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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF THE JEW  
FROM THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA

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A Thesis presented to the  
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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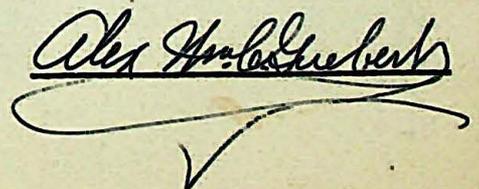
by  
Robert Trautmann

Concordia Seminary

May 17, 1948

Signed by:





THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTER OF THE JEW  
 FROM THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA  
 (Outline)

Controlling Purpose: This paper is to trace the history of the Jewish nation from the Babylonian Captivity to the New Testament Era, noting the influences which influenced the Jewish life to the extent that they became a part of the Jewish character.

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**IV. The Temple and Synagogue.**  
 A. The Temple, and its accompanying sacrifices, the object of Jewish faith and trust.  
 B. The Rise of the Synagogue.  
 C. The place of each in later Jewish life.

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**The Jew and Jehovah**

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Introduction

## The Jew and the Messiah

- V. The development of the Jewish nationalistic spirit.
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He was able, with mere words, to heal completely and forever all sorts of weaknesses and diseases, both physical and mental; men came to cast themselves at the feet of this great healer, imploring Him to exercise His healing power upon their own disease-ridden bodies; and finally, neither the least nor the least, came groups for the express purpose of hearing this bold preacher, in order that they might ensnare Him in His own words, thus showing Him and the people about Him that He was an impostor, that He was "in league with the Devil," that His teachings, especially His claim of being the Messiah, were in direct opposition to the great doctrines of the Hebrew religion as they had interpreted them, which had had their beginning with Moses, which had been sustained through 4000 years of treachery, attack, exile, dispersion, which were even now, in this day of Roman suppression, being taught in every city in Palestine and in countless cities

outside her borders. Introduction of this latter group is

During the very short life of our Savior on this earth, it was His privilege and duty to speak before many and varied groups who stood before Him, some for the purpose of simply satisfying their curiosity to hear what this teacher, whose name was being spread over the width and breadth of Palestine, had to say; some came to listen with attentive ears and open hearts, eager to apply His words to their own lives, to make His words live in them; others came to look in awe upon this being who seemed to have the gift of divine powers in that He was able, with mere words, to heal completely and forever all sorts of weaknesses and diseases, both physical and mental; more came to cast themselves at the feet of this great healer, imploring Him to exercise His healing power upon their own disease-ridden bodies; and finally, neither the last nor the least, came groups for the express purpose of hearing this bold preacher, in order that they might ensnare Him in His own words, thus showing Him and the people about Him that He was an imposter, that He was "in league with the devil," that His teachings, especially His claim of being the Messiah, were in direct opposition to the great doctrines of the Hebrew religion as they had interpreted them, which had had their beginning with Moses, which had been sustained through 4000 years of treachery, attack, exile, dispersion, which were even now, in this day of Roman suppression, being taught in every city in Palestine and in countless cities

outside her borders. The identity of this latter group is unmistakable. These were the Pharisees, the recognized and revered teachers and leaders of the Jewish religion, the strict adherents to the laws of traditional Judaism, the haughty and self-righteous claimants to the title of the world's holiest of men. Again, these were the Pharisees.

This exclusive group was understandably highly interested in the teachings and actions of Jesus. It was evidently a common sight to the eyes of the Jewish people when a member or members of this exclusive sect were seen attaching themselves to a crowd of people, gathered about some object of special interest. They were the "watchdogs", the protectors of the people, constantly on the alert lest any thing or any one should introduce among the Jewish people any element which might in some way contaminate or at least lead them away from their traditional beliefs and practices. Yet it must have become evident to the eyes of even the lowliest of the Jews that this new teacher, Jesus, was arousing in the Pharisees a great deal of interest and concern. For it was not the usual thing that groups of Pharisees should consistently come to join the crowds which gathered about a teacher. Even more unusual was the fact that more and more frequently the Pharisees were seen to step forward and actively take part in the discussions. Most astounding of all must have been the effect on the Jews when they heard Jesus, with no restraint, openly contradict

refute, and reprimand the Pharisees because of their words and deeds. We can well imagine the exchanged looks of surprise and wonder as the Jews heard words such as these, imparted and repeated from the lips of Jesus: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."<sup>1</sup>

From the preceding remarks, it becomes evident to us that the Pharisees exerted a powerful influence on Jewish life. Permit us to go a step further. What the Pharisee was at the time of Christ, even so was the Jew. The essential attributes and characteristics of the Pharisees were and still remain the guiding influence in the life of the orthodox Jew. The Pharisee was the ultimate in traditional Judaism. He was admired and looked up to as the real hero of the day, even though such a feeling was not always apparent to the Pharisee himself. What was it that the Jew saw in the Pharisee? In accord with the universal idea of Judaism, anything which made the Jew stand out and above a non-Jew, completely separate from others, especially separate from anything evil, was considered the goal for every Jew to attain.

What were these characteristics and traits which made the Pharisee and therefore the Jew so separate from others, an individual who stood for something very definite and clear

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1. It is interesting to note here that Dr. Young in his Analytical Concordance to the Bible lists 82 separate passages in the Gospels alone in which the Pharisees are expressly mentioned. Of these 82 passages, 59 speak of direct conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on some point of discussion.

in his own mind, allowing nothing to hinder him in his concentration upon and his achieving of everything that was sacred to him? If one were to read through all the passages in the New Testament alone which treat of the Pharisees, he would have quite a list of qualities, ideas, character traits, and beliefs, all of which united to make up the Pharisees. We do not hope to touch upon all the items which could be included in such a character study. However, we will treat the essential elements of the Jewish character, which we deem most important to give evidence of what the Jew was and thought at the time of Jesus, and how he got that way.

