

1937

The development of Isaiah's conception of God

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
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Thesis

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISAIAH'S
CONCEPTION OF GOD

By

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requirements for the degree of
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II.

PREFACE

This paper has grown out of an extended study made of the books of Isaiah during the last year. The particular thesis of this paper has been narrowed down to include only those ideas which help us to understand Isaiah's conception of God.

I want to express my appreciation for the aid given to me by Dr. Elmer A. Leslie in working out the basis for the paper.

Numerous passages have been quoted, and, unless otherwise indicated, these were taken from The Bible: An American Translation. This new, fresh translation was of much assistance in understanding some portions.

The Author.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Preliminary estimate of Isaiah.
2. His abilities.
3. His God-consciousness.
4. The purpose of this thesis.
5. The method of procedure.

INTRODUCTION

Rising magnificently above the Hebrew prophets stands the figure of Isaiah, a king among them. No man between the time of Moses and Christ in all of Hebrew history quite achieves the power, dignity, and beauty in thought and action that is found in Isaiah. He walked with kings but defended the poor. He helped to direct the affairs of state and yet could direct the affairs of God. He could speak and write in words of lasting beauty.

For many years these facts have been appreciated. That Isaiah was in a position to control the destinies of the nation as well as to fulfill his prophetic office perhaps made him the great man that he was. He had a grasp on the thought of the many centuries of Hebrew history which was amazing. His early work shows his acquaintance with his early contemporaries, Amos and Hosea. All of this he was able to assimilate and use when the situation arose. His ability to meet each new situation with some constructive viewpoint was his genius.

Important to us in this study is his God-consciousness. Isaiah was not a theologian. He did not write out his beliefs about the nature of God in a long dissertation. From all we know he did not even preach on such subjects. Yet each word is weighed in the light of what Jehovah would expect of him. When he spoke he was sure that his words carried with them God's benediction. There is, therefore, a whole, fully-developed conception of God intertwined in the words which Isaiah has left us.

The purpose of this paper is to study the materials of Isaiah thoroughly, for the conception of God therein contained. No man in Hebrew history before Christ had such lofty ideals and was so conscious of God's will. He did not put down a complete theology as such, but it is contained in his practical application of them. If we can find his conceptions of God, and bring them to the surface, our purpose will have been fulfilled.

In doing this we will try to follow the prophet's thought through his forty years of service. It is necessary, therefore, to put his writing in chronological order. Next, we must lay the historical background out of which the great principles arose. A quick survey of the early Hebrew thought about God will complete our preliminary survey. We will then turn to our chronologically arranged materials and find in them the conceptions of God and how they developed.

CHAPTER I

Source materials for the Life and Times of Isaiah

1. Isaiah: 1-39
2. II Kings: 15-20
3. II Chronicles: 26-32
4. Archaeological Records

CHAPTER I

Source Materials for the Life and Times of Isaiah

During the last half century of biblical criticism there have probably been more works written upon Isaiah and sources bearing upon the book of Isaiah than upon any other section of the Bible. It was fully realized that not all of the book of Isaiah came from the eighth century B.C., and that large sections could not have been written by Isaiah, son of Amoz. The result has been a clarification of dates, sources, and materials which makes this study more definite. The materials to be used here, especially from the book of Isaiah itself, will be only a portion of what would have been used a hundred years ago in a study of Isaiah's conceptions of God.

All of the work of Isaiah contained in the Bible is within the first thirty-nine chapters of the book of Isaiah. This position is taken by almost every modern scholar. They do differ greatly, however, as to what parts within this section are non-Isaianic. Such sections as 11-14: 23, 21, 24-27, and 33-35 are quite definitely later writing, although some scholars contest this. The closing section, 36-39, is taken right out of the book of II Kings and is therefore merely a historical appendix. A thorough study of the thirty-nine chapters and also the main commentaries on Isaiah (listed in chart) have led me to consider as Isaianic only the sections appearing on Chart I below, together with the possible dates:

CHART I

Comparative Dates of Isaianic Sections

	Bewer	Box	Cheyne	Creelman	Sellin	Skinner	Smith	Wade
1:2-17	700	701	701	705-1	701	701	701	701
1:18-20	700	703	701	705-1	701	-	701	725
1:21-28	738-35	705	705-1	705-1	701	-	701	725
1:29-31	738-35	722	722	705-1	701	-	701	735
2:2-4	700	-	-	740-35	701	-	740-35	740-35
2:6-4:1	738-35	735	735	740-35	735	735	740-35	740-35
4:2-6	-	-	-	740-35	735	735	735	740-35
5:1-24	-	735	735	740-35	735	730	735	740-35
5:25-30	734-722	735	735	740-35	735	730	735	735
6:1-13	-	734	734	740-35	735	735	735	730
7:-9:7	735-34	734	735-4	735	-	734	734-32	735-34
9:8-10:4	735-34	735	735	740-35	735-4	735	735	735
10:5-34	703-1	711-701	-	705-1	735-4	717-701	721-15	717
11:1-9	700	700	715	705-1	735-4	702-1	720	715
14:24-27	703-1	711-701	701	705-1	722	704	701	701
14:28-32	703-1	720	720 or 705	719	711	727 or 705	721 or 704	705-1
17:1-11	735-34	735	-	740-35	735	735	736-32	735
17:12-14	703-1	702	723	705-1	701	702	734-32	701
18:	703-1	702	702	705-1	701	702	?	705-2
20:	711	711	711	711	711	711	711	711
22:1-14	703-1	701	701	701	701	701	701	701
22:15-25	703-1	704-1	704-1	705-1	701	703-1	701	703-1
23:1-14	-	-	725	735-719	701	703-1	-	-
28:1-6	734-22	723	723	735-719	722	722	725	730-22
28:7-29	703-1	703-2	703?	705-1	701	704-1	-	701
30:	703-1	703-2	703?	705-1	701	704-1	702	703-2
31:(ex 6-7)	703-1	703-2	702	705-1	701	704-1	702	703-2
32:1-8	700	701-700	-	705-1	701	704-1	702	703-2
32:9-14	738-35	-	-	705-1	701	704-1	-	740-30
32:15-20	700	-	-	705-1	701	704-1	-	-

This gives us definitely the materials from the book of Isaiah which will be used in this paper. It also gives an idea of the great variance in the dating of various sections. Inasmuch as we will follow the chronological development of Isaiah's thought about God, we must arrange these materials in an order for study. A comparison of the dates in Chart I, together with a study of the arguments for the various dates, has led us to place the materials of Isaiah in the following order:

CHART II

Chronological Order of Isaianic Materials

740-35	735	735-34	732-21	711	711-701	701-00
2:6 -4:1	6:	7: -9:7	28:1-6	20:	10:5-34	1:2-70
32:9-14	9:8-10:4		1:29-31		14:24-27	32:1-8
4:2-6	5:25-30		14:28-32		1:21-28	32:15-20
5:1-24	17:1-11				17:12-14	11:1-9
					18:	
					22:	
					23:1-14	
					28:7-29	
					29:1-16	
					30:	
					31:	

Isaiah was a man of lofty thought and coupled with that was an ability to write in beautiful language. Most of the materials in Chart II are probably the words of Isaiah, himself. Almost all that we know about him and what he thought and did is contained in less than twenty-two chapters; still he is called one of the great, if not the greatest prophet of Hebrew History.

The Isaianic material first of all shows that the man himself was trained in speech and thought. He uses the ideas of the past quite freely; yet he leaves considerable room for freedom of thought and development of his own ideas. Only a cultured man could achieve the lofty conceptions of God which Isaiah had and incorporate them into words.

He also shows his knowledge of and interest in the past and contemporary history of Israel and Judah. The words of the prophets and seers of old were common to him. Amos and Hosea might have been childhood heroes of his; at least he used the ideas of both men quite freely. He knew the traditions and customs of the past as well as any man of his age. But more than all of this, he was in touch with history in the making. From his earliest word to his last he was interested in all men and women and in the world to come. And what is more, from the day when he first spoke to King Ahaz, around 735 B.C., until he spoke the word to King Hezekiah in 701 B.C. to resist the Assyrians, he was always in position to influence the highest officials. No man, other than the Kings themselves, ever influenced the affairs of either of the Hebrew kingdoms more than Isaiah.

The last thing to be mentioned here is the great devotion of Isaiah to his task and to his Lord. The will of Jehovah was always foremost in his mind. Nothing else really mattered. Whether the majority or a few followed him Isaiah stood always for what he believed was the truth and the will of the God

of Abraham. He was able to see far into the future because of the lofty view of the earth which he could see.

This is the attitude behind the words labeled above as Isaianic, and these will be our greatest source of information during the progress of this paper. We must turn briefly to other sources of our knowledge of Isaiah. None of them throw much light on the subject at hand, but they do help form the background upon which we must make our study. They are important in that regard. First we will turn to the other Biblical accounts, II Kings and II Chronicles. These are two more or less complete histories of Israel to the exile. They are unlike any other histories the world has ever known. In reality a desire to relate historical facts to future generations was a secondary motive. "Their real object was to manifest their belief in the control exercised by Jehovah, the God of Israel, over the fortunes and destinies, primarily of his own people, and secondarily, over the world at large." (1) Let us consider the distinct attitudes of each of these sources.

The book of Kings is the older document. It is likely that it was written sometime before the exile. The writer had at his command three major sources for the history, as follows: (2) The Book of the Acts of Solomon, The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, and The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. These are official books, all of them, and were of a political character. These were used as the form upon which to mould the religious story. Other writings, unknown to us now, were probably used some also. During the exile someone must have made a few changes and brought the story down to date (about 561 B.C.). There may have been some later additions and

(1) Guillaume, A., in N.C.H.S., p.170.

(2) Skinner, J., Kings, p.23.

redactions, but they did not change it sufficiently to be worth discussing here.

The book of Kings usually expressed what is called the Deuteronomic standpoint. This is true to such an extent that many scholars believe the same man wrote the first draft of Kings who wrote Deuteronomy. Whether or not this is true, the attitude is there. It might be said that he was "interested in history but absorbed in religion". (3) This can be indicated by the fact "important reigns like those of Omri and Jeroboam II are dismissed with a few meagre notices, while events of an ecclesiastical character, such as the building or repair of the Temple, or the finding of the Law, are described at great length". (4)

The three main ideas contained in Kings are: (5) (1) The exclusive right of Yahweh to the allegiance and worship of HIS people; (2) the necessity of keeping the worship pure; and (3) the restriction of sacrificial worship to the central sanctuary at Jerusalem. The writer of Kings judges all other writers and all Kings of Israel and Judah on the basis of these things. He probably did not sidestep historicity often to prove his point, but he did often choose the facts which best carried his story.

The book of Chronicles covers almost the same historical period as Kings; yet its story is quite different. The foremost reason is probably the date. Whereas Kings was complete almost in its present form by 550 B.C., Chronicles was composed somewhere near 250 B.C. Wade suggests that someone rewrote the entire history of Israel "in order to bring it into accord with the post-exilic

3. Guillaume, *op.cit.*, p.284
 4. Skinner, *Kings*, page 15
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

arrangements with which he was familiar". (6) The reigns of David, Joash, and Uzziah show this particularly well. The times had changed. New practices had been introduced by Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. One may easily see that a devout man of this new age would want to feel that he was following the traditions of the past. The easiest way was to re-interpret the past.

This new book came out of a Levitical community and is very definitely ecclesiastical. The writer "insists on inserting into ancient narratives the laws, customs, and worship of post-exilic Judaism". (7) He is interested in genealogy. He is interested in law. But, "the writer is concerned above everything else with the life of Israel centered in the worship at the temple in Jerusalem". (8) The temple in all its aspects is fully described; this definitely links the writer of Chronicles with the writers of the Priestly Code.

This writer required an explanation for everything; so he finds divine causes for all sorts of things. King Uzziah was a leper; therefore the Chronicler finds a sin for the cause. Because Ahaz was a bad king, this writer changes the history and has him delivered to the enemy. The reign of Hezekiah is greatly magnified. Many miraculous things are attached to his life. So Chronicles merely takes all of the sources at hand and changes them to fit post-exilic thought.

In our study II Kings 15-20 covers the period of Isaiah's life, while chapters 26-32 of II Chronicles contain the corresponding narrative. As we use the materials from these two sources it is well to have in mind the attitudes of the writers.

6. Wade, G.W., Old Testament History, p.172.

7. Guillaume, op. cit., p.274.

8. Curtis, E. L. and Madsen, A. A., The Books of Chronicles, p.7.

The last source for our knowledge of this period comes from archaeology. The main events of Hebrew history with reference to international relationships are told in archaeological records. We will briefly mention the four main ones.

