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# The relation of the house of Jehu to prophecy

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THE RELATIONS OF

THE DISCOURSE OF JEREMIAH

TO PROPHECY

Thesis presented by John W. King

Class of 1908.

THE RELATION OF THE  
HOUSE OF JEHU TO PROPHECY .

To understand the relation which existed between the house of Jehu and prophecy it is necessary that we look for a time at the political, social, and religious conditions which existed immediately prior to and during the reign of this house. We must also try to learn something about the condition of the prophets and their aims. These we shall see varied very much from the 10th to the 8th centuries B.C. Only as we are able to transfer ourselves back in thought into these centuries will we be able to see things as they were and thus be able to pass judgment upon the acts of the house of Jehu, and point out the connection which existed between this house and prophecy. This is the only true way to understand why prophecy stood by the house of Jehu during the early part of its reign and then completely divorced itself from this house of blood.

The first important thing to attract the attention of the student of Old Testament history is the

fact that prophecy gave birth to the monarchy in Israel. It was the prophet and judge Samuel who discovered Saul when he was searching for his father's asses and who poured upon him the anointing oil, which sign seemed to be the token of prophetic choice for some years to come. He, who stood head and shoulders above those about him, was chosen king of Israel in its hour of need, and to the prophet, who always kept his finger on Israel's pulse must be given the credit for throwing himself into the breach and making possible the transition from the period of the Judges to that of the Kings. From that moment until Samaria fell in 722 B.C. and until Jerusalem fell in 588, the prophets were intensely interested in the political affairs of the nation. Not only did the prophet anoint Saul, but he also anointed the successor of Saul, and, when the prophets saw that the reigning house was not accomplishing the work for which it had been chosen and which was destined to place Israel far in advance of all other nations, then the prophets did not hesitate for a moment to stir up a revolution which would divide the kingdom which had been so auspiciously united under

David. Furthermore, whenever in the opinion of the prophets, the reigning house had ceased to obey the laws of God they did not hesitate to anoint another house to carry on its program. "The monarchy was the creation of prophecy, not merely in the sense that Samuel, by inspiration of J" gave the people a king. The national direction of prophecy embodied itself in the kingship. The first king of Israel was a prophet as well as the second. When Saul turned to go from Samuel God gave him another heart, and when he met the prophets the spirit of God came on him and he prophesied. His excitation was not mere contagious sympathy. There was mind under it; it was the thought awakened by Samuel of his high destiny and of the task before him, taking fire from contact with the national-religious enthusiasm of the prophets". A. B. Davidson in Hasting's B. D. p108.

Moreover the way of the prophet seems to have been the way of the people, at least in the early days of prophecy, for they backed up the prophet by their moral support. This is certainly true with reference to the condition existing from the time of Samuel to that of Elisha. That the eighth century prophets,

the harbingers of deep ethical teachings, should not be so intensely interested in the ruling house was the hand of God leading them away from efforts that would undoubtedly have ended in failure when the nation fell; He was leading them to the point where they would lay stress upon deep ethical principles which would stand out forever as stars in the broad sky of truth and which would when "viewed in the background of heathenism" appear as gems set in finest gold. It was providential, I say, that this should occur for not only did it crystalize Israel's religion, but it also prevented it from meeting the fate which overtook other religions which, when their nations fell, were "Thrown to the moles and ~~vats~~".

Hebrew prophecy with its various developments and interests forms one of the most interesting subjects that can occupy the mind of the student. Its contact with the things of the spirit may render it to a certain extent mystical and mysterious, but in it all there can be traced a history of development that will <sup>more</sup> than abundantly pay for the effort expended. It is no wonder then that this subject has occupied the time of so many scholars in Germany, England, Scotland, and in our own country.

Politically, Israel hardly ever reached a truly settled state. The work of establishment in Canaan was scarcely begun by Moses and Joshua, internal turmoil had not yet given place to loyalty to the ruling house and to national pride. We need, of course, to be careful about our generalizations here but from the brief history contained in the historical books of the Bible this is the impression forced home upon us. For instance, *how* easy it was for Jeroboam to raise about him the dissatisfied people of Israel and lead them from the house of David so recently established. 'Tis true that he had been anointed their leader and had back of him the religious people of the ten tribes and very likely the entire support of the so-called schools of the prophets in the north. And so when the time was ripe, <sup>was</sup> he recalled from Egypt whence he had fled from Solomon, and, immediately upon Rehoboam's refusal to grant the prayers of the people, Jeroboam was accepted as their king. With the cry of "What portion have we in David? neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse: To your tents, O Israel: Now see to thine own house, David." 1 K. 12:16. *the successful rebellion was started.* And when Jeroboam's house be-