The most important element in the Jew's life was his relationship with Jehovah. There was no God but Jehovah, and whatever might interfere with the Jew's worship and esteem of Jehovah or whatever might cause Jehovah to withdraw His grace and mercy from the Jew was abhorred, condemned, and purged. Closely connected with this unflagging zeal for the true worship of Jehovah was the ever-abiding and always apparent idea of the necessity of adhering to every letter of the Law of Jehovah, and also, to the laws passed down through the ages which the ancient rabbis had appended to the Mosaic Law. It will be pointed out that, to a large extent, the Jew was directed to closer and stricter obedience to these man-made laws than to the Law of Moses, although the latter, let it be understood, was always considered to be the "last word" in Jewish law. The Gospels give us ample

in 506; however, the main elements of transition do not develop till after 586, the year of the final deportation.

evidence of this strict legalism. Matt.9,14 treats of the fast, Matt.12,2 treats of the Sabbath, Matt.15,1-6 treats of physical uncleanness, Matt.23,23 treats of the paying of tithes, Luke 7,39 treats of associating with sinners, and in John 7,49 the Pharisees condemn those who know not the Law. Additional Jewish traits treated in the Gospels, especially of the Pharisees, are hypocrisy, outward holiness but inward filthiness, separatism, nationalism, and the like.

It is the purpose of this paper to trace the development of such traits which made up the character of the Jew in the days of Jesus and which are still evident as basic characteristics of the Jews today. We hope to point out the many influences which, during the history of the Jews, made it possible and often necessary for the Jews to adopt new measures, customs, and practises. Many of these customs and ideas at times become less obvious in the historical picture as conditions change. They still remain, however, as fundamental elements of the Jewish life.

We would also clarify here our choice of words used in the title. We go no further back in the history of the Jewish nation than the years immediately preceding 586 B.C., the year of the Fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian armies under Nebuchadrezzar. These years prove to be the stepping-off place for the great transition period of the Jewish nation.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the year 586, there was only

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2. The first deportation of Jews from Palestine took place in 606; however, the main elements of transition do not develop till after 586, the year of the final deportation.

a small remnant of Jews left in Judea. The center of Jewish culture and activity had shifted to Babylon, to the banks of the Chebar River. It was here in Babylon, under the influence of Babylonian culture, that Judaism began to take on the features it had at the time of Christ and what it has today.

### I. Jehovah, the Only, True God

The death of Josiah has been referred to as the most tragic event in Hebrew history.<sup>1</sup> If rightly taken, this statement is true. What happened at the death of Josiah? Josiah's reign had been wholly dedicated to the task of reformation; the task of bringing Israel back, out of the corruption and decay into which it had sunk during the reign of Manasseh, into the pure and unadulterated worship of Jehovah for which King Hezekiah had exerted his every energy, as it is recorded in 2 Chron. 29-32. All the good which Hezekiah, together with the prophet Isaiah, had achieved was completely undone by Hezekiah's son Manasseh. Chronicles simply states in its usual terse form: "Manasseh . . . did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." What Manasseh achieved and allowed to develop in Israel were the very things allowed by his son Amon. And what Amon prescribed during his reign, Josiah, Amon's son, found to be completely contrary to the will of Jehovah. We have traced this chain of kings and their deeds in an effort to illustrate the depths

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1. Kent, History of Israel, p.184.

of habitual wickedness into which Judah had fallen, up till the time of Josiah's reign. An entire generation, 57 years to be exact, had gone by with only a very short time devoted to the pure worship of Jehovah. (For a short period previous to the death of Manasseh, Judah forsook its wickedness as a result of Manasseh's having repented of his sins). Small wonder, then, that the young King Josiah felt such pangs of conscience when he saw how his people were living, wholly without Jehovah.

As Josiah looked out over his people, these are some of the things he saw.<sup>2</sup> He saw the entire country littered with heathen images, carved and molten; he saw groves used for worship services to the heathen idols; he saw altars erected in the very courts of the Temple in Jerusalem, dedicated to the gods of the Assyrians;<sup>3</sup> he saw the Temple itself, sitting in the midst of filth and general disrepair; he saw that the Ark of the Covenant had been removed from the Temple; in general, he saw the chosen people of Jehovah revelling in the worship and rites of heathen deities. These conditions gave rise to the reform movement of Josiah. And by an act of God, the sacred copy of the Law was unearthed by the priests as they cleaned up around the Temple. To this Law Josiah drew the attention of the people, and when Josiah met his death at the hands of Pharaoh Necho, Israel was well on its way back to Jehovah. "The reforms of Josiah ultimately resulted

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2. Cf. 2 Chron. 34-35; 2 Kings 22-23.

3. Fowler, The Origin and Growth of the Hebrew Religion, p.101.

in the complete elimination of the practical heathenism which had long threatened the extinction of the pure worship of Jehovah."<sup>4</sup>

We now refer back to our opening statement. The tragedy in the death of Josiah was this, that now all the forces of evil, which had been partially suppressed by Josiah's reform, could point to Josiah's death and say that his short life was a punishment for his zeal in reform. They could easily compare the 55 years of Manasseh's reign with the 31 years of Josiah's reign, appealing to the reason of the people to prove that the doings of Manasseh must have been more pleasing in the eyes of the gods than were those of Josiah. Whichever methods were used is immaterial. The horrible fact still remains that the Jewish people with no great amount of hesitancy fell right back into the heathenism of the days before Josiah. By the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, through the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiachim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, Judah had sunk to an all-time low in God-lessness. We might compare their condition with a small piece of wood, cast into the midst of a swirling stream of idolatry and vice, rushing to the brink of a falls which shall dash it to pieces on the rocks below. As it picks up speed in its mad dash to destruction, its course is blocked by a rock, sticking up out of the water. In Judah's case, the rock was the reform of Josiah. But, after a short

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4. Kent, The History of the Hebrew People, p.180.

period of time, the piece of wood is again swept into the current, and its final plunge is but a matter of moments. Thus it was with Judah. After the death of Josiah, Judah again plunged, quickly and surely, into the stream of idolatry and vice, whose only end was destruction.

For a complete report on the idolatry of the people up till the final fall, we turn to the prophet Jeremiah, whose sacred and divinely-instituted duty it was to expose and condemn the practises of his own people.