The first of these is the Moabite Stone, first discovered in 1868 at Dibon in Moab. It was written by King Mesha. The author of the Stone is mentioned in II Kings 3:4. Barton says of this Stone, "In general the inscription supplements the Biblical narrative. It mentions persons and places well known from the Bible ...". (9) There are some differences of statement between them, but these do not take from the fact that the Biblical narrative is strengthened as a historical document.

Tiglath-pileser IV, made several western campaigns about this time. He left very complete records, but they were seriously mutilated by a later ruler. Many lines are gone; still, much of interest to students of the Bible can be found. One account tells of the campaign of 738 B. C. in which the alliance of Syrian states, including Israel and Damascus, were defeated. This just preceded the Syro-Ephraimitic wars. (See Chapter II) This inscription also shows that deportation was practiced as early as this, and was evidently the common thing. This supplements the Biblical accounts in II Kings 15-16.

Sargon, whose reign began at the siege of Samaria, adds much light to Biblical sources. He tells us that at the beginning of his reign he captured Samaria, taking 27,290 people away settling others in their midst. Tribute and taxes were placed on them. This confirms the story in II Kings 17:6 and 24-41. Again Sargon tells of tribute taken from the Pharaoh. This records the same story as Isaiah 10:9, the overthrow of Hamath and Arpad.

9. Barton, G. A., Archaeology and the Bible, p. 364.

Sargon has a long account of the campaign against Ashdod in 711 B. C. This dates Isaiah 20 beyond any doubt.

Finally come the tablets of Sennacherib, so familiar to the Bible story. He tells about subduing Merodach-baladan early in his career. Then he turns to the campaign of 701 B.C., describing it in detail. He tells of all the cities of Judah he took, and all the booty. At last he shut Hezekiah "up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his capital city". He does not say he took the city, but he tells of the great tribute which Hezekiah paid him. "With 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones ...; also his daughters, the women of his palace, male and female musicians he (Hezekiah) sent after me to Nineveh, my capital city, and sent his messenger to present the gift and to do homage." (10)

There is one short inscription found in Jerusalem in 1880 which may belong to this very period. It tells of the boring of the tunnel which connects the virgin's well and the Pool of Siloam. II Kings 20:20 tells us that Hezekiah built this tunnel to bring water into the city during the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B. C. The two references certainly refer to the same tunnel construction.

We have therefore quite complete Biblical sources for the period of Isaiah's life. And, almost every major turning point in the history of that time is backed up solidly through archaeological sources. Inasmuch as this whole study is to be built around the historical framework (to be considered in Chapter II), and all of our knowledge of Isaiah's conception of God will be found in these few sources, this careful account of them will enable us better to understand the meaning of each passage. Knowing the attitude of each writer, we can begin to draw conclusions with more certainty.

10. Barton, Ibid, p. 373.

CHAPTER II

The Internal and International Setting

1. The Reigns of Jeroboam and Uzziah.
2. The invasion of Tiglath-pileser, 738 B. C.
3. The Syro-Ephraimitic wars, 735-4 B. C.
4. The Fall of Damascus, 732 B. C.
5. The Fall of Samaria, 722 B. C.
6. The Reign of Sargon, 722 - 705 B. C.
7. Sennacherib and his invasion, 705-1 B. C.

CHAPTER II

The Internal and International Setting

With the numerous Biblical sources augmented by archaeological findings, we are able to weave together a fairly complete history of Western Asia between 750 and 700 B. C. These many monuments and tablets mentioned in the last Chapter give us a network of dates upon which to hang the Biblical records more completely.

Isaiah is mentioned first in connection with the death of King Uzziah, about 740 B. C. This means that he must have grown up and received his education in the greatest and most prosperous period Israel and Judah had known since the days of David and Solomon. Early in the first quarter of the eighth century Assyria had launched a western military campaign under Adadnirari III (810-782 B. C.). In a series of battles Damascus was crushed, and Edom, Phoenicia, and Israel were badly defeated. Before Judah could be taken, however, wars in the East made it necessary for the Assyrian troops to be withdrawn. For forty years Assyria remained comparatively weak. This was also true of the crushed neighbors of Israel and Judah.

The result was that both the Kingdoms of Samaria and Judah prospered. "Alike in Israel and Judah, the period of Assyria's greatest weakness was covered by a single reign - of Jeroboam II (785-745 B. C.) in the north, and of Uzziah (780-740 B. C.) in the south." (1) These two men conquered lost lands and pushed their borders back to where they were at the time of David. Israel gained land as far as Hamath and subdued the already weakened Damascus. Uzziah regained the port of Elath and fought successful battles with the Philistines,

1. Wade, G. B., *Isaiah*, p. lxxiv.

Ammonites and others. It was also a period of great internal expansion and prosperity in both nations.

"But this remarkable outburst of material prosperity was attended in both kingdoms by an aggravation of the social evils which seem inseparable from every oriental system of government." (2) The masses became economically enslaved, and luxury and debauchery became common among the wealthy. It was in this atmosphere, in the very center of it, Jerusalem, that young Isaiah grew up. He must have been at least in his adolescent years when the prophet Amos went from Tekoa on one side of Jerusalem to Bethel on the other to thunder out against existing conditions in the name of Jehovah. Isaiah must also have known of the deep sincere appeal made by Hosea in the north. Neither Amos, a native of Judah, or Hosea, a citizen of Samaria, limited their words to Samaria. Judah was included, as well as many foreign nations. It is no wonder that Isaiah's early sermons resemble the work of Amos.

In 745 B. C. Tiglath-pileser III (745 - 727 B. C.) ascended the throne of Assyria. Within a few years he had drawn a united empire about him and began to look westward again. Jeroboam II had died in the same year that Tiglath-pileser took the Assyrian leadership. "Israel now entered upon the last stage of its history. The throne became a prize of a succession of conspirators..." (3) This period of misgovernment and moral and religious corruption was preached against by Hosea (Chapters 4-14). It was a signal of weakness to Assyria.

In 740 B. C. Uzziah died, and Jotham, who had been regent during his father's illness, became king. The Kings and Chronicles accounts show him as following in his father's footsteps and remaining true to the Jehovah-worship.

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2. Skinner, J., The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, v.2., p. xi.
 3. Wade, G. W., Old Testament History, p. 357.

By 735 B. C., however, Jotham had been replaced by his son, Ahaz, who proved to be a weak and corrupt sovereign. He is mentioned by Tiglath-pileser as early as 734 B. C. as having paid tribute to Assyria. (4)

Tiglath-pileser had begun his western campaign in 738 B. C. In that year he defeated an alliance of Syrian states and then turned southward. The immediate threat of the Assyrians so close at hand caused Pekah, King of Samaria, and leader of the anti-Assyrian faction, to try to form an alliance of all of the western states. Ahaz refused to join; so Damascus, led by King Rezin, and Samaria declared war on Judah in 734 B. C.

The Damascus forces went southward, capturing Elath and other southern points. Pekah naturally came from the north. The extent of the damage done by these armies we do not know. It was serious enough so that Ahaz became alarmed. In his fear he appealed to Tiglath-pileser for aid, against the judgment of the young prophet, Isaiah. This is the first time Isaiah appears in a place of prominence. (See Chapter III). He realized Assyria would take care of these enemies anyway and recommended trust in Jehovah, but to no avail. Judah became merely a puppet of Assyria.

Tiglath-pileser responded almost immediately by attacking both Samaria and Damascus. In 733 B. C. some Samaritans were carried away captive and the next year Damascus was completely destroyed, the king slain, and the people deported to Kir. King Pekah was slain by conspirators, and Hoshea replaced him, assuming the throne on the condition that he pay tribute to Assyria. When Tiglath-pileser died and Shalmaneser IV (727 - 723 B. C.) assumed the throne, Hoshea was tempted to defy Assyria. He appealed to Egypt for help, which failed to materialize. In 724 B. C. Shalmaneser besieged Samaria. A long battle

4. Gray, G. B., The Book of Isaiah, p. lxi.

ensued, and Shalmaneser died and was replaced by Sargon before the city finally fell. Over 27,000 inhabitants were carried away; these were replaced by people from other sections of the empire. Thus the greater of the two Hebrew kingdoms came to an end nearly 150 years before that of its less-favored southern rival. Judah's comparative weakness was its very greatest strength.

Ahaz proved a traitor in the eyes of Isaiah in more ways than one. Not only did he send to Assyria for aid, but he introduced foreign religions into Judah once again. Molten images became common, and immoral practices were introduced into religious as well as private life. Both Isaiah and Micah tell us of this renewed threat against Jehovah-worship. Ahaz even made changes in the Temple so that an altar, built after the type used by the Assyrian monarchs, might be used. All of this brought the judgment of the historians and chroniclers upon him, as well as the accusing finger of the prophets.

When Hezekiah (720-692 B. C.) came to the throne of his father, Ahaz, he found himself without friendly neighbors and with a heavy tax burden imposed by Assyria upon them. There was little else for him to do but remain true to Assyria during the remainder of the reign of Sargon. Hezekiah must have kept one eye watching toward Egypt. In 720 B. C. Sargon had crushed his western opposition so completely that for almost ten years there was no trouble. In this battle the armed forces of Egypt and Assyria met for the first time. Hezekiah seems to have partially joined in an alliance against Assyria in 711 B. C. Isaiah protested (Chapter 20) against this attitude. Sargon singled out the city of Ashdod in Philistia as the leader of the opposition and completely crushed the armies there. Judah fell back upon her policy of neutrality..

During this period Hezekiah had instituted many religious reforms. He recognized the corruption in the "high places" and abolished them. He also

destroyed Asherim and pillars and other idolatrous things. "He even demolished the brazen serpent reputed to have been made by Moses, because it had hitherto been the practice to offer incense to it." (5) In all of this the prophets Isaiah and Micah must have been active. Hezekiah hit at the very things against which those two prophets were preaching.

The death of Sargon in 705 B. C. changed Hezekiah's foreign policies completely. Sennacherib was the new leader. Merodach Baladan, king of Babylon, was the first to revolt. He sent letters and an embassy to Hezekiah under the guise of congratulating him on recovering from his recent serious illness. In reality he wanted Hezekiah's military aid. Isaiah rose up once again in protest, saying Assyria would destroy them along with Babylon should they join Merodach Baladan. Isaiah was vindicated a few months later when Sennacherib came from seclusion to put Merodach Baladan from the Babylonian throne for the third time.

The anti-Assyrian groups in western Asia turned to Egypt. "Now for the first time the Palestinians and Phoenicians who observed the approaching Assyrian colossus with growing anxiety saw in the approaching dynasty of Egypt (the twenty-fifth) a power equal to the Assyrian to which they could appeal for help." (6) This Ethiopian dynasty had sent out many envoys. Now Judah and other states looked on them with favor and in turn sent ambassadors of their own. Hezekiah's prime minister, Shebna, who was a pro-Egyptian, came into conflict with Isaiah. Great as Isaiah's influence was at this time he could not gain the popular eye, and the policies of Shebna were carried out.

5. Wade, G. W., op. cit., p. 365.

6. Whitehouse, O. C., Isaiah, vol. 1, p. 28.

Sennacherib knew that most of the western nations had defaulted in their tribute payments. Now he saw these new storm clouds brewing and turned his attention to the west immediately. Hezekiah realized that there would soon be war and fortified the city, secured a water supply, and stopped up all fountains outside of the city. They saw Sennacherib defeat Phoenicia, Philistia, Ashdod, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, - one after the other. Ashkelon and Ekron resisted but were soon taken. Now Judah was besieged. The Assyrian forces came to the very gates of the city. They were forced to give up the Ekronite king who had fled there, many women, including Hezekiah's daughters, and large payments of gold and silver.

Isaiah was vindicated; Shebna was taken from office. The people thought that the city was delivered. But for some reason Sennacherib decided he should completely wipe out Jerusalem before going to Egypt. He sent envoys to Hezekiah to ask if they would allow themselves to be deported peacefully. Hezekiah brought the question to Isaiah. This time the prophet gave the word for Jerusalem to resist. Jehovah would defy the enemy. Again he was vindicated, for the armies of the Assyrians started for Jerusalem and never got there. Whether sickness, military defeat, or trouble at home was the cause, Sennacherib returned to Assyria with his armies.

CHAPTER III

The Idea of God in Israel before Isaiah.

1. Mosaic times.
2. Changes during the settlement in Canaan.
3. Clarification of thought under Elijah.
4. Amos and Hosea.