1 King 16<sup>9</sup>

came weak then "Zimri, captain of half ~~of his~~ of his chariots, conspired against him." And Zimri inaugurated in Israel the abominable practice of destroying the house of the dead king. "And so it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat upon the throne, that he smote all the house of Baasha: he left him not a single manchild, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet." 1 K. 16.11 But Zimri ~~Zimri~~ ruled only seven days in Tirzah. There were two things against him. He did not have the approval of the people, and he had not been chosen and anointed by the prophets, so " Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel in the camp."

Instead of going forward, Israel was surely going rapidly backward and this was the way that it looked to Hosea when he took up his prophecy against the division. To him the division of the tribes was a fatal mistake and therefore to be condemned. It was retrogression instead of progression. It was going back to the period of the Judges, which

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period was one of chaos. " Throughout the period of the judges, neither the nationality of Israel nor the religion of Jehovah stood on a sure footing. The tribes of Israel were broken up into isolated factions and often seemed on the point of absorption among the Canaanites; and the religion of Jehovah in like manner, which lost the best part of its original meaning when divorced from the idea of national unity, threatened to disappear in the Canaanitish Baal worship before it could succeed in adapting itself to a change from nomad to agricultural life---- So the religion of Jehovah was not a necessary part of the state-- but the chief cornerstone of the political edifice". W.R.S.

In this same connection it will be well to quote from Renan who says that " the tribes of Israel had not at that time, the sentiment of dynastic fidelity and in this they resembled Arab tribes, which have never displayed it at any epoch----- Iahweism had no more power than Islamism, 1500 years later, to check the prevalence of crime. Religion was no impediment to the committal of murder and abominable violence. ---- The religion of Iahweh had as yet a feeble link with morality. It was in this respect

similar to that of Chemos." And in speaking of the house of Omri, the same author says " But the greatest service that Omri rendered to the kingdom of Israel was to give it a capitol, which it had not possessed until his reign. The miserable hamlet at Tirzah could not be called by this name although it contained a royal palace, which in the popular songs was compared to Jerusalem.---- Omri bought, for two talents of silver, a hill situated a few miles (Shechem) to the northwest, in a very advantageous military position. He called it Someron, the guard, intending to make it the central point of his monarchy". History of Israel p 206 F.

While such was the condition of things politically, socially conditions were worse in the kingdom. It was a period of change even here. The lay of the land had much to do with Israel's moral backsliding. The rich plains of Samaria, through which passed the arteries of commerce, soon made possible a rich class of nobles. These men influenced by the customs of the east were casting aside the simple customs of their forefathers and were fast becoming an oppressive aristocracy which no longer respected

the simple customs of former days. They built themselves ivory houses, they oppressed the poor, and the time was fast approaching when justice no longer reigned in the land. Such was the state of affairs when Amos felt the voice of God call him from his flocks in Tekoa and go to Bethel where he should utter his stinging message of reproach against the ruling house in Samaria. In fact it was the changing social condition that led to the rapid downfall of the house of Omri. It is the opinion among many scholars that the real cause for the downfall of this house was not its attitude toward the Tyrian Baal but the fact that Ahab, aided by his wife, had not respected the rights of Naboth and had taken his vineyard from him by means of fraud, thus failing to honor the custom concerning the old homestead. He was trying to introduce the customs of the East and it proved fatal to his house.

There was no religious unity in Israel during the early years of the divided kingdom and this may also be said of the united kingdom, for although there was the chief sanctuary at Jerusalem this does not say that all of the people went there to worship. The prophets did not cry out in horror when Jeroboam set

up the calves at Bethel and Dan. Moreover these new places of worship were not spoken against until after the time of Amos. They seemed to be needed in the early years of the divided kingdom and it was a wise move on Jeroboam's part when he dedicated these places of worship, for they acted as a bond of unity to the people who had not yet learned to know and exalt Jehovah above all other gods. It must be borne in mind that the great need of the people was to have a God who could help them as the gods of the people around them were helped. They were in need of a Mars who would fight with them and strengthen them in battle. In such a god they were willing to trust, and because they had not yet reached the point where they could fully trust Jehovah to help them they were in a state of fear concerning the gods of the nations about them and more than once this fear lost them the fight. A very striking incident of this kind is found in 1 Kings, 3:26-27 where Israel had gained the day and then lost it through superstitious fear. <sup>when</sup> "And the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom; but they could not. Then he

took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him and returned to their own land." Many other instances might be cited showing their lack of trust.