In the first place, Judah had transferred her worship and trust from Jehovah to idols and heathen deities. How often faithful and heroic Jeremiah cried out against such false and misplaced trust! In the very first chapter of Jeremiah, Jehovah Himself cries out against the people: "And I will utter my judgements against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands."<sup>5</sup> Showing to what depth of misguided, almost nonsensical, thinking the Jewish people had sunk, we read these words: "Saying to a stone, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face . . ."<sup>6</sup> We must not be lead to think that these heathenish practises were confined to only the men or the leaders in Judah. What grief must have

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5. Jer.1,16.

6. Jer.2,27.

filled the heart of Jeremiah when he saw the conditions which forced him to utter: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."<sup>7</sup> Finally, we see to what revolting and uncivilized extremes its idolatry carried Judah when we read: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the sone of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire."<sup>8</sup> Such were the depths to which this chosen nation had sunk.

Jeremiah gives us comparatively little in the way of naming explicit gods to which the people paid such homage and sacrifice. Ezekiel, however, at this time living in exile in Babylon, was permitted by Jehovah, through images, to see the conditions which obtained back in Palestine. He is first taken to the door of the inner gate of the Temple and sees there an Ashera, the "jealousy image", which challenged most of all the indignation of the jealous God of Judah. McCurdy connects this Ashera with incitement to sensual iniquity.<sup>9</sup> Ezekiel is then taken into the inner court and reports thus: "So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood

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7. Jer.7,18.

8. Jer.7,31.

9. McCurdy, History, Prophecy, and the Monuments, VII, p.252.

Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up." Ezekiel is then taken to the north gate of the Temple: ". . . and, behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz." Concerning this Tammuz, permit us to quote passages by Dr. McCurdy:

The main part of the answer is furnished by the famous "Descent of Ishtar", as it is usually called, a poem describing the journey of Ishtar to the underworld, the realm of Allatu, in search of her consort Tammuz . . . It was inevitable, in the very nature of things, that as the counterpart of Tammuz, regarded as the male principle of productiveness, a goddess should be thought of as expressing the female principle. And so it came to be popularly felt that the love and union of Tammuz and Ishtar were the source of all the beauty and fertility of the earth, of the perpetuation of the race of plants, animals, and men, of life itself, with its manifold activities and enjoyments . . . Herein lay the danger and the significance of "the women weeping for Tammuz" in the view of the prophets of Jehovah. This rite, as actually performed in Jerusalem in the sixth month of 591 B.C., may not have been directly associated with acts of sexual vice perpetuated under the license of religion. But at any rate, the moral evil was inevitably promoted by the religious ceremony. Indeed, at this stage in the history of Israel the introduction of the custom was tantamount to an authorization of those shameful practises which marked antique Semitic religion wherever a temple was reared and dedicated.<sup>10</sup>

Finally Ezekiel was taken to the inner court; "and behold at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the East; and they worshipped the sun toward the east."<sup>11</sup> Need more be said to

10. McCurdy, *op. cit.*, VII, PP. 254-258

11. Ezek. 8,16.

show how far Israel had drawn itself away from Jehovah in its worship!

In addition to all this, Judah, instead of putting its trust in Jehovah alone for protection from dangers and attacks from outside its borders, was basing its faith in the providence of outside nations. Again Jeremiah cries out against such forms of idolatry: "Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go."<sup>12</sup> Again: "And now what has thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?"<sup>13</sup> Finally: "Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord."<sup>14</sup>

It has been said by someone that a nation is only so strong as its leaders. When a group of people succeeds in proving itself to be peace-loving and straight-dealing, seeking the welfare of the peoples of the world as well as the welfare of its own members, it can be concluded usually that the leaders of that nation are setting the pace in carrying out its endeavors. Down through the ages in the histories of nations the world over, this principle has proved itself

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12. Jer.2,25

13. Jer.2,18

14. Jer.17,5.

to be correct. The same principle applies to the nation which achieves the opposite effect. When a group of people loses the respect of other groups living in the world with it as a result of its treacherous dealings, its behind-the-back plotting, its smug and self-righteous attitudes, its condoning of political and moral evils within its own borders, then that nation has not had the right kind of leaders. Such was the case with the Jewish nation at the time of which we have been speaking; such it continued to be till the present time. As the leaders, so the people.

The Jewish nation, it is true, became the object of the displeasure of Jehovah for many reasons. However, one of the main reasons for its state of decadence at the time of its fall was because it permitted a line of corrupt leaders, political and spiritual, to mislead it, deceive it, deprive it of its heritage, cast it into a class of unrighteous peoples, lead it swiftly and surely to the brink of destruction. It was only the mercy of Jehovah which kept the whole of the nation of Judah from the fate of its sister nation, Israel, complete destruction. For the leaders of Judah had reached a level of corruptness never before seen by Judah. The disastrous part of the whole situation at this time was this that such perversity was so general and universal. It included every one of the leaders with the exception of a very few righteous men who refused to be swept into the stream of God-lessness, thereby having the entire nation as

their enemy.

The corruption of Judah included every class of its leaders. The nobles, especially the kings, from Jehoiachim to Zedekiah, basked in the easy life of oppression and luxury. Jeremiah has recorded the reputation of these kings as being unjust, greedy, and selfish. In chapter 23, the prophet calls them "the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture." Jehoiachim, like all covetous men, was irreligious. We are told that he forced his people to extreme labor that he might have a luxurious palace. It is quite possible that Jeremiah's words in chapter 22,13-15 are addressed to Jehoiachim:

Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgement and justice, and then it was well with him?

2 Kings tells us that he rested securely under the protection of Egypt, whose heavy tribute he exacted from his unwilling subjects. Kent tells us that the chief ambition of this king was to imitate the luxurious courts on the Nile and Euphrates.<sup>15</sup> Jehoiachim was one of Jeremiah's foremost enemies. Thruout his reign, he treated Jeremiah's word with contempt. What happened to the writings of Jeremiah, as recorded in Jer.36, was typical

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15. Kent, op.cit.,p.185.

of Jehoiachim's attitude toward anyone or anything that threatened an end to his sinful reign. So it was with the succeeding kings. We refrain from going into further detail concerning the evils of Judah's kings. Suffice it to repeat the simple phrase of the Biblical records: "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord."