CHAPTER III

The Idea of God in Israel before Isaiah

The great genius of Isaiah was in his ability to adapt his religious thought to meet various situations as they arose. He began with the thought of many hundreds of years behind him and changed it to meet new needs. His thought was as old as Moses and yet as new as Amos and Hosea, from whom he borrowed much. Each great prophet has looked for the foundation of his thought in the past and has then begun to build upward. The only way in which we can know what Isaiah's early thought was, and what must have been in the minds of the people, is to make a swift review of earlier thought.

We can never be entirely sure of what the early Hebrews of the time of Moses believed about God, for most of the stories of that period were written at a late date. There must be, however, certain threads of truth in the stories which we have.

The Semites, for the most part, were conscious of some divine presence. In many cases fear may have been the factor which promoted it, but this cannot be said for all of them. Even in early times the concepts of God which were developed show real spiritual depth. There was more than a shuddering fear of God. They worshipped His power and took delight in it. "The very word for God, 'El', suggests power and supremacy." (1) To the Hebrew people the great strength of God took precedence over the merely mysterious element, although the latter was surely a part of their early religion.

1. Lofthouse, W. F., in The People and the Book (Peake), p. 223.

The God of these early Israelites was thought to live in a certain place. At first it was on Mount Sinai. He stayed there and ruled, although no one ever saw Him. From there the lightning and the thunder were sent out. There He revealed Himself to Moses. There was the source of all morality. There was the source of strength against the enemy. This is a most characteristic idea, "that the enemies of Israel are the enemies of Israel's God, Yahweh". (2)

Perhaps central to all this thought is the covenant idea. The above things, characteristic of early thought, were done for the benefit of Israel alone. Jehovah had taken Israel as His chosen people; they had taken Him as their God. Therefore they must live up to His commands. In that nomadic stage of Israel's existence there was no other path of thought, for the tribe was the unit. All others were enemies.

When the Israelites began to move into Canaan it was necessary for them to take Jehovah with them; so the ark-idea came into being. An empty box was kept in a tent with a few symbols of power; in this way God was carried with them. As Miss Benedict points out, (3) Jehovah was almost entirely a God of war during these days. "In every crisis they turned to their warrior-god, Jehovah, and their victories were credited to His power and His ban was placed upon their conquered enemies." (4) Feasts were held in His honor, and a few primitive rituals grew up.

That awe, mystery, and fear were still a part of their thought of God is a certainty. For most people of that time there was, perhaps, not much more than that. We have many stories about the ark and the sacred treasures which indicate that their ideas of God were very primitive. A man touched the ark to keep

2. Benedict, M. J., The God of the Old Testament in Relation to War, p. 11.
3. Ibid, p. 12.
4. Mathews, Shaller, The Growth of the Idea of God, p. 51.

it straight and he died. Later the Philistines captured it, but it caused them so much trouble they finally left it.

Dr. Harper sums up the thought of God at this time in the following sentence. "When Yahwism, whatsoever may have been its origin, came into Canaan, it was, so far as the conception of God is concerned, simple and primitive, very crude and naïve, monotonous and severe." (5) This statement is probably very close to the truth. The groundwork was there, but the religion had not begun to develop very much. The God of the time of Moses and Joshua was limited both in space and as to the number who followed Him. Yet the people thought of Him in terms of unlimited power. For them He was The Only God.

When they began to settle in Canaan an entirely new situation was presented. Two important things took place. They changed from a nomadic to an agricultural people, and they came into contact with a highly developed civilization, that of the Canaanites. This meant that transitions were taking place in every realm of their activity and thought.

The Israelites, for the most part, continued to worship Jehovah, for He gave them many victories. They captured the hill country quite easily. The ark seems to have been put at Shiloh, and for a time their worship centered there. Soon the problem of worship became a real one, for the Israelites found sacred places all about them where the Canaanites worshipped their gods. For the most part these were fertility cults. As the Hebrews became more agricultural they were lured by these cults. Many of the people worshipped both Jehovah and these fertility gods. A change in the conception of God was necessary.

5. Harper, W. R., Amos and Hosea, p. lxxxviii.

"It is not surprising that in the process He should have acquired traits which He did not possess before He led His people through the Jordan... This was an extension of the conception of Yahweh into the realm of natural process." (6) Soon He was thought to control not only the mountains and the sky, but also the seasons and the land. As a result, great festival occasions sprang up in Jehovah-worship. The old feast of the Passover, for instance, was expanded to include agricultural elements. Sowing and reaping were now a part of Jehovah's plan.

When the monarchy came into being, the supremacy of Jehovah was advanced well above all other deities. David's monarchy was at its basis a military one; yet he strengthened and centralized religion as well as the state. This worked two ways, for David was really strengthened by his stress upon religion, too. The main unity of the nation, as far as the people were concerned, was loyalty to the one God.

During the time of David and Solomon there were those who worshipped other gods, and failed to be loyal to Jehovah. The latter had married wives from many lands. With them, new types of worship were brought into the very court of Jerusalem. When finally new sanctuaries were set up in the north because of the political rupture, this tendency to break away from Jehovah-worship was made easier and more excusable.

The first great attempt at the clarification of thought about God came from the time of Elijah. Many new developments in religious thought are taking place in this period. First, the problem of Baal-worship, involving the solitary position of Jehovah, had become acute. It was for Elijah to bring it into the open.

6. Matthews, op. cit., pp.52-3.

Even those who thought they were loyal to Jehovah had sometimes had Baals or idols of some kinds in their homes and paid homage to them as well as to Jehovah. Elijah challenged this division of loyalty. As Peake (7) points out, the stories about Elijah are not at all accurate from the standpoint of the historian; yet, regardless of this, the result of the experience on Mt. Carmel was to set Jehovah up before Israel as their one God for all time. Individuals failed to recognize Him as supreme after that, but the leaders, the prophets, never again wavered.

Another thing to be noted is that the idea of God is becoming more spiritual all of the time. The God which was thought to be housed in the temple at Jerusalem spoke to Elijah in a "still, small voice" (8) out upon the mountain top. This is very important to the development of the thought of this paper. Also important is the fact that Elijah does not limit Jehovah in his rule to Israel, alone. He at least believes that Jehovah has a controlling hand in Syria, when he calls for a change of leaders there.

The idea of a moral God had also become apparent during the time of Elijah and Elisha. Back in the time of David, Nathan had called the king to task for his actions, but now it appears more clearly. The seizure of Naboth's vineyard by Ahab was condemned by Elijah in no uncertain terms. In this condemnation he spoke in the name of Jehovah.

Further proof of this trend toward morality in religion is the long series of miracles and good deeds accredited to these men of God, Elijah and Elisha. To do good was becoming definitely a part of religion.

7. Peake, A. S., The People and the Book, p. 261.

8. I Kings 19:12.

The thought of Jehovah as a God of wrath was still present at this date. The people believed he would punish severely the nations who brought trouble to Israel. They also believed that individuals who did not keep the covenant of Jehovah and remain true to Him would be destroyed by Him. The Old Testament is full of these ideas and even at a much later date than this.

From the troubled times of the ninth century we now turn to the prosperous middle years of the eighth century B. C. "At the time when Amos appeared at Bethel there seems to have been no anticipation in Israel that any reverse in national prosperity was near."⁽⁹⁾ As was indicated in the last chapter, both Judah and Samaria were living in peace and luxury. The whole message of Amos to this age centers around the word "righteousness". He was born in the country and had the countryman's hostility to the rich of the city. He was a reformer of the first rank and alive to each new need. He threatened "Yahweh's punishment upon economic injustice and national faithlessness".⁽¹⁰⁾

Out of this sort of message came new conceptions of God. First, we must notice the tendency toward monotheism. He admits that Israel is Jehovah's chosen when he represents Jehovah as saying, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth".⁽¹¹⁾ Yet in his prophecy all of the neighboring nations are included. The fact that Israel was elected by Jehovah makes her sins even more terrible. Their blindness to the state of things is inexcusable, for they knew better than any others what God's intentions are.

A Day of Judgment is pronounced by this prophet in which Israel, as well as her neighbors, will be punished for their manifold sins. Sacrifices are not

9. Peake, op. cit., p. 265.

10. Mathews, op. cit., p. 58.

11. Amos 3:2.

enough - right living, a complete reform, is the only thing which could ward off this great Day. Jehovah is so righteous that He will punish every wrong deed. What stirs His anger more than anything else is not ritualistic offenses but oppression, cruelty, and injustice.

We find here a stern God, more powerful than any known before. Amos' thought approaches monotheism and adds the quality of righteousness or moral rightness to God's character. God was exalted above the earth.

In sharp contrast to Amos is Hosea. Hosea teaches his lesson in thinking not of a severe, stern God, but of one who is gracious and forgiving. Perhaps the backgrounds of the two men are responsible for the difference.

Hosea's wife, Gomer, had been unfaithful to him; yet he had loved her still. This did not right her wrongs, but he could forgive them. Somehow the prophet saw Jehovah's greater love for Israel in the same light. Israel had been unfaithful to the bridegroom of her youth. Would she repent so that Jehovah could forgive and they could again be united?

The idea of punishment is not entirely gone from Hosea's thought of God, but it is lost in his high conception of love. Peake (12) suggests the following as a motto for Hosea, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? ... My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together."⁽¹³⁾ Perhaps no man before this time really felt any deeper than Hosea the very nature of God. Most of what he wrote down over twenty-six centuries ago is still in our characteristic conception of God today.

About the time that Isaiah's ministry began, the ideas traced here were the

12. Peake, *op. cit.*, p. 273

13. Hosea 11:8

ones with which people were familiar. They still harked back to the covenant between Jehovah and Israel. Mysterious elements were still included in the mind of the common person. Most had not yet understood Amos' word, and sin and corruption were not considered as violating ceremonial duties to Jehovah. Hosea's loving God was new to them and only gradually took hold. The people did not think in monotheistic terms, although the trend was in that direction. There were still gods for other nations just as there was but one God for Israel. The influence of the foreign cults was still felt, for corruption of religious places was common. Lastly, the two nations, Judah and Samaria did not act in their policies toward their own people or toward other nations as if they were the chosen of God - or even as if there were any God at all.

We will now turn directly to a study of the development of Isaiah's thought about God. We will see how he uses the very ideas of the whole of Hebrew history, and particularly of his earlier contemporaries, and makes them fit new needs.

CHAPTER IV**Isaiah's Early Conceptions of God**

1. His Call and Commission.
2. His Early Sermons.
3. Summary.

CHAPTER IV

Isaiah's Early Conceptions of God

We do not know just when Isaiah was born or when his ministry began. Most likely he was in his twenties when he had his conversion experience, which would put his birth date somewhere near 760 B.C. This means that he grew up in the very period in which Amos and Hosea were preaching. If, as is likely, Isaiah lived as a youth in Jerusalem, he must have come into contact more than once with every evil which those two great prophets spoke about.

The conversion of Isaiah took place in 740 B. C. Whether he preached before that we do not know. At least, he must have started very soon, for we have several sections of his work in our Bible which date between 740 and 735 B. C. It is quite generally agreed that Isaiah did not write about his conversion until sometime near 735 B. C. Yet, since our study here deals with the development of his thought rather than of his writings, we will turn first to the conversion experience.

"In the year that King Uzziah died
I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne,
high and lifted up .."(1)

These are the opening words of the prophet's story of his own conversion. His reference to King Uzziah must mean more than just a convenient dating of the whole section. Uzziah was one of the greatest kings of Israel or Judah. He had put Judah once again on her feet (see Chapter II). Advancements had been made along religious lines, even though political and social corruption was general, as it is in any great period of prosperity. The high regard people had

1. Isaiah 6:1

for Uzziah is reflected in this,

"that God helped him to prosper, and his name spread far abroad, and he was marvelously helped until he was strong." (2)

To the boy, Isaiah, this great king must have been a hero. Now the king was gone, and Jotham, although following in his father's footsteps, was far from his greatness. This death must have meant something very deep to the heart of this religious lad, for some years later he still dates his conversion by this event. George Adam Smith helps us in the meaning there when he writes, "That it is no mere date Isaiah means, but a spiritual contrast which he is anxious to impress upon us, is made clear by his emphasis of the rank and not the name of God. It is the Lord sitting upon a throne - the Lord absolutely, set over against the human prince. The simple antithesis seems to speak of the passing away of the young man's hero-worship and the dawn of his faith." (3) In this hour of great loss Isaiah may have realized his need of Jehovah and Jehovah's need for one to speak out in His name.