Under such conditions we can readily see that the prophets had an Herculean task before them. They were jealous for their nation, they wanted to purify the social life of their people, and they were the servants of a jealous God whom they wanted to place in an impregnable position before the people. They were to bring strength out of weakness, beauty out of rottenness, and purity of worship out of occasional spasmodic efforts. This task they assumed because they felt that they were men of God selected for this special <sup>purpose</sup>, and although they were sometimes so discouraged that they withdrew under the bushes to weep, as a rule, they faced the battle and fought their fight.

That the records concerning the early movements of the prophets in Israel are so meagre is a thing to be regretted. There was progress, but how much we do not know until we reach the point where prophecy

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was almost in its full blow. Nevertheless in the period which engages our attention we get a good glimpse of the old and almost the full glare of the new. Of the true prophets we have Samuel, Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha, Amos, Jonah, and Hosea. Of the first five we know but little because their work was done before the days of literary prophecy; and the little that we are able to cull from the historical records is mixed with magic and the miraculous. These features were soon after divorced from prophecy forever and at the same time the prophets begin to deliver a clearer and loftier conception of Jehovah and of their mission as His messengers.

IN addition to the true prophets, there were in this age either so-called prophetic schools or guilds whose homes seemed to be near the prominent places of worship. How they became members of these guilds we do not know. Samuel is called the father of them and from his time until the days of literary prophecy, they kept in touch with and influenced the ruling house. Twice in his lifetime Saul comes in touch with them and it is asked "is Saul of the prophets". That they were very numerous is seen from 1. Kings 22

where Ahab forms an alliance with Jehoshaphat against Syria. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go up against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. " It is during this period that we gain the first trustworthy evidence. They were as we see encouraged to speak favorably for the ruling house. But the king of Judah is not so favorably impressed with the reply that the four hundred give to Ahab "And Jeshoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we may enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me but evil." Nevertheless he is called and gives an unfavorable answer to the king's inquiry, and because he did so he is severely punished.

But whatever significance these guilds may have had in the days of Elijah and Elisha, it is

quite evident that during the days of Amos and Hosea, they had lost their power for good and probably contented themselves with mere forms of ecstatic utterance and external trickery. Of them and their work W. R. Smith says "the first appearance of companies of prophets is in the history of Samuel and Saul ( 1. Sam. 10. 3, 10 seq. ) where they are found engaged in the worship of Jehovah under circumstances of physical excitement closely parallel to what is still seen among dervishes of the East, and occasionally among ourselves in times of strong religious feeling. Excitement of this sort is often associated with genuine religious movements, especially among primitive peoples. Like all physical accompaniments of religious conviction, it is liable to strong excesses, and may often go along with false beliefs and self deluding practices; but religious earnestness is always nearer to the truth than indifference, and the great movement of which Elijah was the head found large support among the prophets of Jehovah. Yet we must not forget that physical enthusiasm is a dangerous ally to spiritual faith. The revolution of Jehu, which Elisha set on foot with the aid of the prophetic guilds, used means that were far re-

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moved from the loftiness of Elijah's teaching, and under the protection of Jehu's dynasty the prophetic guilds soon sank to depths of hypocrisy and formalism with which Amos disclaimed all fellowship". P86.

That Ahab did a great work for Israel cannot be denied, but from whatever way the historian looks at that reign, he will certainly meet the fact that from the very beginning there was enmity between this house and true prophecy. This could not be otherwise under the circumstances. The early prophets stood for a narrow provincialism and the house of Ahab stood for liberalism. 1. King's 16.30-33 gives the following reason for the conflict. "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as had been if it ~~was~~ a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings that were before him.

Ahab's policy was not one of forbearance toward the prophets. This may in part have been caused by the fact that he did not feel dependent upon them. They had not raised him to the throne, neither had they annointed him. He was willing to bear only with those who should speak words favorable to his house. There was enmity between Ahab and Elijah from the day that he ascended the throne until the time that he was slain at the battle of Ramoth-gilead. The primal cause of the struggle was his attitude toward Baal worship and his encouragement of the same. It is true that Solomon had done the same thing, but the time had come when the prophets believed that Jehovah must stand out supreme. An indication of this is seen in the contest which Elijah conducts between the prophets of Baal and himself and where Elijah comes out supreme. As the result of this the prophets of Baal, four hundred in number were killed by the brook Kidron.