The true depths of Jeremiah's inward pain and sorrow must have reached its limit when he looked over the land and saw that Jehovah's own priests and prophets had rebelled against Him: ". . . a wonderful and horrible thing was committed in the land; the Prophets prophesied falsely and the Priests bore rule by their means." As painful as his duty must have been, Jeremiah did not mince words when he denounced the policies of the priests and the prophets. "He declares that he is completely stunned and unmanned because of the awful consequences, past, present, and to come, of the wickedness of the people to which they have been instigated by priests and prophets, so that the land has been made like Sodom and Gomorrah."<sup>16</sup> A complete list of the defilements perpetrated especially by the prophets is given in Jer. 23, 9-32. The false prophets utter visions out of their own minds and not the word of Jehovah; they promise good fortune to the wicked; if they had heeded the counsel of Jehovah, they would have turned the people from their evil ways and deeds; they proclaim peace when the enemy is waiting at the borders of the

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16. McCurdy, op. cit., VII, p. 237.

land. The result of such deception and corruptness is obvious. When a people are deceived to such an extent, and, most tragic of all, they delight in such deception, that they are no longer able or wish to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, then that people is doomed to certain destruction.

What took place in the history of Judah at this time can only be explained in the light of the never-ending mercy of Jehovah. The destruction of Jerusalem, the famine and pestilence experienced during the final seige,<sup>17</sup> the frightful condition of starving men, women, and children, the desparation which finally forced the fathers to eat the flesh of their children,<sup>18</sup> the deportation of the great majority of the inhabitants of the land, the loss of the Temple, the gruelling experience of making that long trek to Babylon, the necessity of settling in a new land, altogether different in climate, people, and customs, all of these carried into the hearts of the exiles the realization that the righteous anger of Jehovah was being turned upon them. What the people had been deceived into believing impossible all of a sudden became stark and tragic reality. Yet, as exceeding an act of punishment the Exile seemed to be, even more so did the Exile prove to be a divinely-willed period of purification for Jehovah's own people. The Jewish nation was cast into con-

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17. Josephus, Antiquities X 7,4.

18. Ezek.5,10.

ditions which were to prove to them that they had been very wrong, that the real cause for their exile was that they had forsaken Jehovah. It was a long and hard lesson, filled always with memories of how completely wicked they had been. But the lesson was a good one. In the 70 years of its exile, the Jewish nation, by means of various instruments, conditions, and circumstances, returned to the true worship of Jehovah.

Most important of these instruments by which Jehovah wished to be brought back into the very lives of His people was the preaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is true that Jeremiah was allowed to remain in Jerusalem while the greater part of his people were taken to Babylon; yet, Jeremiah was not so preoccupied with the moral betterment and political safety of his fellow citizens in Judea that he should ignore the condition of his brethren in exile. Despite the fact that he had been persecuted by many of these people, yet he never forgot that they were his people, to whom he had been sent to minister. There, in exile, were many of his friends who had sheltered him in Jerusalem; there was Ezekiel, who no doubt had been a pupil of Jeremiah, to whom had been given the spiritual guidance of the Babylonian colony. And Jeremiah well realized that from this group in Babylon was to come the new and purified kingdom which would be returned to their homeland.<sup>18</sup> Realizing how important it was that the

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18. Jer.24,1ff.

exiles receive the proper guidance, Jeremiah sent a message to the exiles.<sup>19</sup> He had received word that there were still some false prophets among the exiles who were trying to persuade the people that they would soon return to Jerusalem. Jeremiah's first purpose was to assure the exiles that there would be no returning to Jerusalem till 70 years had passed. With this in mind, Jeremiah then formulated the policy that was to be the guiding principle for the exiles living under Babylonian authority.

Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

What comfort these words must have been to these confused and dejected people as they thought back on their former home. It is probably true that there were still some who resisted the idea of following Jeremiah's exhortation; yet, from what history tells of developments during these 70 years, we well know that these objectors must have been overruled, for we find the exiles doing exactly as Jeremiah had told them. The people were summoned to lives of self-sacrifice, an altogether new thing in their experience. Without such self-renunciation, the restoration would have been in vain.

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19. Jer.29, 1-19.

Already we see a change in the attitude of the people. They were now becoming conscious of the fact that they must listen to only the true prophets of Jehovah. No longer were they such a careless nation. As they thought back over the events of the preceding half-century, as well they must have, they remembered all the wickedness and idolatry which had filled their lives. And along with these same thoughts came the voice of one man, the man of God, Jeremiah, the one whom they had despised, rejected, disobeyed, persecuted. If ever there were accusing consciences, they were certainly there among the exiles in Babylon. We are safe in assuming that this was the beginning of true repentance! Ps. 137. But forgiveness of their sins could not come from Jeremiah. Even though they had become so hardened in the past years that they had no need for forgiveness, they still knew to whom Jeremiah had always pointed them, who had said to them: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity against the Lord thy God . . ." <sup>20</sup> With the anxious wish that they had heeded Jeremiah's words when he had spoken them, there came the firm resolve to never again forsake Jehovah. Therefore they rallied around the words of Jehovah's servant.

But Jeremiah had reached the end of his term of duty in respect to the exiles. He had done the work for which

Jehovah had called him. Would Jehovah now forsake His people? One of the most tangible proofs that Jehovah was still with His people, that He was still protecting them, was His providing them with a successor to Jeremiah, the prophet-priest Ezekiel. It was Jehovah's purpose, through Ezekiel, to lay a foundation of righteousness and holiness for the new kingdom of Jehovah's. Through Ezekiel, the Jewish nation was shown the providential guidance of Jehovah, the grace and omnipotence of a God supreme among nations.<sup>21</sup> The people accepted Ezekiel as a true prophet of Jehovah and came to him for guidance, for advice.<sup>22</sup> This guidance Ezekiel gave them, largely through his symbolical actions and visions. Ezekiel was indeed Jehovah's main instrument in bringing Judah back to a close relationship with their God. And as the history of Judah progressed, through the remainder of the Exile, through the periods of Ezra and Nehemiah, the periods of Greek, Egyptian, and Syrian rule, it was proven to the Jews ever more conclusively, that Jehovah was their only source of power, aid, and comfort.