Let us turn to an analysis of the content of his conversion for the light it turns upon his conception of God in this early period.

The words "high and lifted up" probably refer to the throne. Perhaps the loftiness of the temple caused him to look up. It brought upon him the knowledge of the great contrast between God and man. The standards of Jehovah and his righteousness came into conflict with the lowly and vulgar state of affairs in the land of His chosen people. We might call it a contrast between the spiritual realm of God and the material realm which existed in Judah.

2. II Chronicles 26:15.

3. Smith, G. A., The Book of Isaiah, p. 60.

The angels which were around Jehovah's throne said to one another,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of his glory." (4)

The Lord of hosts, or Jehovah of hosts, was the common name for the God of Israel. But the prophet introduces two new terms - at least new meanings - into his conception of God. They are holiness and glory.

In the first of these, holiness, Isaiah takes a common word and restricts it to Jehovah. The phrase "holy gods" appears in an inscription of the king of Sidon and is even used in reference to sacred prostitutes.⁽⁵⁾ It means, therefore, in its most common usage, separateness. It is used primarily in connection with the term god or things religious. Isaiah means, then, that in his vision God was set apart from him. He felt the great gap between himself and the divine being. This exalted conception is reflected throughout the entire life of Isaiah. It is one of his great contributions to the conception of God.

The term "holy" for Isaiah must have had ethical qualities, too. We gather this from the context, as will be shown below. God was perfection of moral purity (and thereby set apart from others), as well as being different merely in the nature of His being.

Let us consider the other term. "The Lord's glory, in the sense which it has in the Seraph's song, is equivalent to the majesty pertaining to him by virtue of his sovereign power."⁽⁶⁾ It meant to the people of the old Testament an external manifestation of power or greatness. Skinner believes⁽⁷⁾ that it could refer to a king or anyone with great power and authority. This, too, may

4. Isaiah 6:3.

5. Skinner, John, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, vol. 1., p. xlv.

6. Wade, G. W., The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, p. xxxv.

7. Skinner, op.cit., p. xlix.

have grown out of his reverence for king Uzziah. He was a great leader and the people respected his sovereign power. Now he was gone, and Isaiah turned his face toward an even greater sovereign.

We cannot overestimate the importance of this idea in the mind of Isaiah. Never for one instance in his entire career did he ever doubt that Jehovah was his sovereign Lord, and Lord over the entire earth. All things were caused by Him, and through Him all things would work out in the interests of righteousness. Isaiah saw God's glory - or the manifestations of God's power - in everything, in all nature and in all history.

These two ideas of God's holiness and his glory are basic in the thought of Isaiah toward God. They are not new in that the ideas were known to the people long before this date. Yet in their particular combination and meaning here, they are original. Never in Hebrew history had God become so completely spiritualized, exalted, and all-powerful as in the mind of Isaiah.

It is quite likely that these terms were chosen to express what happened in his vision after several years of experience. If this is true, and they were not written until five years after the vision, the ideas there contained are even more valid.

"Then said I,
 Woe is me, for I am lost;
 For I am a man of unclean lips,
 And I dwell among a people of unclean lips;
 For mine eyes have seen the King,
 The Lord of hosts." (8)

After what we have just discussed, this confession of the prophet is not a surprise. It is the natural reaction for a religiously-minded person with such

an exalted conception of God. He was completely disarmed by the realization of his mortal weakness. Then one of the seraphim touched his lips with a red-hot stone and declared his guilt taken away. For one whose lips were to play such a prominent part in leading a nation in the ways of Jehovah, this was an important act. It also shows that the idea of a forgiving God was in the mind of Isaiah from the beginning. One who repented could be brought back into harmony with God again.

How completely Isaiah gave himself over to the will of God is shown by his call and acceptance,

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'
Whereupon I said, 'Here am I! send me.' " (9)

"What spiritual understanding of the will of God and the responsibility of man, what evangelic liberty and boldness are here!"⁽¹⁰⁾ Here is the source of his great power, which he exercised for so many years. Every time a great need confronted Israel there was need for a leader. Each time Isaiah must have said, "Lord, here am I; send me."

There follows his commission which reveals more the nature of the men and women of Judah than the nature of God.

"Then I said,
'How long, O Lord?'
And he said,
'Til cities lie waste without inhabitant,
And houses without man;
And the soil be left desolation,
And the Lord have removed man far away,
And many be the forsaken places in the midst of the land.
Even if a tenth remain in it
This must pass through the fire again,
Like a terebinth, or an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is felled'." (11)

9. Isaiah 6:8.

10. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

11. Isaiah 6:11-13.

Even this early Isaiah seems to have sensed that God would punish Israel for her sins. Perhaps he even has deportation and exile in mind, for those things were not uncommon to the peoples of that part of the world. He seems also to think in terms of a righteous remnant which will "pass through the fire" and still remain. One of the most interesting things in this entire study is to see how the prophet develops his thought and then later goes back to some little idea and develop it thoroughly, when some situation demands it.

The prophecies which belong to this early period (before the Syro-Ephraimitic wars) are as follows: Chapters 2-4,5, and 9:8 - 10:4. In these verses we see how he attempted to use himself in the service of Jehovah of hosts for the first five years of his ministry. His thought here is almost identical with what we found in his conversion experience in Chapter 6. Smith says that these chapters to be discussed go back to the prophet's conversion where they find the "secret and solemn moments of inspiration in the prophet's own soul". (12)

Isaiah's earliest writings resemble those of Amos in some ways. First, he shows that God is righteous and expects men and women to do rightly. He calls them to come back to ways of right, saying,

"O house of Jacob, come and let us walk
In the light of the Lord!
For He has forsaken His people,
The house of Jacob." (13)

Then he begins to list offenses - materialism, idol-worship, and others. Later he singles out these offenses and dwells on them at great length, abuse of the soil, use of strong drinks, moral blindness and love of sin, and greed and perversion of justice. But just what does this have to do with the character of

12. Smith, op. cit., p. 57.

13. Isaiah 2:5.

God? There seems to me to be no more telling verses than these to illustrate what was in the prophet's mind:

"Mankind is humbled, and man is brought low,
The eyes of the exalted are brought low;
But the Lord of hosts is exalted through justice,
The Holy God shows himself holy through righteousness." (14)

The last of those two verses is an illustration of the use the young prophet made of Amos' thought, coupled with his own conception of God. The holy God of Isaiah is just and righteous and demands the same kind of character from all.

Particularly does the prophet aim remarks at the "daughters of Zion". Two sections, 3:16 - 4:1 and 32:9-14. The things which they have come to hold dear, Isaiah says, are not lasting and will be taken away. Again, he says in substance to them that only the things of God are worth while.

The idea of judgment which played such an important part in earlier prophets finds a prominent place in these early sermons of Isaiah. It is the same idea of righteousness - stern and uncompromising - that Amos used so effectively to give his message to the people of Bethel. Characteristic statements are as follows:

"The Lord comes forward to plead,
He stands up to arraign his people;
The Lord will bring an indictment
Against the elders and princes of his people." (15)

and

"Go into the rock and hide in the dust,
From before the dread presence of the Lord,
And from his glorious majesty ...
Then the haughtiness of man will be humbled,
And the pride of man will be brought low;
And the Lord alone will be exalted on that day." (16)

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14. Isaiah 5:15-16.
15. Isaiah 3:13-14a.
16. Isaiah 2:10, 17.

Each time Isaiah shows the great difference between God and man, the feeling he had when he said, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips". He shows the majestic God standing in judgment over the people.

The great difference between the conceptions of Amos and Isaiah at this point is that Amos saw only complete destruction, regardless of anything; Isaiah's God always calls for repentance first. We might say he gives them one last chance to renounce their sins before he pronounces the day of judgment upon them.

Isaiah believes thoroughly that Israel can be saved. Later he has his doubts, but at this early stage he believes that God's continued calls to his people will be heeded. Perhaps the thing which reveals Isaiah's conception of God's power over sin more than any other one thing is his continued hope for a sinless Jerusalem. In the very opening verses of the present group of chapters he pictures "the mountain of the Lord's house" to which the nations will come, saying,

"Come, let us go up to the mount of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
That he may instruct us in his ways,
And that we may walk in his paths;
For from Zion goes forth instruction,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (17)

In this passage it would seem that Isaiah was building in his mind a Jerusalem equal to his picture of God. This is what the city could become should it follow Jehovah in the way He led.

In Isaiah 4:2-6 the prophet begins to look far ahead, perhaps toward the ideal, perhaps toward what he expects to take place. It is a glowing picture of the coming glory of Zion. It is the Zion which those who follow Jehovah will know. We can see the first beginnings of the Messianic idea growing in this.

These early sermons make very little reference to other nations than Judah and Samaria. Syria, Philistia, and a few others, are mentioned incidentally. Isaiah's whole attention is centered on his own people and their relationship to their God. The idea of the covenant is assumed with him as it is with almost all of the writers of the Old Testament.

Is Isaiah really thinking in monotheistic terms even at this early date? As one reads through the materials of Isaiah's early ministry, he finds that Isaiah does not use any phrases or words which would help to argue this point. Yet, if anything is certain, this is. Monotheism - one God alone - is absolutely necessary to the very thinking of Isaiah. For,

" he will judge between the nations,
And arbitrate for many peoples." (18)

The one indication of what Isaiah's later thought is to be is found in this passage.

"Therefore the Lord raised up their adversaries against them,
And spurred their enemies on,
The Syrians on the east, and the Philistines on the west,
Who devoured Israel with open mouth." (19)

This is enough to be sure that from the beginning Isaiah was a practical monotheist. For him there was only one God, Jehovah of hosts.

Let us summarize briefly the main thought of this early period. There is one God, Jehovah, who is exalted far above any human conception of Him. He is holy, and His glory is shown in His righteousness. Next to Him, His own people are lowly and sinful. Just because He is their God and they worship Him does not exempt them from their sinfulness. Judgment will come upon them.

18. Isaiah 2:4a.

19. Isaiah 9: 11-12.

The idea of the remnant seems quite well formulated in his mind even now, although, as we have said, the Messianic idea has not yet developed. In this period he has found a solid background for his later life. He has found Jehovah, the God of Hosts, in whom he can put his whole trust.

CHAPTER V

The Statesman - Prophet

1. The Change in Emphasis.
2. Ahaz and the "firebrands".
3. A Deep-rooted Hope.
4. The Fall of Damascus.
5. The Fall of Samaria.
6. Summary.

CHAPTER V

The Statesman - Prophet

Up to the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic wars, Isaiah had been a "prophet of general principles, preaching to his countrymen the elements of righteousness and judgment, and tracing the main lines of fate along which their evil conduct was rapidly forcing them". (1) His preaching had been to individuals on their own behalf. His references to other nations, we have said, were almost too few to mention. His message followed the general pattern of that of Amos, except that there was some hope in the mind of Isaiah.

Now the scene changes. In place of the great Uzziah or his worthy son, Jotham, on the throne, is Ahaz. The new king assumed the head of the government with everything in his favor, but he was a weakling in holding his head up among the nations and soon undid most of the good his grandfather had done.

It is little wonder that the young prophet, Isaiah, thinking back to his boyhood day of hero-worship toward Uzziah, should wonder about the future of his nation. And as he became more concerned about Ahaz following Jehovah's will these things happened. Gradually the nation, Judah, took the place of the individual in his thought, while the world of his day took the place of the nation, Judah, in his early thought. Soon he found himself thinking about Jehovah's control over the destinies of the whole world.

This change was brought about by the events leading up to the Syro-Ephraimitic wars (see Chapter II). The weak Ahaz was afraid when he saw the alliance of his northern neighbors against him. Isaiah went to him and spoke in the name of the Lord, saying not to fear, for

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 91.

"It shall not stand; neither shall it come to be
 For the head of Syria is Damascus,
 And the head of Damascus is Rezin; ..
 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
 And the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
 If ye will not believe,
 Surely ye shall not be established." (2)

He was saying in substance, these two nations are controlled only by men and weak ones at that. Do not be afraid. Have faith and believe on the Lord. This idea is the cornerstone of the work of Isaiah in this whole period. He saw God as controlling the whole world. The whole of human history is the government of the one God, which Israel had known for so long. This is the great idea which Isaiah gives us in this section of his life.

The people of his day, whether Hebrew or of other nationality, usually believed in some sort of divine being. For the Israelite people it had been one God for Israel; while the rank and file still believed that other nations had other gods. Amos, and perhaps Hosea, before Isaiah had thought in terms of monotheism, but neither made it completely clear. Now, however, there is no doubt about the meaning. Isaiah believed in one God who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. It is little wonder that the writings of a later man, whose central thought was the sovereignty of God over the universe, should have his works related to that of Isaiah's. Isaiah 40 - 55, commonly known as Deutero-Isaiah, carries this idea to its culmination.

