since J.M.P. Smith was the only source read that spoke approvingly and with conviction concerning the choice of 612, and since George Adam Smith (Jeremiah, p. 383) offers the alternative date of 612 and 606, and since chronology was not a major factor in the thesis, it seemed wise to use the generally accepted date.

The title of this thesis would be misleading if this paper were a textual criticism of specific Messianic passages. Since it is a general study of the Messianic thought it includes the Day of Yahweh and other beliefs pertaining to and related to the Messianic Hope in particular. It aims to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

The reader will notice the addition of several articles from Hastings' Bible Dictionary in the Bibliography. They were read but unintentionally omitted from the first copy of the thesis.