Jehovah employed many ways to show the people that He was with them always. During the Exile, under Babylonian rule, they were not slaves as we know slaves. They were laborers, made to work hard, but they were not persecuted laborers. They were allowed the freedom to build homes,

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21. Ezek. 20.

22. Ezek. 8, 1.

raise families, worship as they wished and when they wished, to live as real citizens. The truth of Jehovah's words was forcefully emphasized to them when Cyrus defeated the Babylonian armies, and gave his permission for them to return to their homeland under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Jehovah's providence was manifestly proved to be over all His people when He did not forsake those who chose to remain in Babylon after they had received their freedom. He certainly blessed Ezra and Nehemiah. The incidents recorded in the book of Esther are ample evidence to show that His mercy endureth forever. Down through the ages till the coming of the Messiah, the Jewish nation was never again in serious doubt as to whether Jehovah was truly their loving and merciful God, despite the times that it might have seemed to them that Jehovah had forsaken them. Never again do we read of the Jewish nation as a whole forsaking Jehovah for another god. Jehovah had been restored in the hearts and lives of His people.

With this knowledge that everything they were as a nation and as individuals was due to Jehovah, the Jews were constantly on the alert lest their worship of Jehovah be contaminated in any way. It is true that at times there were some who left Jehovah for heathen deities, but the nation has to the present time remained faithful, constantly conscious of the necessity of fighting off all forms of heathenism. This consciousness began in Babylon with the

development of a revulsion for the religion of their conquerors which if followed would lead to a renunciation of true Jehovah worship. It is generally accepted, although there are some who attempt to prove the opposite, that the Persian religion had little if any effect upon the Jewish religion, which is in keeping with the above-mentioned policy, and which is borne out in the light of the later wars waged against Hellenism. During the Hellenistic periods, the Jewish nation absolutely refused to be diverted from their worship of Jehovah. Apocryphal literature, especially 1 and 2 Maccabees, proves that the Jews had returned to Jehovah and would suffer death rather than fall back into the condition in which they had lived before the Exile. God's people had learned their lesson well; There is no God for the Jew but Jehovah.

Centerly:

The older thinking of Israel, in every sphere, was largely conditioned by a conception of corporate personality. It was not merely, or even primarily, the single human or divine individual who was regarded as the true spiritual unit. Before the emergence of the later attitude, it was the whole group that was conceived as a "person", and the isolated individual had no standing apart from the larger body. Hence a nation could be treated as an individual; if Achan, the Israelite, was contaminated by appropriating that which lay under the taboo, it could be said that "Israel hath sinned" (Josh. 7.11) and the penalty must be paid by the whole people.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that the solidarity of the family, clan, or tribe

1. Centerly and Robin, Hebrew Religion, p. 263.

formed so important an element in Hebrew thought that the individual and his personality were largely forgotten. We have further evidence of such a conception in Saul's massacre of the entire population of the city of Heli; in the hanging of the children of Rimpa and Michal to expiate the crime of their grandfather; and in the sacrifice of Isaac's sons along

## II. The Relationship to Jehovah

We must at this time devote some space to a discussion of the relationship which existed between the Jew and Jehovah during the period under consideration. Was there a very personal relationship between the Jew and Jehovah or was the Jew's religion only transferred to him, being actually embodied in the community? We find, through the records of Biblical lives and events, that both concepts existed.

Concerning this point we might begin by quoting Oesterly:

The older thinking of Israel, in every sphere, was largely conditioned by a conception of corporate personality. It was not merely, or even primarily, the single human or divine individual who was regarded as the true spiritual unit. Before the emergence of the later attitude, it was the whole group that was conceived as a "person", and the isolated individual had no standing apart from the larger body. Hence a nation could be treated as an individual; if Achon, the Israelite, was contaminated by appropriating that which lay under the taboo, it could be said that "Israel hath sinned" (Josh. 7, 11) and the penalty must be paid by the whole people.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that the solidarity of the family, clan, or tribe

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1. Oesterly and Robin, Hebrew Religion, p. 263.

formed so important an element in Hebrew thought that the individual and his personality were largely forgotten. We have further evidence of such a conception in Saul's massacre of the entire population of the city of Nob;<sup>2</sup> in the hanging of the children of Rizpah and Michal to expiate the crime of their grandfather Saul;<sup>3</sup> in the murder of Naboth's sons along with their father.<sup>4</sup> Despite the loss of emphasis on this concept, of which we shall speak later, the persistence of this community or group concept is proved by the incident of the hanging of the ten sons of Haman<sup>5</sup> or the incident of the casting of Daniel's accusers and their families into the lion's den.<sup>6</sup> The early prophets consumed a large amount of space in reiterating this group concept of religion. A most striking instance is the entire book of Hosea, where the evil deeds of many are ascribed to all of Israel and Judah. The true force of this concept became altogether too evident to Jeremiah when the people in Judea, having been accused and reproved for their many sins, tried to excuse their own wickedness by blaming it on the wickedness of their fathers: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."<sup>7</sup>

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2. 1 Sam. 22, 16-19.

3. 2 Sam. 21, 1-9.

4. 2 Kings 9, 26. (For further examples, see Smith, "The Rise of Individualism among the Hebrews," Amer. Journal of Theology, p. 251.