Smith⁽³⁾ points out another new development in the thought of Isaiah concerning God. Before this time resigning to the will of God would have meant resigning to fate. Fatalism was much the keynote of that day as of the rule of the Grecian gods. It is easy for us today to become fatalists; so we can understand better what this means. To the mind of Ahaz, the advice of Isaiah

2. Isaiah 7:9.

3. Smith, op. cit., p. 116f.

probably meant nothing more than had he said, "Go give yourself up to Pekah and Rezin", or some other such words. To the nation it would have meant much the same thing. But one who had a deeper insight into the real character of God, as Isaiah did, could trust his fate and the fate of his nation to that God. This is something that it took many years for the people to understand. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both found it a problem in later times.

Ahaz could not fathom what Isaiah was saying to him. He did not experience God in such a way as to know him. So he took up a policy of his own, that of calling upon Assyria for help in the crisis.

With his knowledge of God and understanding of man, Isaiah made another attempt to persuade the King. He told the King to ask for a sign from God; this he refused to do. Isaiah then ventured a prophecy, saying that since you will evade God, He will show you a sign anyway. It is this, that before a child, who will soon be born and will be called "Emmanuel" (God is with us), is old enough to know right from wrong, Assyria will have conquered both Samaria and Damascus. Not only that, but Assyria will also cause grave trouble for Judah as well. She will do much damage to Ahaz and his kingdom. This will prove that the King should have put his trust in God rather than the armies of Assyria.

What is the power of prediction which Isaiah uses here? Can he foretell the future? There is but one answer to this as far as our study is concerned. It is an answer used over and over again in this paper. Isaiah knows the character and will of God better than those about him. And he also is alive to the political movements of the day, even more so than the King himself. He knew that putting Judah at the feet of Assyria would make trouble before too long. He probably knew also that Ahaz could not be content with things that way for very long, and would cause trouble to come.

The result is that Isaiah turns his appeal at last to the people themselves. He put upon a tablet the words "speed - spoil - hurry - prey", or a better translation, "Speeding to the spoil, hastening to the prey". This is meant to carry the same idea as the remarks to Ahaz. He is calling attention to the fact that both Damascus and Samaria will soon fall easy prey to Assyria.

When a child is born to Isaiah about this time, he gives the name "Speeding to the spoil, hastening to the prey" to him. We see somewhat of the earnestness of the man and his prophetic consciousness. He tells the people that before the little boy is old enough to cry out "Daddy" (Abi), "Mana" (Immi), the two kingdoms to the north will be destroyed by Assyria.

The next utterance shows what is to become a factor in Isaiah's later thought. He writes,

"Because the people have spurned
The waters of Shiloah, that flow gently,
And melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah,
Behold the Lord is bring up against them
The waters of the River, mighty and many,
Even the king of Assyria and all his glory." (4)

The Assyrians are an agent in the hand of God, and the damage they do even to Judah will be His will. This is not fully developed here; so the discussion is left to a later section. The first mention of Assyria as an agent of destruction for Jehovah is in this passage.

The prophet closes by addressing his remarks to the enemies of Israel, saying they will be overcome; they cannot stand

"For God is with us." (5)

It is the hand of God controlling the destinies of the nations.

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- 4. Isaiah 8:6-7.
 - 5. Isaiah 8:10.

Yet ever present in the heart of the prophet is the knowledge of God's forgiveness, and he hopes that this will not have to come to pass. A picture of this hope for Israel, coupled with his faith, is found in these three verses. "I will bind up my testimony, and seal my teaching in the heart of my disciples. Then I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Israel; I will set my hope on him, while I and the children whom the Lord has given me remain as signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mt. Zion." (6)

While the prophet's mind is dwelling on this aspect of the situation, he thinks onward to a picture of the ideal community. It begins with the hopeful words

"The people that have walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;" (7)

These are what seem to be words which come out of a perplexed soul. He knows how God spoke to him and how he saw the light. It would be possible for Him to speak to others, too. If they would but listen. He goes on thinking of the land which would result from living godly lives. His mind turns to the King upon the throne, Ahaz, and he turns to a vision of an ideal king -

"The government shall be upon his shoulder;
And his name shall be called
'Wonderful counsellor of God Almighty,
Father forever, Prince of Peace'.
Of the increase of his government and peace
There will be no end.
Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom
To establish it and uphold it
In justice and in righteousness,
From henceforth even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." (8)

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- 6. Isaiah 8:16-18.
 - 7. Isaiah 9:2.
 - 8. Isaiah 9:6-7.

These words come out of the very depths of the soul of the prophet. The "zeal of the Lord of hosts" is the thing in which he put his faith. If all of Jerusalem had thought in the same terms perhaps this picture would be a reality.

One cannot read the words above quoted without thinking at once of the word "Messiah". They go together in our day. Yet, it is hardly possible to believe that Isaiah yet had formulated his Messianic hopes. They were brewing, for we can see them in this section. He does make use of the remnant idea consistently now, but the two are not brought together until a later date.

The Assyrian armies had answered the call of Ahaz by this time, and began their attack on Judah's northern neighbors. Tiglath-pileser was in command, Samaria was quickly subdued and after a long battle, Damascus was finally taken. The king, Rezin, was put to death and the people were taken prisoners to other parts of the empire.

All of this must have been watched closely by Isaiah. More than likely he spoke and wrote about it considerably. It was his first great opportunity to vindicate his judgment before the eyes of the whole nation. Sometime during the course of events he wrote one terse, crisp prophecy on Damascus which was included in the book of Isaiah. He views the impending calamity with calm certainty. He feels no doubt of the outcome. He calls it a warning to Samaria of what is going to happen to her -

"That the glory of Jacob will be made thin." (9)

The prophet then turns once again to point out the beneficial aspects to mankind, or rather to point out the moral. He writes as follows:

"And that day shall a man look to his Maker
 And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel;
 He will look no more to the altars,
 The work of his hands - -
 On that day will your cities be deserted - -
 And they will become desolation." (10)

And the reason for this

"Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
 And have not been mindful of the Rock of your refuge." (11)

When Tiglath-pileser had finished with Damascus and Samaria, he looked toward Judah. He was bought off from any great harm by the payment of tribute. And now Judah was merely a vassal to Assyria. Would that we knew what the people of Judah had to say to Isaiah when it was all over. Perhaps even the king would have to admit his mis take, but the pages of history are silent on the outcome.

The next work of the prophet comes many years later, perhaps somewhere near the year 727 B. C. or after. He addresses his message to the "proud crown of the drunkards of Samaria" and refers to them as "the fading flower".⁽¹²⁾ The main charge he has against them is their drunkenness. Since their defeat they had fallen from place to place. Now the prophet says they are to be trampled upon, and this, too, was soon to come true.

Once again the prophet draws his moral, writing,

"On that day will the Lord of hosts be a beautiful crown,
 And a glorious diadem to the remnant of his people -
 A Spirit of justice to those who preside over justice,
 And of might to those who turn back the tide of battle
 to the gate." (13)

- 10. Isaiah 17:7-9.
- 11. Isaiah 17:10.
- 12. Isaiah 28:1.
- 13. Isaiah 28:5-6.

Thus we come to the closing word which we have in Isaiah concerning Samaria before her destruction. And with it we also close the second period of our study of the development of Isaiah's conception of God. It will be well for us again to make a swift summary of the high points of development in this period beginning with the Syro-Ephraimitic wars and concluding with the Fall of Samaria.

First, we mentioned the change in the prophetic life of Isaiah, himself, for this is basic to an understanding of his new thought in this period. His attention became fixed more upon the international affairs of Judah and Samaria than upon individual lives. His conception of an all-powerful, majestic God, which he found in the temple at Jerusalem, was great enough for him to formulate this doctrine - have faith in Jehovah to guide even the international relationships of our land. This becomes his consistent policy from 735 B. C. on.

This led to what was predicted in the earlier period, that he should see God as directing all of human history. He would soon call Assyria to destroy the armies of Pekah and Rezin without involving Judah. Why should Ahaz become afraid and throw his trust to horses and men rather than to God? This was his challenge.

He still sees God as requiring the destruction of those who are disloyal to Him - unless they repent. The Day of Judgment is as imminent for Judah as it became for Damascus and Samaria. There will, however, be those who remain true and be saved. This remnant will play a more important part in Isaiah's later thought. Here it seems quite certain that the idea grows out of his conception of God's character. If God is righteous He will not punish those who are true to Him, and if He is forgiving, those who go into the fire of destruction and through repentance are cleansed of their sins, will also become a part of the

righteous remnant.

The references to the ideal community in this period of Isaiah's thought are still more of a dream than a determined hope for the establishment of a Davidic king reigning over the righteous people in the sight of God. In these little glimpses into the mind, heart, and soul of Isaiah, we find some of his deepest beliefs about God. After all, it is the way a man acts and the things he hopes for and expects which more than anything else indicate his relationship with God. A loving God was showing Himself now along with the righteous and exalted qualities which were there from the first.

CHAPTER VI

God and Human History

1. Righteousness and Justice.
2. The Warning.
3. Assyria, The Rod.
4. A Remnant.
5. Anti-Egyptian Activities.
6. A God of Loving Care.
7. The Basic Reason.

Chapter VI

GOD AND HUMAN HISTORY

Again silence reigns. After the oracle against Samaria somewhere near the time of accession of Hezekiah in 727 B.C. we cannot definitely date any passages until 711 B.C.. What was going on in Judah we do not know. Perhaps they were recovering from the shock of the complete annihilation of their northern brothers. They were of the same blood and shared the same history even though they had recently been on opposing sides of a battle.

The thoughtful Isaiah must have seen it as the result of the hand of God. The "drunkards of Ephraim" were being punished for their sinfulness. It must have meant more than just that to him, however. The question he would ask is this, "If God found it necessary to destroy Samaria for her wickedness what must be the fate of Judah?" His concern was always with his own people and their relationship with God. Here let us look into a section of the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. It was probably not written until later, but it does show the result of such reasoning as we have just indicated.

Isaiah turns his fierce words upon those who "reel with wine and stagger with strong drink", who would not listen to his message, who mocked his words, whose knowledge of affairs is as "babes just weaned from the milk." These people say to Isaiah

"We have struck a covenant with death,
And have formed a compact with Sheol;
So when this overwhelming scourge passes
It will not reach us -;" (1)

1. Isaiah 28:15

That is their flaunting attitude. Before pronouncing complete destruction, that idea of a loving, forgiving God comes forward again in these words, and telling words, deep with the solemn hopes of a great soul they are,

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone,
A well-tested stone,
A precious stone, as the corner-stone
of a sure foundation -
He who believes shall not be worried.
And I will make justice the measuring line
And righteousness the plummet."(2)

Has anyone ever indicated more beautifully the will of God on earth? These verses are telling ones for our study. Out of all the varied materials written in the years leading up to the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B. C. this seems to show what conception of God gauged his thought about Judah, which was his chief concern. Out of this grew the theory that Assyria is God's agent of justice. And out of this conception of God grows also the messianic thought of the prophet.

"He who believes shall not be worried". That is Isaiah's theme.

Smith⁽³⁾ sees in this passage the idea that God speaks twice to men, "first in words and then by deeds, both times very simply and plainly". The words come to us through God's spokesmen or by the way of our consciences. We should act according to them. They are the wishes of God in contrast to the desires of the world which are about us. If we fail, however, to follow the words which are spoken, then God speaks again in action. This is the penalty for one who fails to do what he knows to be the will of God.

This calm, thoughtful advice from the prophet is followed by a damaging oracle of destruction. He tells them,

2. Isaiah 28:16-17

3. Smith, op cit. p. 157

"Your covenant with death will be annulled,
 And your compact with Sheol will not stand.
 When the overwhelming scourge passes,
 You will be battered down by it". (4)

In the closing part of the prophecy Isaiah once again shows his trust in God's forgiving grace. He shows that God is careful and reasoning. He is not going to act quickly and harshly without reason. To prove his point the prophet takes a parable of plowing and threshing. The farmer plows, sows, and threshes in due season. He is more careful with the delicate plants than the hardy ones. Some deserve to be crushed. Is not God, who taught these things to the husbandman, even more methodical and careful? He will care for those who are pure and good and will do everything in due season for them. But those who are found wanting and worthless will be crushed and destroyed. God is not indifferent. He is interested in each single person.