Cornill in his Prophets in Israel gives a very favorable picture of Ahab. "Ahab, owing to his conflict with Elijah, is ranked among the biblical miscreants----but as unjustly so as Saul. Ahab was

one of the best kings and mightiest rulers that Israel ever had, esteemed and admired by both friend and foe as a man of worth and character. He was thoroughly equal to the situation, and after severe struggles raised Israel to a position which it had held under none of his predecessors. The only thing that he can be blamed for is his weakness toward his wife, the bigoted and intriguing Tyrian Princess, Jezebel. Elijah does not announce the destruction of the ruling house on account of its idolatry, but as an act of justice. It was not the Tyrian Baal which overthrew the dynasty of Omri but the crime committed on a simple peasant." This is a good effort to free Ahab from blame, but it is only another example of a writer throwing back his own conceptions into the record instead of allowing the record to speak for itself.

While the social crime of Ahab may have been the straw that broke the camel's back, there was a deeper under-current that caused the downfall of Ahab. It was the current of hatred for Baal worship and a zealous desire to please Jehovah ahead of all others. It should be remembered that long before the record of Ahab's sin against Naboth, we have Elijah's proph-



He seems to have had an attractive character and was able to persuade <sup>Ahaziah</sup> ~~Jehoram~~ king of Judah to assist him in a war against Hazael king of Syria--- the man who, when he came to Elisha to enquire concerning the outcome of Benhadad's illness, was told that he would do evil to Israel. 11. Kings 8.7ff. "Elisha when he beheld him began to weep. And Hazael said, Why weepest thou my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: Their strongholds thou wilt set of fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash in pieces their little ones, and rip up their women with child." But it was not until "Joram" had returned from the great battle at Ramah and was resting in Jezreel, there to be healed of the wounds received in battle that the time for the revolt seemed ripe.

*II King.* 1X. " And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said onto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this vial of oil in thy hands, and go to Ramoth-gilead. And when thou comest thither, lookout there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from

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among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber. Then take the vial of oil, and pour it on his head and say, Thus saith Jehovah, I have annointed thee king over Israel." The young man followed Elisha's instructions and, after delivering the direct message of Elisha, adds "And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Jehovah, at the hand of Jezebel." This then is given as the reason for the revolution, not because he had done social injustice, but that he had slain the prophets.

Revolution seemed to be in the air. The other soldiers had noticed the strange actions of the young man and as soon as Jehu came from the inner room, they said, "Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee." Bluntly Jehu told them what had happened, and in a moment the revolution was on. It must have been in the air for some time from what we can draw from the meagre accounts that we have in 11. Kings. The choice was unanimous and Jehu was backed by the army and proclaimed king by them. It is a very significant thing that the prophets, in the

time of their deepest need, should go to the army, and there select one fitted, as they thought, to accomplish their work.

Jehu was a man of action and no sooner had he received orders than he set about to execute them. First he must make away with Joram the king who lay wounded at Jezreel. The king notices the cavalcade coming and messengers are <sup>sent</sup> to meet it but they fail to get any satisfaction from Jehu. They are made to fall in line and ride behind the new king. As Jehu draws near, the watchman on the tower exclaimed, "The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. And Joram said, Make ready. And they made ready his chariot. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out to meet Jehu, and he found him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many." Then Jehu slew and then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I

and thou rode together after Ahab his father, Jehovah laid this burden upon him: Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith Jehovah: and I will requite them in this plat, saith Jehovah. Now therefore take him and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of Jehovah." The thought of obeying God's command lent fierceness to Jehu's work. This is also the reason why Jehu's bloody course received no word of reproach from Elisha and the other prophets of his day. He was just the man to root out Tyrian Baal worship and to remove it forever from the borders of Israel. This was the needful thing in the eyes of the prophets and therefore they did not oppose the method used by Jehu.