5. Esther 9, 13ff.

6. Daniel 6, 25.

7. Jer. 31, 29.

The Jeremiah's answer introduces us to the not-altogether-new concept which Jeremiah was now emphasizing and trying to get across to the people. In the verse immediately following that quoted above, he says: "But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Jeremiah was calling attention to the personal relationship and responsibility of the individual to Jehovah. As Fowler puts it: "Jeremiah looked forward to the day when this convenient shifting of responsibility should have passed away with the recognition of the truth that God deals with each according to his own deserts."<sup>8</sup>

The impression must not be given that this concept of individualism was entirely lacking in former times which is the view of many. We need but think of the very close personal contact maintained between Jehovah and men such as Elijah, Elisha, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and the like. These were men who knew Jehovah to be their own personal God, their own Protector, their own Judge, as well as the God of the nation. The writer of such a book as Proverbs, Job, or Ecclesiastes was conscious of this individual relationship. "He concerned himself with the common, practical interests of ordinary, everyday life. He met men face to face on the streets and at the city gates, and gave them counsel on matters arising from their relations to each other as individuals."<sup>9</sup>

8. Fowler, op. cit., p. 118.

9. Smith, op. cit., p. 254.

The priests also acted on the basis of the individual. Theirs was the task of instructing individuals as to their ceremonial obligations in connection with sacrifices and offerings, to see to the observing of the regulations concerning clean and unclean, and to inspect personally all cases of leprosy and prescribe the course to be pursued. The very laws of the nation did not leave out the individual. The injustice of punishing one man for the crimes committed by another, even though they may be of the same blood, could not be overlooked very long in a progressive community. No, the individual had not been forgotten in the earlier history of Israel and Judah.

The point we wish to make here is that the responsibility of the individual to Jehovah had to a great extent been pushed into the deep recesses of the Jewish mind, in the years immediately preceding the Exile. This responsibility needed reemphasis. And the times were just right for the teaching of such a doctrine. Fowler seems to have a fairly good idea of this course of events when he says:

In the early years of struggle for the land common loyalty to the covenant God was the one force which was able to change the tribal consciousness of early Israel into something like a national consciousness. When the remnant of the divided nation was facing extinction more than four centuries later, it was the loyalty of the prophet Jeremiah to the nation and its deserted God which led him to such an experience of his own standing with God that he found the individual, whose fellowship with his God might exist, though the nation proved faithless, and whose life as a reality, dear

to God, might continue though the nation fell and its members were scattered abroad.<sup>10</sup>

With Jeremiah, the individual human being begins to take on a new importance. A man now became conscious of the fact that he could truly reach Jehovah apart from his fellowman; he is no longer dependent upon the community in his dealing with Jehovah. Jeremiah's experience with the reform of Josiah had taught him the uselessness of a merely superficial and temporary religion. He learned that only the Law written in the heart could be adequate. Therefore he wrote: "See, the days are coming, saith Jehovah, When I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah . . . I will put my law in their inmost being, and in their heart will I write it."<sup>11</sup>

We have pointed out that Jeremiah tried to prove to the people that they individually could stand before Jehovah. He furthermore tried to show them that they individually were responsible for everything they did. It becomes evident that the emphasis on personal responsibility was especially elaborated upon by Ezekiel, the prophet of the Exile. His environment was especially favorable to the development of this doctrine. Dr. Smith feels that the fact that the Babylonian conquerors selected the leaders of the nation's thought and action for deportation in itself gave splendid opportunity for this truth to be accepted.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Fowler, op. cit., p. 121.

11. Jer. 31, 31ff.

12. Smith, op. cit., p. 260.

Another fact which tended to aid the development of this doctrine was this that now the exiles were shorn of the opportunity to worship as members of the kind of community to which they had been accustomed. The Jew was faced with the necessity of lifting his thoughts and desires to Jehovah's throne in the privacy of his own home. Ezekiel, filled with the zeal of achieving among his people a true consciousness of God's will and a constant endeavoring to fulfill His will in them, stressed this personal responsibility in most of his preaching. We have evidence of a different approach when we read his words concerning his call by Jehovah in chapter 3, 17-21. He is called to minister to individuals. His own feeling of responsibility to Jehovah for the souls intrusted to his care is very marked. No heavier burdens were to be placed on them than he himself could bear. Therefore justice becomes, at times, the subject of his discourses. In chapter 14, 12-23 he shows that one man's crimes do not bring judgement upon another, nor does the righteousness of one secure immunity for the sins of another. In chapter 18, 5-20 he repeats this truth with the illustration of a father and his son. Nothing is counted against or for a man except those deeds, thoughts, and faith which he himself has and does. In chapter 18, 21-28 Ezekiel speaks beautifully of true repentance which absolves a man from everything which he has committed against Jehovah previous to that time. He then proceeds in chapter 33 to

offer an earnest appeal to repentance and to faithfulness, insisting that Jehovah wants all men to be saved. However, Jehovah is still just and righteous. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die."<sup>13</sup> Kent sums up this whole activity of Ezekiel with these words:

In the clearest terms he enunciates the great principle that each man is responsible, in the sight of God, simply for his own acts whether good or bad, and that present, not past, attitudes and deeds determine the issues of life. Ezekiel's ultimate message, therefore, in the hour of the nation's overthrow, was a call to individual repentance and the assurance that Jehovah was not only just in his treatment of each individual, but also eager to forgive every soul that truly turned to him for pardon and protection.<sup>14</sup>

With such a devoted man of God leading them, with a God so anxious to help and save them, is there any wonder that the people of the Exile became the foundation of the new kingdom of Israel?