"This also comes from the Lord of hosts,
 Whose counsel is wonderful,
 Whose wisdom is great". (5)

This whole section seems to form a background out of which we can better build the thought of this whole period of Isaiah's ministry. It indicates his conceptions of deity in its very basis, upon which the concrete ideas will develop.

In 720 - 19 B.C. Egypt had become such a power in the west that Sargon feared her. He took his armies through southern Asia minor and at the very borders of Egypt inflicted a deep blow against the Africans. This seems to have awakened the western nations to the new power in their ranks. Hitherto Egypt had only been one among them. Now she became the most powerful of the group, and the

4. Isaiah 28:18

5. Isaiah 28:29

smaller nations began to look to Egypt for help. Judah must have been among them.

Chapter 20 of Isaiah tells a much greater story than its six verses would indicate. The Assyrian armies had been sent to Ashdod to suppress a rebellion there. They had evidently tried to form an alliance of states against Assyria. Just what the relationship of Judah to this group was we do not know. Evidently they were planning with Ashdod to join Egypt in an attempt to throw off the Assyrian yoke. When Isaiah saw what had happened to Ashdod he used it as the basis for a new argument. For three years he went naked and barefoot through the streets of Jerusalem as a sign that captivity would follow the proposed policy of looking to Egypt. Judah will be put to shame because Assyria will take Ethiopia and Egypt captive. He closes by saying, "How then can we escape," (6). In other words, our fate will be the same as theirs.

What has this opposition to an alliance with Egypt to do with Isaiah's conception of God? Why should stress continue to be given to loyalty to Assyria? There are two reasons which seem to appear here. In the background is the covenant idea. Judah should have remained true to Jehovah, because she does now owe a loyalty to Assyria, since calling on her for help, she should remain faithful to that pledge. That seems to prompt Isaiah's policy of loyalty to Assyria. The other reason is that the prophet sees the nation, Assyria, as a tool in the hand of God. As long as there is hope for Judah to repent Jehovah will have Assyria defend her. If she deserves punishment, Assyria will do that work too.

So as early as 711 B.C. the prophet begins his anti-Egyptian policy, and it may have begun earlier.

Very soon after this Isaiah put into written form his thought concerning Assyria's relationship to God, beginning

"Oh Assyria, rod of my anger
And staff of my fury!" (7)

Assyria, then is an agent of God. Jehovah has chosen the mightiest of the nations of the earth to do his work for him. And what is it that Assyria will do?

"Against the godless nation I send him,
And against the people of my wrath I charge him,
To despoil them and to prey on them
And to trample them down like mire of the streets." (8)

Assyria, the great rod of anger, declares to all who hear,

"Shall I not do to Jerusalem and its images,
As I have done to Samaria and its idols," (9)

This is the purpose of Assyria in the world. He is being used by God for a certain definite purpose. Quite rightly the prophet could not condone any closer relationship between Assyria and God than this. He asks,

"Shall an axe boast over the man that hews
with it,
Or a saw lord over the man who plies it," (10)

The answer is, of course, an emphatic, "no!". Assyria is a vain and self-centered nation. All of these things which God is causing them to do they will take credit for themselves, saying,

"By the strength of my hand have I done it,
Any by my wisdom, for I have understanding." (11)

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- 7. Isaiah 10:5
 - 8. Isaiah 10:6
 - 9. Isaiah 10:11
 - 10. Isaiah 10:15a
 - 11. Isaiah 10:13

Because of the "arrogant boasting" and "vainglorious pride " Jehovah will punish them. He will cause "wasting sickness " to come upon them. And when the burning fire of the glory of the Holy one has consumed them there will be so few left that " a child may write them down.

Even in the midst of this long discussion of Assyria, her bloody victories and inglorious defeat, that hope which is eternal in Isaiah springs out. Although

"Destruction is decided upon, overwhelming in the face of righteousness." (12)

he says that

"On that day the remnant of Israel - will no more lean for support on the enemy which smote them, but will lean in loyal trust on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." (13)

This seems quite definitely to look forward to a day after the destruction when there will be a community following in Jehovah's way. This draws one step farther toward the messianic community which is to become one of Isaiah's greatest developments.

This chapter has outlined completely God's use of Assyria and indicates what the prophet sees as the likely outcome for both Assyria and Judah.

Jehovah's control over history is made more evident by a series of oracles Isaiah gives on the nations round about. One he addresses to Ethiopia (14) telling them that Jehovah is merely waiting until the time is ripe to send Assyria there to destroy them. Egypt, Tyre, and Moab are also told of their fates.

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- 12. Isaiah 10:22
 - 13. Isaiah 10:20
 - 14. Isaiah 18

In the year 705 B.C. Sargon was murdered, and Sennacherib became king in his stead. As shown before (See chapter II) this was a signal for a wide-spread revolt. This time the rulers of Judah responded with the rest to try to free themselves of the bondage of Assyria. Up until this time they had kept paying tribute most of the time, while looking first one way and then another for a way out. Now they openly defy Assyria.

Isaiah concerns himself almost wholly with this situation right up to the time when Assyria actually starts the western campaign. We will consider the ideas about God present in these prophecies found in chapters 29, 30, and 31 of the book of Isaiah.

We meet an entirely new idea in the first eight verses of the twenty-ninth chapter. It is one of sympathy. But let us look at it first, and then find the deeper meaning. He begins by saying, (Skinner's translation)

"Woe to you Ariel, Ariel,
The city where David dwelt". (15)

That is to say the city of David is to become an altar-hearth and be the scene of murder and bloodshed. Skinner⁽¹⁶⁾ suggests that this may have been spoken in the temple where the altar for slaughtering and offering animals for sacrifice was right before the people. What the prophet means is that Judah is as a lamb before the slaughter. Then he describes the siege of the city.

"I will encamp against you round about,
And will hem you in with siege works,
And will set up forts against you.
Then low from the earth shall you speak,
Deep from the dust shall your words come;
Like the voice of a ghost from the earth
shall be your voice,
From the dust shall your words rise twittering." (17)

15. Isaiah 29:1

16. Skinner, *op.cit.*, p. 218

17. Isaiah, 29:3-4

This sounds as bad as any of the former pronouncements which Isaiah has made against Jerusalem.

The scene changes. No longer is there destruction but deliverance. The Lord will bring thunder, earthquake, noise, whirlwind, tempest, and fire against the foe of Jerusalem,

"And all the hoarde of nations that war against Ariel, --
 Shall be like a dream, a vision of the night...
 So shall it be with the horde of nations
 That war against Mt. Zion." (18)

Here appears what scholars have called the inviolability of Jerusalem to which Isaiah seemingly subscribes. What has brought about this new idea? It goes back to some of his basic conceptions of God. First there is the covenant. God is in Israel and has been from the earliest times. Because of this, Zion is impregnable. In the end God will see that she is saved. Secondly, God has need of Jerusalem to take his message to the world. Israel alone of the nations knows Him; therefore He cannot destroy her. These are what we might call two defensive reasons for the belief in the indestructibility of Jerusalem. They defend Jehovah, Himself, and His cause.

There seems to be a third and more profound conception than these two in the mind of the prophet. It has returned time and time again during the course of our discussion. God's redemptive power is stressed, and here his control over history is used to prove it. The prophet has used a vivid picture - the nation as a hearthstone with her children being taken. Then suddenly the enemy is defeated. By whom? Not by Israel, but by God. In this way God's great saving power is manifest to His children so that they might believe.

The result is not so, however. Instead of seeing God's might in their deliverance they are dazed, or in the words of the prophet, "drunk, though not with wine". Their blindness is attributed to divine causation. Isaiah explains in this way:

"The Lord says:
 'Because this people draw near me with their mouth,
 And honor me with their lips,
 While their thoughts are far from me ...
 Therefore, behold, I will once more deal with this people
 In a wonderful way.'." (19)

This is to say that the people are so blind to Jehovah's will that he must use startling and unusual methods to bring them to their senses.

The chapter as a whole gives us two more insights into Isaiah's thought about God.⁽²⁰⁾ We are to look for God in ordinary events and deeds. He is present in everything about us. He is our creator; He controls history; He speaks to us in many other ways. The second insight is this: When we do not see God in the ordinary deeds and events of life, He speaks to us in miracles or some sort of distinct revelation.

This present chapter requires the background of Isaiah's broad thought about God. Only an All-mighty, All-powerful, loving, forgiving God could do the things described herein by Isaiah.

Now the prophet is brought out of his deep, thoughtful mood by the realization that the great Assyrian armies were drawing near. He leaves his parables to become real specific. The Egyptian alliance is denounced, saying that it will bring only shame and disgrace. We have already mentioned how this policy grows out of certain concepts of God's relationship to Israel. He says that

19. Isaiah 29:13-14.

20. Smith, op.cit., p. 218.

because they have spurned Jehovah's word and "have trusted in cunning and crookedness" they shall be

"like a descending rift,
Bulging out in a lofty wall
Whose crash comes suddenly, in a moment.." (21)

The rift in the wall is, of course, the Egyptian policy, and he predicts that it will fall upon them. There follows a most beautiful verse describing God's will for them -

"For thus said the Lord God,
The Holy One of Israel:
By returning and resting shall you be saved,
In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." (22)

It is Isaiah's faith shining through again in the hour of great need.

The remainder of this period we will summarize briefly, and then close with a more detailed analysis of 30:18-26.

It would seem that the Egyptian alliance flourished for a short time, and the prophet's words fell on deaf ears. He once again says that they should not go to Egypt for help, relying on horses and armies for strength, when they should be calling on the Lord. Why?

"Now the Egyptians are men and not God;
And their horses are flesh and not spirit.
So when the Lord stretches out his hand,
The helper will stumble and the helped will fall;
They will all of them perish together." (23)

The great distance between God and man in Isaiah's mind is indicated by this verse. God only needs to stretch out His hand to cause both Egypt and Judah

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21. Isaiah 30:13.
22. Isaiah 30:15.
23. Isaiah 31:3.

to fall. All of the great armies will count for nothing. Is this not revealing of the God of Isaiah? There is no other power in the universe than God in the mind of Isaiah. All things are moving to carry out his will.

But still comes back the thought that God will save his own people; Jerusalem must be spared. In two pictures, one of strength and one of love, Isaiah pictures this divine care. The first,

"For thus saith Jehovah unto me; Like as when the lion growleth, and the young lion over his prey, if a mob of shepherds be called forth against him, from their voice he will not shrink in dismay, nor for their noise abase himself; so shall Jehovah of hosts come down to fight for Mt. Zion and the hill thereof." (24)

There is great power and strength indicated here as well as a desire to aid Jerusalem. The prophet knows the wickedness of the city, but can never quite make himself believe that God will allow it to be captured.

The second portrayal uses a much different picture to express the same idea:

"As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts cover Jerusalem; He will cover and deliver it; He will pass over and preserve it." (25)

This takes us to the very heart of God. As a mother-bird would protect her nest, so will Jehovah protect His people. We sometimes forget that He is our God, and call to someone else for help; while our real help cometh from above.

"Return, O Children of Israel,
To him against whom you have plunged so deep in revolt!" (26)

This is the prophet's last appeal. It is, so far as we know, the last word he spoke before the Assyrian armies advanced into Judah. He probably knew the alliance with Egypt could not stop Assyria. If only Judah would remain with Assyria! Assyria was the master of the western world in that day. As long

24. Isaiah 31:4. (G. A. Smith translation).
25. Isaiah 31:5. (G. A. Smith translation).
26. Isaiah 31:6.

as Judah was on her side she was safe. Soon Jehovah would destroy Assyria and Jerusalem would be free. But no, they would not listen to the word of God and be saved. They had turned from Him and must repent or be destroyed.

Returning to chapter 30:18-26, let us summarize the main thought there. It seems to reflect the main thoughts of Isaiah about God and also lead directly to the messianic sections, which will be considered in Chapter VII. The whole passage looks forward to a better day for Judah.

"Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you,
And therefore He will arise to have pity on you;
For the Lord is a God of justice -
Happy are those who wait for Him." (27)

We must imagine that which is in Isaiah's mind. The Assyrian armies are advancing, but the prophet is sure that the people will return to the ways of the Lord when He manifests Himself in some wonderful way. The Lord is waiting to be gracious to them, but He is just and will do so only when permitted by their change of living. In that day they will no longer be blind to their teacher. A new word is introduced here - Teacher. He makes beautiful use of it saying that

" When you turn to right or left
Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying;
This is the way; Walk in it." (28)

God is real to Isaiah. That verse indicates without any doubt that the prophet heard the word of God and felt His benediction on every act. He walked with God and counselled with Him. It was Isaiah's thought that God speaks to all men in this way and would guide them and their nation would they but listen.