Whitehouse in Hasting's B. D. vol 11. p. 564 says that "The vivid and dramatic character of the narrative in 11. Kings 9 & 10 makes it clear that the causes which led to the popular discontent against the house of Omri were not so much connected with the introduction of the Phoenician Baal and the Ashtoreth worship, but rather with the high handed judicial murder of Naboth. Towards Phoenicians, Israel had for centuries felt a traditional friendship. It began

with the days of David and Solomon. In language the two were akin. They exchanged their commodities, and the bond which linked them was called by the eighth century prophet Amos a covenant of brethren ( Am. 1.9 ) a fact well illustrated by the beautiful episode of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath ( 1 Kings 17. 9-24 ) " There are several reasons which lead me to reject this view (1) I think that the place where Jehu slew Joram had a great deal to do with the color of Jehu's words; (2) this is not the view made prominent in other parts of the narrative; (3) the fact that the murder of Naboth was the outcome of the continued worship of Baal reinforced by Ahab's marriage to Jezebel. The murder of Naboth was ~~only~~ only one item in the general discontent. that broke forth into a blaze with the revolution of Jehu.

The actions of Jehu immediately following the destruction of the house of Ahab show that the revolution had more than political bearing. It had a deep religious bearing. This is shown by the attitude of the prophets and other religious bodies to Jehu. Whitehouse comments thus: " It is not clear what was

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the religious significance of this destruction of the Baal temple and its devotees. Doubtless Wellhausen is right in saying (Isr. u. Jud. Gesch. p 77) that Jehu was essentially a soldier, and his aims were <sup>political</sup> political rather than religious." But the facts in the case point to the conclusion that his enmity was not directed against all forms of Baal worship, but simply to the extirpation of Tyrian Baal worship which was fostered by Ahab. There was a fight on between the exponents of Yahweh and Tyrian Baal, and in order to accomplish its purpose, prophecy turned to the king as an exponent of Yahweh and thus again brought the royal power to the support of Yahweh.

It is very true that the foe which Jehu and the prophets fought was not a new one in Israel. "In reality the germs of dangerous error go back beyond the division into the times of the united kingdom. We read in the First Book of Kings (XI.1 ff) that Solomon's heart was estranged from Yahweh by his foreign wives. True, <sup>itself</sup> this passage employs the expressions of the <sup>sixth or seventh</sup> ~~sixth or the eighth~~ century ~~period~~ ~~etc.~~ but it also contains <sup>historical</sup> ~~some~~ good old material. It is certainly a fact that Solomon built places

of worship near Jerusalem for the native gods of his foreign wives; for Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, for Milcom, the god of the Ammonites, and perhaps for others also." Budde Religion of Israel to the Exile. P. 113f.

There was a serious crisis in Israel and stringent measures had to be taken. The time had arrived when neither priesthood nor the prophets were able to make the advance necessary. Quick and decisive action was needed. Drastic measures had to be taken and Jehu was the man of the hour. The priesthood was weak. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether the priesthood of itself would ever have been capable of keeping Yahweh-worship permanently alive. For the priestly office, like every other institution whose activity is of an external, technical kind, is exposed to external influences, and undergoes thus a slow but continuous change. We have the proof in the adoption of the Baal festivals into the Yahweh cult, which cannot have come about without the co-operation of the priesthood. This class could not do much to save Israel's religion. It is with the prophets that we find the real saviors of Yahweh worship, for in them lay the power to stir both the

kings and the people; and when the time came, after they had succeeded in firmly establishing Yahweh worship, that they could no longer keep this worship pure and clean, they could and did succeed in placing in the hearts of the people the principles of true religion that kept alive Israel's religion in the hearts of the Jews during Judah's exile.

Side<sup>by</sup>side with Moses, the prophets appear as second saviors and new founders of Israel's nationality and religion, in the face of a danger scarcely less than that of the Egyptian bondage." Budde p 88.

Elijah had tried in vain to win Ahab and the people of Israel back to Jehovah worship by the use of the marvelous, but he had utterly failed. Elisha was destined to use other means. They needed stronger evidences of J's power than was shown in simply spiritual manifestations. Elisha was going to make Jehovah supreme and he had learned from the results of his predecessor's work that nothing could be achieved with spiritual weapons; he became a demagogue and conspirator, a revolutionist and agitator. He incites one of the most contemptible characters known in the history of Israel, the cavalry officer

Jehu, to smite the house of Ahab, and set himself upon the throne of Israel. This came to pass. Elisha had attained his object, and the Tyrian Baal had disappeared out of Samaria, but Israel itself was brought to the verge of destruction. The reign of Jehu and his son, Jehoahaz, is the saddest period that Israel ever passed through, and eighty years afterward the prophet Hosea saw in the bloody deeds of Jehu an unatoned for guilt, that weighed down upon the kingdom and dynasty, and which could only be expiated by the fall of both." Cernill. The Prophets of Israel. p33.