As forcefully and beautifully as Jeremiah and Ezekiel developed this doctrine of personal relationship and individual responsibility, there is lacking in later Biblical and Apocryphal writings any special treatment of the subject or any definite evidence that such individuality had become a part of the Jewish character. Two reasons for this may be these: first, this concept of individuality may have become

13. Ezek. 18,4.

14. Kent, Kings and Prophets, p. 279.

so much a part of Jewish thinking that it was simply taken for granted by the later writers. The thoughts, words, and actions of the Jewish people may have been so built up around this personal relationship with Jehovah that it was considered contrary to the Jewish character that there should be any idea of relationship except a personal one. Unfortunately, this theory can be accepted as no more than a speculative one, for we have found no definite evidence from these later writings that such was the case among the Jews. The closest we have been able to come to finding such evidence is in the story of Esther, where both Esther and Mordecai considered themselves fully capable and acceptable in the eyes of Jehovah to come to Him as individuals. In the beautiful prayer of Esther, as recorded in The Additions to the Book of Esther 14, 3-4, Esther says: ". . . help me, desolate woman, which have no helper but thee. For my danger is in mine hand." There is here at least a hint of such a personal feeling of closeness to Jehovah. However, we cannot press the point in Esther too far, for as we view the actions of Esther and Mordecai as a whole, we immediately see that everything they said and did was in the light of doing it for the sake of the Jewish community as a whole; whatever they did was also for the sake of their exiled fellowmen. In 1 Esdras 8, Ezra speaks of the honor that Jehovah has bestowed upon him in that he put it into the heart of the king to send Esdras to Jerusalem. His words

"Therefore was I encouraged by the help of the Lord my God" impress one as having their origin in a beautiful trust in the personal providence of Jehovah, in the unwavering knowledge that Jehovah knew His own, each one individually, and provided for him.

Such evidence, however, is not conclusive, and leaves us free to cite a second theory concerning the later relationship of the Jew with Jehovah. This theory tends to put the Jews back into the same condition which obtained in the years previous to the Exile. In later Biblical writings, especially, we find that Jehovah's pronouncements of destruction, displeasure, or mercy are proclaimed to the Jews as a nation. Perhaps two illustrations will suffice. Ezra 9 tells of the princes coming to Ezra, and speaking the words: "The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands . . . For they have taken of their daughters for themselves: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands; yea, the hand of the princes and rulers have been chief in this trespass." The conclusion to this passage is given in Ezra 10,5: "Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware." We have here an example of the very thing against which Ezekiel strove, the condemnation of all because of the guilt of some. Even if we should feel safe in saying that this

sin of having heathen wives was applicable to every man and woman in the kingdom (which, to us, seems unlikely), even so, such condemnation, according to Ezekiel, was not to be applied also to the children; but earlier in chapter 10 of Ezra we read that the children were included in the congregation of those who assembled before Ezra to weep their tears of sorrow.<sup>15</sup> A second illustration is taken from the words of Haggai, chapter 2,13-14; "Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." From these passages and many more like them, especially in the Apocrypha, we are impressed with the fact that Jehovah is dealing, not with the individual, but with the nation. What some did, that the nation did. What some deserved, that the nation deserved. Did Jehovah no longer deal with the individual, but only with the nation?

With these two theories in mind, the one that individualism had become a part of the character of the Jews, the other that the nation alone was dealt with by Jehovah, we

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15. It seems that we have here a very early use of the false premise which has been repeated so often among certain groups of the 19th and 20th centuries, that "every member of an organization is personally responsible for every action of that organization to which he belongs."

look at the period which saw the greatest amount of Jewish activity since the Exile, the Maccabean fight against Hellenization. We find that it is nation fighting nation, culture fighting culture, religion fighting religion. It was a national emergency and the emphasis was definitely on the relationship between Jehovah and the Jewish nation. However, we also find that what one part of the Jewish nation did was far from what another part did, and the first party would not be held accountable for what the other party did. The nation was divided. There was no longer a united nation with whom Jehovah could deal. The realization of the individual's relationship to Jehovah was also very evident. It was not the nation which refused to do battle with the Syrian armies on the Sabbath; They were individuals. It was not the nation which continued the rite of circumcision, contrary to the law of Antiochus; they were individuals. It was not the nation which would rather suffer death than give up its sacred Scriptures; they were individuals. The very fact that men would sacrifice themselves is a strong argument for the contention that the important thing was that an individual could stand before the throne of Jehovah and know that he was doing right, despite what others of his nation said or did.

The conclusion that we draw from all this is this, that despite the reemphasis by Jeremiah and Ezekiel on the personal relationship and personal responsibility of a man

with Jehovah, the former idea of Jehovah dealing with individuals through the nation was not completely excluded. Both were evident, both were appealed to. If the nation's relationship with Jehovah was not as it should have been, a man was not immediately condemned because he was a part of that nation, although for most Jews it was difficult to realize it; he himself was still able to stand before Jehovah and plead his own case, repent of his own sins, even if the nation did not, and receive forgiveness, even when the nation was condemned. Small wonder again that so many Jews were eager to hear more from the lips of Jesus who taught that same doctrine of personal responsibility.

What the Jewish people owe Jeremiah and Ezekiel for this reemphasis of the individual is beyond human ability to fully appreciate. What comfort or consolation could the Jew have today if his relationship with Jehovah still depended upon the relationship that the entire nation had with Jehovah? The Jew had learned that Jehovah deals with man as an individual.

It was not always so. In the years before the Babylonian exile, the Law was almost entirely disregarded; the Jews during this period discarded the demands of the Law to the extent that their every action was a transgression of this Law. In chapter I we noted a number of these transgressions.

### In Jeremiah III. The Attitude Toward the Law of Jehovah

It will not be necessary here to go through this complete list, but we feel that, in order to get a clear start into the Lawless action of the people, we should be mentored. The people among whom Jeremiah was trained to know the will of Jehovah, were people who were trained to know the will of Jehovah. The people among whom Jeremiah was trained to know the will of Jehovah, were people who were trained to know the will of Jehovah. The people among whom Jeremiah was trained to know the will of Jehovah, were people who were trained to know the will of Jehovah.

We have pointed out so far that Jehovah, following the period of national idolatry preceding the Exile, again became the focal point in the Jewish life, so that His position as the one God, the all-wise and all-merciful Father, both for the individual Jew as well as for the Jewish nation, could not be taken by any other deity, no matter what the consequences of their loyalty might be. We are now interested in showing how the Jew showed his loyalty to Jehovah. There were numerous ways in which such loyalty could be shown: by the Jew's regularity in temple worship, by his sacrifices, by his prayers, by his exemplary life, and the like. But all these are only symptoms or methods which stemmed from one great principle. That principle was obedience to the Law which Jehovah had given to His people, by which they were to regulate their lives, which was their guide in living lives pleasing to Jehovah. Jehovah had given this Law to Moses, and Moses had passed it on to them in writing. Adherence to this Law was the deciding factor which determined where the Jew stood in the eyes of Jehovah. Therefore strict conformity to the Law was the prime requisite in Jewish life.