The rest of this section implies a deliverance from "the slaughter". Twice

27. Isaiah 30:18

28. Isaiah 30:21

such references are made. First he says that the people will cast out their images and will receive rain, nourishment, and fodder,

"On the day of the great slaughter,
When the towers fall." (29)

The second reference says that the light of the moon and the stars will be brighter,

"On the day when the Lord binds up
the bruises of His people
And heals the wounds with which they
were smitten." (30)

A great deliverance is then assured, and the development of a new community with the aid of God will be the result.

"Within twelve hours of this time," Rabbi Newman said in a sermon from a Protestant pulpit, "Protestants didn't understand the basic Jewish attitude. God is linked up with the very personality of the Hebrew people." Those are his approximate words. He went on to say, "to separate God and the personality of our people would be the equivalent of a Christian taking Jesus of Nazareth out of his religion." This seems to help us to understand Isaiah's feeling about Jerusalem. The question was not whether there would be any Jews left or not. The conflict seems more to be as to whether a few would be saved or whether the nation as a whole would be redeemed. This takes us directly to a consideration of the so-called messianic sections of Isaiah.

29. Isaiah 30:25
30. Isaiah 30:26

CHAPTER VII

The God of a Redeemed Israel

1. The Remnant.
2. A Redeeming God.
3. The Ideal Future.

CHAPTER VII

The God of a Redeemed Israel

The message of Isaiah reaches its highest points in his messianic predictions. It is here that we see best what he believes is God's character and God's will for men and women and for nations. How did such a conception grow out of Isaiah's message of doom? To understand it we must trace this particular aspect of the prophet's thought more thoroughly than we have in the preceding chapters, although it is contained in them.

Isaiah's message, for the most part, is one of doom. This is particularly true of his early sermons. He saw only complete destruction of "Jerusalem and Judah" for her many sins against Jehovah. This was later expanded to apply to all nations who did not follow the dictates of the Lord of Hosts. Perhaps Knudson explains the real value of this message when he says, "Their purpose was a practical one - to arouse the people to a moral earnestness and sense of obligations to Jehovah". (1) This was the guiding principle in the early days. As has been suggested, he probably took his lead from Amos.

This conception of God's justice which would require such punishment was probably current thought among the religious people of the time. The form which it most often took, and the form in which Isaiah first used it, was the Day of Yahweh, when Isaiah shows the Lord saying:

"I will remove its hedge, so that it shall be ravaged;
I will break down its wall, so that it shall be
trampled down;
I will make it waste." (2)

1. Knudson, A. C., The Beacon Lights of Prophecy, p. 145.
2. Isaiah 5:5.

There is little doubt that he had in mind the complete destruction of Judah for her sins. The Day of Yahweh was to be a terrible and devastating day.

All of the early work of the prophet seems to indicate that he expected this destruction to come soon. The state would be devoured by Assyria, the tool in God's hand. He makes it clear that this is not an infringement of God's justice, because Assyria, too, will be destroyed when she has served her purpose. Isaiah seems constantly to expect that day to come.

There seems to have been one ray of hope present in Isaiah that was not found in any of the former prophets, unless perhaps Hosea. Isaiah believed that the righteous would be saved and form a new community. The first indication of this comes at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic wars. He named his son Shear-jashub, meaning "a remnant shall return" (or "turn"). This, then, becomes a living hope in his heart. It reflects several of his ideas about God. First, God is just and will not allow harm to those who serve Him. Secondly, God needs the help of His people to tell of Him to the world. Also, it shows God's love for his people and His desire that they be saved.

As time goes on his statement of this grows more intense and more certain. Early in his career he wrote,

"And they who remain in Zion, and are left in Jerusalem will be called holy - even everyone who was enrolled among those destined for life in Jerusalem - when the Lord has washed away the filth - by the spirit of judgement and the spirit of destruction." (3)

The most complete statement comes much later in his work. It gives more of the idea of what God desires in this day.

3. Isaiah 4:3

" And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, And they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." (4)

Some have naturally seen in such passages as this a prediction of a period of exile and then a return. This could hardly have been the case. It is merely a way to show God's justice, and Isaiah actually believed it would follow. In this way what looked like opposing principles - doom on the one hand and the saving of a remnant on the other - became consistent. " We have in this conception of the remnant the connecting link between the prophetic message of doom and that of hope. In the impending judgement a few will be saved, and they will become the holy seed from which a new nation or community will grow." (5)

There appears in the late days of Isaiah's ministry another idea , already commented upon in this paper. It would seem to the writer that the conception of God's grace and saving power grew from day to day. He put all power in the hands of Jehovah - even the redeeming of a wicked nation. This has been called the inviolability of Jerusalem, in the Old Testament circles. Perhaps those with more mature minds who have made deeper studies into Isaiah than this, know better. It would seem, however, that the following is more logical.

Isaiah had faith in Jehovah to do anything with the earth, with men, with nations. Time after time he thought that Jerusalem would soon be taken because of her careless and unreasoned foreign policy. Yet she was never harmed. He then began to think that Jehovah would find some way to spare his people. But He could not allow sinners to go unpunished. The only way Jerusalem could be spared was for the inhabitants to repent of their wrong-doing and return to the

4. Isaiah 10:20 (Revised version)

5. Knudson, op. cit.

ways of Jehovah.

Perhaps God would do some great and startling thing before the very eyes of the people of Jerusalem and bring them back to their senses. The more he thought about it, the more he thought that such a thing was possible. It seems to the writer that this is proof of a greater faith and a higher conception of God than any which had been suggested before. The loving, redeeming qualities that we know today as a result of the life of Christ seem to have become stronger and stronger throughout the life of Isaiah.

We come, then, to the climax to Isaiah's thought in the messianic prophecies. Some scholars see them as impossible contradictions to the whole message and teaching of Isaiah. But if seen in the light of what we consider Isaiah's earlier ideas they become the necessary conclusion to his chain of thought. We cannot claim that Isaiah originated the messianic idea; there were probably many different theories going around; yet Isaiah made the first, conclusive use of the idea.

If either a remnant is left after the destruction or the nation is saved by deliverance, it is a redeemed community. There will be no idols, no oppression, no corruption, but only Godliness, regardless of how it is achieved.

We have already seen how Isaiah dreamed of an ideal community. (See page 47) He knew how badly certain things were needed. He was a soul who wanted his people to have the very best there was to have, for the sake of their God. Perhaps the sections we are going to cover here in the remainder of this chapter were written in the excitement of the great deliverance of 701 B.C.. Perhaps they were written as a dream in the prophet's old age. But into them is poured the very deepest of his soul's desires based upon his exalted conception of God. Let us

now turn to consider 32:1-8, 15-20 and 11:1-9, assuming for our purposes that they were written late in his life: At least they reflect the highest in his thought.

" A shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a sprout from his roots will bear fruit." (6)

This is of little importance to the thesis of our paper except inasmuch as it shows that even an ideal community of Jews will have a man like David, who had become idealized, at its head. It is another proof that the personality of Israel and the personality of God are tied very closely together.

Then follow the seven spirits which the leader will have. It has had great vogue in the Christian era, for it does describe Christ as well as any section of Isaiah. There is no doubt that Isaiah was thinking in terms of a man with the spirit that Jesus had. He wrote,

" And the spirit of the Lord will
rest upon him
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord -
And his delight will be in the fear of the Lord." (7)

Some trace our seven-fold candlestick to this - the spirit of the Lord in the center with the other six divided on either side.

It is not enough for him, the leader, to have the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord with him. He must put it to good purpose in Israel. The passage continues,

"He will not judge by that which his
eyes shall see,
Nor decide by that which his ears
shall hear;
But with justice will he judge the
needy,

And with fairness decide for the
 poor of the land;
 He will smite the ruthless with
 the rod of his mouth;
 And with the breath of his lips
 will he slay the wicked.
 Righteousness will be the girdle
 round his loins,
 And faithfulness the girdle round
 his waist." (8)

That will be the new age in its human relationships. The new leader will see that all of these things take place. What is important to us at this juncture is this: that a man's conception of man is never any greater than the conception of his God. If a God-centered man like Isaiah could think in terms of a man with these characteristics, think how he would mould those words which were to refer to his God. God has wisdom and understanding; God has counsel and might; God deals justly and is girded with righteousness. Built into these words is Isaiah's conception of God. It is as if a sculptor were carving a statue of some great virtues. Into it would go the best that the man could give. Perhaps it, too, would picture his God. The title might be "An Ideal Man", but the concepts in it would be above any one man. So with Isaiah. His messiah was so close to God that the people of the Christian era have used these very words to describe the Son of God.

Verses 6-9 show the redemption of nature. It is not enough for Isaiah to establish a new government in the land and to redeem all of human society. He will also have nature redeemed. In a land where lions and reptiles were common enemies, and where wolves and leopards were common worries to the sheep and cattle, he shows them all living together harmoniously.

"The cow and the bear will be friends,
 Their young ones will lie down together;
 And the lion will eat straw like the ox." (9)

8. Isaiah 11:3-5

9. Isaiah 11:7

Children will play "on the hole of the asp" and will even put their hands "on the viper's den" without harm. Concluding the passage he writes,

"They will do no harm nor destruction
On all my holy mountain;
For the land will have become full of
the knowledge of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea." (10)

We cannot understand those words, not having to fear these animals at every turn. The Israelites knew that fear. Isaiah believed that even wild animals would become a welcome part of that new society. "Our relation to the lower animals is one of the three great relations of our nature. For God our worship; for man our service, for beasts our providence, " (11)

Isaiah covers all of nature in this section, for he believed that God controlled all nature. An ideal world will be ideal in every respect. The immensity of his conception of God is indicated clearly. It stands high above any others up to and including his own time.

"Behold! A king will reign in righteousness
And princes will rule with justice." (12)

This begins what we think is one of the best pieces of writing Isaiah did. The Assyrians have retreated leaving the city of Jerusalem still unharmed. The prophet, now sixty years old or more, sees the deliverance of Jerusalem as a dawn of the new age. Once again as when he refers to the prince-prophet (9:7) and when he speaks of the son of Jesse (see above 11:1) he begins with the ideal ruler. We have already covered his beliefs in this regard.

The next verse says,

"And each one of them will be as a hiding
place from the mind
And a shelter from the storm."

10. Isaiah 11:9

11. Smith, G.A., op. cit.

12. Isaiah 32:1

Like streams of water in a dry place." (13)

Is this not Isaiah's vision of God as well as his hope for man? It is just that. God was his shelter when storms of protest were raging. God was his strengthening power when the dry dust kicked up by the mounted armies of the Egyptians was in the air.

Smith gives even greater significance to this verse when he says this verse presents us, "first, with a philosophy of history, secondly, a great gospel, and in the application of it there is, thirdly, a great ideal and duty for ourselves."⁽¹⁴⁾ As a philosophy of history it means that the world depends upon great characters. And God depends upon great men to lead the way. The history of nations, the history of the church, and even the history of the world, is told best by a series of great names.

The gospel contained is not only an ideal for man's thought, but God's promise - now fulfilled in Christ. Have we not often sung?

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee?"

It was the same idea that Isaiah expressed in the verse above. God was sure, powerful, and loving. Isaiah was so sure of that that that it came out in words when he had his heart fastened to the highest conception of man.

The last, that it is an ideal and duty for ourselves, is understood without discussion.

"No more will the fool be called noble
Nor the knave be counted princely
But the noble man plans noble things
And on noble things he takes his stand. (15)

13. Isaiah 32:2

14. Smith, G.A. p.251

15. Isaiah 32:6,8

These verses and the ones between them show the new capacity to distinguish character in the age which is to be established. Right will become right, and wrong will be wrong.

The homes will become secure

"My people will dwell in peaceful homes
In secure abodes and in quiet resting places." (16)

Then as a fit summary to this high point of our study let us turn to these verses:

"Until the spirit be poured on us from high,
Then will the steppe become a garden-land,
And the garden-land be counted an orchard.
And justice will dwell in the steppe.
And righteousness abide in the garden-land;
And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
And the product of justice quietness and confidence forever." (17)

We must realize that while we are able to find Isaiah's picture of God, to some extent, in each one of these passages, he very seldom refers directly to describing God's attributes. In other words, Isaiah knows a God who expects men to act, and Isaiah acts according to his best knowledge of the will of God. When all is said, the religion whose God is great enough to affect the lives of men and women is the highest and most worthwhile religion. Through these great portholes of God's character, as Isaiah knew them, he was able to vision and believe in a redeemed Israel - far greater than any other man had ever dreamed about.