Another important incident which shows that Jehu's work had the support of the religious bodies of his day is shown by the fact that the work which he did was approved by the Rechabites. Jehu is still on his carnage of slaughter when he meets " Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him". At Jehu's invitation, Jehonadab rides with him and they go to Samaria where Jehu calls together all the prophets of Baal throughout all Israel and the worshippers of Baal also, and after he has gathered them all together, orders are given and they are slain, thus

forever ridding Samaria, at least, of Tyrian Baal worship. But because Jehu did not also destroy the calves at Bethel and Dan? he too is condemned. However there must have been more than this back of his condemnation, because the time had not yet come for the prophets to strictly condemn the idols at these places. His sin was that while he did rid Samaria of Baal worship to a very great extent, he did not rid her of Baalized Yahweh-worship. His great work really proved to be a failure because it lacked a pure and deep motive. In speaking of the Rechabites, Budde says: " Even 250 years later, <sup>at the</sup> seige of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar, we meet his descendants, the Rechabites as a sect, almost an order, following a strict and peculiar manner of life. Acting according to the command of their ancestor Jonadab, they hold it impossible to live in conformity with the will of Yahweh, the God of the desert, save by avoiding wine and the practice of agriculture and by dwelling in tents instead of houses. ( Jer. xxxv ) and these Rechabites were as their genealogies teach ( 1 Ch. 11. 55 ) a branch of the Kennites, the tribe to which the wife of Moses belonged." Budde p 20.

Jehu was a zealot of the purest kind and this is probably the reason why he was supported by the prophets and the extreme sects of his day. At least this is the only reason for their holding to such a character after it was seen that he was not doing his work from high and pure motives. Yet for all we know there may have been admirable qualities in the man ~~xxxxxxx~~ that are not given in the brief record that we have of his life. If we could depend on the argument from silence, we might say that because we hear of no compliment that the prophets did not approve his work, neither did they complain about his bloody work during his lifetime and we know that for two generations after his death that Elisha seems to have been in close touch with the ruling house for when he took sick and was about to die, Joash then "king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face and said to him, O, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof". Here also was the turning point in the fortunes of the house of Jehu, and also of Israel, for about this time Hazael king of Syria died, and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. With the death of Elisha proph-

ecy and the house of Jehu part company.

Elisha had seen Baal worship extirpated from Israel and he himself had been the instrument of its destruction by causing the anointing of Jehu as king and the one who should do the work, but no doubt he was disappointed in the outcome, for Jehu and his descendants were a selfish lot and used their power for purely selfish purposes. They had indeed rid the land of Baal worship but had not been the leaders of true worship and so the inner religious life of the people did not prosper but sank lower and lower.

With the accession of Jeroboam II. to the throne we reach the period of literary prophecy, and therefore the period of reliable information. And it is well to note here that this comes soon after the death of Elisha. The sky is bright. Fortune favors the new king and the time of Israel's golden era seems at hand. Damascus has to fight Assyria and can no longer keep up its war with Israel. Jeroboam is able to extend his borders until he has recovered all of Israel's lost territory. Outwardly it seemed as if conditions were going to vindicate the prophets

choice of this house and Israel was beginning to feel secure after one of its most trying periods "Under Jeroboam II. the outward state of Israel appeared as brilliant as in the best days of old, and the wealth and splendor of the court seemed to the superficial observer to promise a long career of prosperity; but, with all these outward signs of fortune, which the official organs of religion interpreted as sure proofs of Jehovah's favor, the state of the nation was rotten to the core; there was no truth, mercy or knowledge of God in the land". Jer- W.R.S. p 89  
"Jeroboam" restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea or Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which He by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." 11. Kings 14.25.

The closing verses which give the record of this king's life and death are very significant. We miss here the usual denunciation concerning evil deeds. Jehovah" saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.-- Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath,

which belonged to Judah, for Israel; are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his fathers even with the kings of Israel; and Zechariah his son reigned in his stead." How we wish that we might get hold of a copy of the "book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel' Then we would be able to better understand the lives of many characters who are now practically in darkness.

Still we cannot say that we do not know much about Jeroboam's reign and the relation of this to prophecy. The social and religious conditions of his day are amply pictured by Amos and Hosea. One of the most striking facts is that the attitude of the prophet is no longer one of commendation. The house of Jehu is not flattered but condemned. It may be that the impending crisis had much to do with this change of attitude. The hour was fast approaching for a death struggle with Assyria, and the prophet, looking backward and then turning his glance forward, could see better the actual state of things than those who "sat in the seat of the scornful."

" It is no accident that the first appearance of

genuine prophecy in Israel coincided with the first advent of the Assyrians. Historical catastrophies aroused prophesying in Israel, and for this reason the prophets have been well called the storm-petrels of the world's history. This Amos has expressed in a highly characteristic manner where he says: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath reared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy." ~~Cornill p 34-35.~~

The prophet possesses the capacity of recognizing God in history. He feels it when catastrophies are in the air. He stands on his watch tower and spies out the signs of the times, so as to interpret them to his people, and to point out to them the right way, which will surely guide them out of all danger." Cornill The Prophets in Israel p 34-35.

Amos, the predictor of Israel's downfall, was no son of a prophet, he did not belong to any brotherhood or guild of prophets, but out in the fields of

Tekoa as he watched his flocks and gathered sycamore figs, he mused over the signs of the times and the events of history. He must have spent much time in communion with God, and, when in his adult years, he heard the voice of Jehovah, he felt that he could not be "disobedient to the heavenly vision." So he wended his way to Bethel and there delivered his message, which no doubt sounded well in the ears of the people until he reached his denunciation of Israel. Then Amaziah could no longer stand it. Priest were alike, there was no justice in the land, Jeroboam's house must fall. Surely his words were a burden to the land and so Amaziah took drastic measures to silence the fanatic. Amos obeyed the will of the priest and people and returned home there to write down the words which had burned their hearts. Amos was truly "a man who had power to look at temporal things under eternal points of view, who sees God's rule in all things, who knows, as the incorporate voice of God, how to interpret to his contemporaries the plan of God, and to direct them according to his will". *Cornwall p 316*

Amos<sup>r</sup> was not only the herald of the destruction

of the house of Jehu but he brought with him a new conception of God and of worship. It is no longer enough to simply sacrifice but the sacrifice must have the right motive. The bond which binds Israel to Jehovah is no longer a national one but an ethical bond. He is the God of justice and of law and because Israel and other nations "have broken the universal laws of fidelity, kinship, and humanity", they must be judged and condemned by the same laws. Israel likewise, "in spite of its assiduous Jehovah worship". And here in Amos we get a glimpse of God's world-wide rule. He is the universal God of justice and all the peoples of the earth are judged by him, and especially Israel because of their previous special revelation. Their fanatical faith and worship will not save them, for the right motive is lacking. It was given them to know the true character of Jehovah but they have failed to learn: therefore is " the virgin of Israel fallen,

She cannot rise again:

She is cast down upon her land,

There is none to raise her up." Amos

" The blooming pink on the cheek of the virgin Israel is not for the prophet a sign of health, but the

hectic flush of one diseased and hastening to her end. In all the noise and tumult, the hustle and bustle, his keen ear detects the death rattle, and he intones Israel's funeral dirge." Cornill p. 44.

The new principle which has been introduced is well illustrated in the words of Amos " I hate , I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and your meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5. " In Amos we have, so to speak, the incorporation of the moral law. God is a god of justice; religion the moral relation of man to God--not a comfortable pillow, but an ethical exaction.-----

National boundaries fall before this universal power of justice. When the Moabites burnt to lime the bones of an Edomite king they drew down upon themselves the judgment and punishment of the God of Israel. Justice and righteousness are the only

reality in heaven and in the earth. Thus through Amos the God of Israel, as the God of justice and righteousness, becomes the God of the entire world, and the religion of God a universal religion."

Because the house of Jehu had not seen this but had obeyed the law of selfish lust, they were to be destroyed. The man of one prophecy had set forth a burning idea, which from that time forth should be one of the foremost lights in the sky of prophecy. He could not approve the work of the house of Jehu because it had failed to enforce the idea of an ethical relation between Israel and Jehovah. It had not rid Israel of Baalized Jehovah worship, and with it all there had been a selfish spirit that cared not for the poor and needy but oppressed them with burdens that could not be borne, while the rich nobles dwelt in houses of ivory and enjoyed feasts and banquets at the expense of the poor. In pounding out the false bottoms underlying the religious conceptions of his day "Amos" becomes "one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates."