There are no passages in the Old Testament which come any closer to describing the God of our Christ than these. Only Deutero-Isaiah and Job can even rival them.

16. Isaiah 32:18.

17. Isaiah 32:15-17

CHAPTER VIII**Forty Years of Godliness**

1. Conclusions.
2. The Lasting Qualities.
3. A Statement of Isaiah's Influence.
4. Digest and Summary.

CHAPTER VIII

Forty Years of Godliness

We have now completed the suvery of the authentic works of Isaiah. From the day on which he saw his vision of the Lord of Hosts to the year of his last prophecy must have covered at least forty years. Some scholars make it closer to fifty, but that is immaterial here. Whatever the number of years they were all spent in interpreting God and His will to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. His words were far-reaching. Not only did he appeal to the people, but he also walked with the kings in council. In his every word and every act Isaiah was conscious of God's will. It is no little wonder that he gives us numerous glimpses into his conception of God's being. We must remember, however, that "Isaiah was pre-eminently a prophet of action rather than a theologian."⁽¹⁾ We have to look for his thought of God in that action. Jefferson says that a man's conception of God colors all his thinking and determines his attitude toward life.⁽²⁾ This is our gauge for this life.

In a few brief words we will now summarize the main ideas of God which are found in Isaiah. Inasmuch as our study has followed a chronological pattern for the most part, we have not clarified certain major ideas in the best possible way. We will touch only upon those which seem paramount to our understanding of Isaiah.

To begin at the very beginning we may quote from Dean Knudson to say,

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1. Kent, C.F. The Kings and the Prophets of Israel and Judah, p. 180
 2. Jefferson, C.E. Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, p. 62

"To Isaiah the one great fact of the universe was the sovereignty of God". (3) The first term which will describe Isaiah's conception of The Holy One is majesty. In his very earliest contact with God in the vision he saw God "high and lifted up". The coloring of an oriental monarch was in it. God is far above people, in the heavens directing the universe. To to Isaiah is transcendent. He does speak to people, but Isaiah likes to think of Him as acting in startling ways.

It is the opinion of this paper that this idea was tempered somewhat by Isaiah's later thought. God became more immanent; yet never can we say that he approached the tender attitudes of Hosea or Jeremiah toward God. In this respect he was closer to Amos and was the forerunner of Deutero-Isaiah and Job.

A part of this idea, and yet important enough to deserve special mention, is the prophet's philosophy of history. Here he stands out as really original. It is his greatest contribution to Hebrew thought about God. Jehovah is the creator of the universe; and he directs the moves of all things. Thus, there are no other Gods. He conceives of Jehovah as sending the different nations from place to place to carry out his will. Nothing is more evident to the reader of Isaiah than this.

Is it any wonder that Isaiah is often called the prophet of faith? From our point of view that goes to show that Isaiah believed in a God so majestic and so powerful that he did not deny Him a single thing. He could put his whole trust on the Lord and be calm and serene.

Holiness is another basic conception which Isaiah held. It is concerned with His goodness - His divinity. He is the Lord God of Hosts, the Holy One.

Out of this came Isaiah's special message. There are two words which he used time after time. Many passages quoted within this paper carry them. Righteousness and justice are the keystones. As we said earlier in this paper, the term holy, as used in that day, did not necessarily embrace morality. On the other hand, Isaiah's use of it demands those concepts. He thought in terms of holiness much as we Christians think of it today.

Whether Isaiah was exhorting the people to better living, advising the nation in its practice, or dreaming of an ideal state, righteousness and justice are mentioned. There is no doubt but that the prophet believed God acted on these two principles.also.

A great basic principle which grows out of the concepts of Jehovah's might and goodness is his redemptive power. Somehow this is not included in a catalog of Isaiah's greatnesses. It seemed to us during the study of his later works to be quite evident. The prophet's heart began to soften somewhat from his scorching predictions of doom. At first he let his thoughts dwell upon the community as it would be restored after destruction. The remnant-idea was expressed. Later on he began to hope for and then to believe that Israel could be redeemed. God would show himself in such wonderful ways that people would come to Him, and there would be no need for a complete destruction.

We see that Isaiah has climbed upon the shoulders of the prophets which went before him, to view "our God" from a higher place than ever before. He does not quite attain the clear expression of the universality of God found in Deutere-Isaiah. He shows a few signs of holding on to the idea of retributive justice in the character of God. His conception of the love of God does not reach either the standards of Hosea or of Jeremiah. In a negative way, these are the places

in which Isaiah's conception of God fails to reach the highest in the Old Testament. But as one can easily realize if he has followed the thought of this paper, no one man in the Old Testament developed so many concepts to such heights. What Knudson says of Isaiah's messianic hope can be said of most of his teaching. "He took the traditional belief and purged it of its selfish nationalism, and made it a vehicle of lofty idealism." (4)

The whole level of Hebrew thought about God was raised because of this one man. That does not say that the nation accepted his view. Most of the people did not. But the great leaders from his day to ours have been elevated in their thought of God by Isaiah's lofty concepts.

Briefly now let us see what Isaiah's teaching about God could mean for us today. First, in his absolute dependence upon God and his surrender to God's will. If there is any one thing we need in our world today it is this. Isaiah teaches that lesson as clearly as any person in the Old Testament. His word and deed were all aimed to show the people of his time that they should have faith in God. Little did he realize that twenty-six centuries later people would still be receiving inspiration from him. How anyone can read certain passages in Isaiah and not be drawn nearer to God is more than we can understand. Such beautiful words describing such magnificent ideas about God are not found very often in the Old Testament.

In this day men and women have focused their eyes on material things just as they had in the eighth century B.C. We put our trust in money and in political machines, as the people of Isaiah's time put their trust in idols and corrupt officials. If only more people could raise their eyes to God and live and work on that plane, many of the trials and heartaches of this world would disappear.

4. Ibid, p. 164.

The kind of God we believe in makes a difference, too. Man has become so powerful in his world that he has allowed his opinion of God to shrink. People tell us this is a recent trait we have picked up, but Isaiah believes differently. Self-deification was one of the evils against which he labored. Time and again his great condemnation of the nation, Assyria, was based on this. It has become more marked in our age. Humanistic thought has crept into our religion. If God is God such thinking should not be. And no one tells us in more certain terms than Isaiah that the Holy One of Israel is the One God.

This leads us to Isaiah's philosophy of history, already discussed to some extent earlier in this chapter. Most of us do not see God's hand in the affairs of men as Isaiah did. Perhaps we cannot subscribe to Isaiah's thought here in its smallest detail. We don't imagine God as moving nations about as we move our men about on a checker-board. Yet God's spirit is there and we fail to follow it. He inspires great leaders today, just as he did in the days of old, and we, too, fail to follow them. He has given us resources, and we waste them. He has given us beautiful things and we fail to appreciate them. Human beings fail to get along with one another. We do not beat our spears into pruning-hooks as Isaiah's God would have us do.

We must have the hope for an ideal, God-centered world with us all of the time. Those messianic pictures are not the property of the Jews alone. They can now be shared by others. A few short years ago we were dreaming of the brotherhood of nations under the League of Nations. That dream has broken, but there must be a new one in its place.

Isaiah's redeeming God is our need. The great reformers of our modern world knew this. The great revival of religion started by John Wesley came out of the fire of a saving grace. God can do great things. For the Christian, Jesus has

replaced the personality of Israel as our guide. Jesus is "our" chosen one rather than the nation, Israel. But that makes it easier to understand. We who follow Christ are missing the mark just as far as the Hebrews who failed to follow an ideal Israel. Would that we could believe as Isaiah believed that God would bring us salvation!

For Isaiah, God was the source of all goodness and all justice, and through Him alone can peace ever become a reality in the world.

Let us put our faith in God and not in things.

Thus we see that the God of Isaiah was a God greater than any the Israelites had ever known. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of Moses, had grown to new unprecedented heights through the eighth century B.C.. Isaiah built upon the thought of the past and made it fit his present and the future. He laid the ground work for all greater thought about God by giving Him all power and a universal reign. Only the God we know revealed in Christ supersedes Isaiah's lofty conceptions.

SUMMARY

Briefly we will trace the thought-line of this paper. It was first necessary to survey the various sources for materials on the life, work, and thought of Isaiah and his times. Isaiah 1-39, II Kings 15-20, II Chronicles 26-32, and archaeological sources were discussed. The method and viewpoint of each source was discussed in order to make better use of its material.

Nothing is more important as a background for this study than its political setting. Isaiah's whole life revolves around certain outstanding events which took place in western Asia. The reign of Uzziah, king during Isaiah's youth, was the starting place. The part Isaiah played and the interest with which he watched the Syro-Ephraimitic wars, the fall of Damascus and Samaria, the Egyptian

alliances, and the coming of Sennacherib were all discussed. Isaiah's life story stops there abruptly; so we leave the historical background with the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

Chapter III takes us directly to our main study. It contains a survey of the thought about God in Israel before Isaiah, beginning with Moses. Before that time ideas are very vague. With the life of Moses the Hebrew religion takes a very definite form. It was a very primitive religion to be sure, but the process of growth began. God was a local or a national deity. When the Israelites settled in Canaan many changes took place. Jehovah became a God of natural processes, which he had not been before. The first great clarification of thought came from Elijah when he upheld the solitary position of Jehovah, spiritualized the thought of God, and championed his morality. Finally, the contribution of Amos and Hosea brought us directly to the beginning of our work. Amos' thought was centered around the word righteousness in its concept of God; while Hosea thought of a God of love.

Isaiah's vision in the temple showed his God to be majestic and holy. The influence of King Uzziah and of the thought of Amos was particularly noticeable. Isaiah always thought of God as being "high and lifted up". It shows the great gulf between God and man, when God is so exalted. But his call gave him the strength of God's will within him to carry him on for forty years of service. In the prophecies which follow the influence of Amos and the idea of a righteous and just God become more evident. The great difference is that from the first Isaiah believed that at least a remnant of the people could be saved from the coming destruction.

The Syro-Ephraimitic war brought a change of emphasis to the teaching of Isaiah. He began to be interested in God's will for Judah as a nation. God's

universal sovereignty became his keynote. He saw God as directing all of world affairs, sending even nations to do his bidding. He offered only one policy to the king, faith in God. Even though King Ahaz failed to follow that advice and called on Assyria for help, Isaiah still had hope for the future. At least a few will remain true, and someday, perhaps, a new and great king will come. It is the first strain of his later messianic thought. He watched the international affairs closely. The fall of Damascus and of Samaria were both called inevitable. The hand of God had fallen on these wicked nations.

Isaiah reiterates his belief in a God who is just and righteous, and warns as to what may happen if people do not follow in His way. "He who believes shall not be worried" is the prophet's theme. Then he turns to his first lengthy consideration of the place of Assyria. That nation is shown as a "rod of anger" and a "staff of fury" in the hand of God. The destruction they are all bringing out is done as an agent of God. The prophet's conception of God's integrity will not allow him to think of Assyria as outlasting Judah for long. That arrogant and boasting nation will be dealt with very severely by Jehovah as soon as it has served its purpose for Him.

Continuing the summary of this chapter we next noted a prediction that the remnant would put its whole trust in Jehovah. From this he turns to a horrible scene of an altar where animals are slaughtered and likens Judah to it. In contrast, however, he shows how God will save her from that destruction. The great saving and redeeming power of God has grown into his thought and takes a prominent place - leading to his messianic sections. But now he denounces the Egyptian alliances as being untrue to God. Put your trust in Him who will defend you like a lion and hover over you like a mother bird. The main reason he began to hope for this deliverance in place of merely a remnant being saved is that the person-

ality of God and Israel were securely linked together in his mind.

Chapter VII deals entirely with what we have considered the climax of the prophet's thought about God - his messianic thought. We have shown how his conception of the remnant kept him out of complete doom all of the early part of his ministry. He is certain that God will save the righteous. As he grows older, his faith in God, a redeeming God, becomes stronger. He believes that God will be able to show Himself to the people in such a way as to make them repent. Then the whole country can be saved. We have then discussed two messianic passages at length, showing that in that day a new government, a new human society, and a new relationship with nature will be established. Embedded in this is a deep conception of God, for such lofty thoughts could only be inspired by God.

Such was the God of Isaiah. A conception equal to the highest ever conceived before Christ. And, with Deutero-Isaiah, Isaiah, Son of Amoz, almost visioned Christ himself.

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