And here again we see that the most important and imposing things are the simplest and apparently the most easily understood." Cernill P. 46.

We now turn to the second of the eighth century prophets and notice how he stands in reference to Jehu and his work. We do not have to search very long to find his position on this question. "For yet a little while and I will avenge upon the house of Jehu the blood spilt at Jezreel, and will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel." Thus the acts which Elijah and Elisha had instituted are condemned. The means which the early prophets had thought would free Israel forever from the bondage of false worship had only done so in part. All that the revolution had accomplished was transitory. It did not give to Israel even the national freedom for which the prophets sighed. Instead, the state was, for a time greatly weakened by it, so much so that Jehu paid tribute to Assyria and thus became a subject to the Assyrian king.

Hosea goes down to the roots and examines the soil there. He discovers there the real reason for Israel's apostacy. The calves, the calves at Bethel

and Dan they have caused Israel to err. To Elijah and Elisha these formed no part of Israel's weakness. Prophecy had not yet advanced far enough to see that the worship of these was only another form of Baal worship, but her eyes were fast opening. First came the demand for ethical worship and then the demand for loving heart worship. All that Jehu had done lay on the surface. "Yahweh was yet angry with Israel. Why did he act thus? What further did he require, besides the exclusive worship of himself? Israel's national conscience, its conscience incarnate in the person of the prophets, was confronted with this question on the basis of the covenant entered into with Yahweh. And again we remember that it was not Baal worship alone which had brought about the overthrow of the house of Omri, but its deeds of violence also, of which the murder of Naboth stands as the classic example. This cancerous sore of the monarch had not been removed by Jehu and his house. He had founded his kingdom by cunning and deceit, and deeds of atrocity; and the grievous times which followed were certainly not calculated to lighten the yoke of the people. Yahweh

could not look unmoved upon such ill-treatment of His innocent people, for this reason He continued to be angry, and did not turn away the punishment.

Through such experiences and reflections propheticism came to the apprehension of a new truth. It was not enough to worship Yahweh and Him alone; everything depended on how He was worshipped. Yahweh is the God of righteousness, of morality; the supreme, the only indispensable requirement which He makes of His servants is righteousness, morality. This is openly declared by Hosea when he prophesies Yahweh's punishment of the house of Jehu in spite of his meritorious service in overthrowing Baal-worship." Budde Religion of Israel to the Exile p.127.

Nothing shows better the great breach between 8th and 9th century prophetism and that of the 6th and 7th century prophetism than the way that they view the house of Jehu and its work. It can be partially bridged over by claiming that the question which Elijah and Elisha were dealing was national, while that of Amos and Hosea was religious and purely so, but this is not a true distinction for the same national question still existed. Jehovah was still the god who had delivered them from Egypt and the

same jealous God that He had been represented to their fathers. " When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.---Yet I taught Ephraim to walk: I took them on my arms: but they Knew not that I Healed them. I drew them with chords of a man,with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them Hosea .Xl. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? ---- I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned from him. I will be as the dew is to Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Hosea.

The contrast which is shown in the character, work, and messages of the different prophets discussed well illustrates the limitations under which Old Testament revelation worked. They were all working toward the same end but not from the same standpoint. Elijah and Elisha used the power of the state, they appealed to loyalty and courage: Amos and Hosea freed themselves from the state and appealed to conscience. One appealed to the head; the other to the heart; one dwelt on justice, the other appeal-

ed to the law of force. The time for the divorce of state and religion had come. The peril of the future demanded that the religion of Jehovah be made deeper, wider, broader than any state. That it should rest on an inner relation between man and God. Given this and Ephraim could go down to Assyria, but their religion would forever live. To this deeper and more lasting work Amos and Hosea were dedicated. It was this work so nobly done that preserved Israel's religion and strengthened it so that it withstood not only slavery, but also that greater and more subtle foe which came in their next great crisis. And so when Greek culture tried to uproot the religion of Yahweh, it found it so wrapped up in the warp and woof of the people that it was an impossible task. Elijah and Elisha approved what seemed best to them and no doubt it was the best for the time being, but under the high power microscope of spiritual vision with which Amos was endowed and the higher power one of Hosea, the right of the earlier prophets became faulty and sinful. Not because Elijah and Elisha were ~~were~~ wrong but because their light had been dim, while to Amos and Hosea had been given deeper insight into real worth.