It was not always so. In the years before the Babylonian exile, the Law was almost entirely disregarded; the Jews during this period discarded the demands of the Law to the extent that their every action was a transgression of this Law. In chapter I we noted a number of these transgressions. In Jeremiah we find a complete catalogue of the sins of the people. It will not be necessary here to go through this complete list, but we feel that, in order to get some insight into the lawless condition of the Jewish people up till the fall of Jerusalem, the more important of these sins should be mentioned.

The people among whom Jeremiah worked had been trained to know the will of Jehovah. Despite the fearfully irreligious condition of the Jewish people at this time, they were still kept enough in touch with the Law that they knew, even if they would not admit it, what was displeasing to Jehovah. Their chief failing was lovelessness, both for Jehovah as well as for their fellowmen. Lovelessness was a complete transgression of both Tables of the Law. This lovelessness for Jehovah resulted in idolatry, discussed in chapter I, forsaking of the Sabbath Day, treated in Jeremiah 17, and rejection of the Word of the Lord, as in Jer.6,10: ". . . behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." The woe of Jeremiah, the heart-ache and soul-searing pain which he felt, is readily understood when we see how completely the people had forsaken

everything that even reminded them of love to Jehovah. Such God-lessness immediately showed itself in sins committed against their fellow Jews. Here the catalogue becomes black with transgression. A man was no longer able to speak the truth to his neighbor: "And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valient for the truth upon the earth . . . they have taught their tongue to speak lies . . ." <sup>1</sup> Deceitfulness filled the hearts of the people: "Their tongue is an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait." <sup>2</sup> There was no longer any regard for the life of others, not even one's own children: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal . . ." <sup>3</sup> also: "Therefore thus saith the Lord of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, "Prophecy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand." <sup>4</sup> The death of another was no barrier if it meant that they would no longer hear the words of Jehovah. Everyone lived for himself, regarding not the needs of his neighbor: "They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy to they not judge." <sup>5</sup>

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1. Jer. 9, 3-5.
  2. Jer. 9, 8.
  3. Jer. 19, 5.
  4. Jer. 19, 5.
  5. Jer. 5, 28.

The sixth commandment was laughed to scorn by the people:

" . . . when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning; everyone neighed after his neighbor's wife."<sup>6</sup> The last two commandments of the Decalogue are treated in Jer.6,13: "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." To add insult to injury, the people, faced with the warnings of Jeremiah, refused to heed his warning, because they did not consider themselves as having done anything wrong: "Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me" and "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush."<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, instead of admitting their guilt, they insisted that the things they did were as Jehovah had ordained it: "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?"<sup>8</sup> Jehovah's people had universally and completely forsaken the Law of Jehovah which forbade all these transgressions. It was indeed time for a period of

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6. Jer.5,7-8.

7. Jer.2,35.

8. Jer.7,9-10.

purging and purification.

That period came, comparatively speaking, like a "bolt of lightning". Within the period of 20 years, all but a small part of an entire nation was taken from its native land and placed into an environment very much different from what they were accustomed to. They were no longer free to do exactly as they pleased. They were no longer able to call the land from which they made their living their own. They were no longer working for themselves but were under the surveillance of their foreign captors. Most of them no longer lived in the city, although some of them were no doubt taken to the city of Babylon to help with Nebuchadrezzar's great building projects. New kinds of employment were learned. New climactic conditions had to be gotten used to. All these and many more changes became parts of the Jewish life.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, for our purposes, we must emphasize that the exiles were not subjected to such slavery that they were not allowed any freedom whatsoever. In the first place, Nebuchadrezzar could not afford to create any cause for dissension and strife. His main purpose in bringing the Jews to Babylon had been to help him build up his country, to fill out its desolate regions, to erect buildings, to aid in the vast project of irrigating the waste lands. If all this was to be satisfactorily accomplished, the

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9. For a complete description of the Jewish settlement in Babylon, see McCurdy, op. cit., Book X, chaps. XIII-XIV.

exiles would have to be treated as leniently as possible. In the second place, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel intimate that the freedom of the exiles was not greatly hampered. Jeremiah seems to take it for granted that when he tells them to build homes, plant gardens, marry and give in marriage, "to seek the peace of the land", they will be permitted to do so. We read in Ezekiel that he had his own house, that there were elders who were concerned over the affairs of the exiles, and that these elders could gather in meetings, in this particular instance, at Ezekiel's house.<sup>10</sup> The very fact that there were elders shows us first that the disappearance of the monarchy had cast the exiles back into an organization which made the elders the leaders of the community. Again, we conclude that the exiles were allowed to live together as families and clans, since their representative elders were able to gather in meetings. Oesterly points out in this connection that in the lists of the returned exiles, mentioned in Ezra, the exiles are enumerated not only according to heads of families but also according to the districts in which they had lived before the Exile.<sup>11</sup> Be that as it may, it is conclusively proved that the exiles were allowed to live very much like they had lived in Palestine.

This was true also of their religious life. However,

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10. Ezek. 8, 1.

11. Oesterly and Robin, op. cit., p. 284.

the religious life of the exiles was radically different from that which they had been accustomed to in Palestine. And logically so. For one thing, they no longer had their Temple to visit. The absence of the Temple seemed to preclude in the Jewish minds any possibility of offering up sacrifices. What a difference this must have made in the Jewish life.

For the relationship hitherto conceived to exist between them and their God had been exhibited in such numberless ways; no animal was killed for food but that part of it was dedicated to Yahweh as His due; no bread was eaten of which in some form the first-fruits had not been offered to Him; no feast was inaugurated without bringing to Him the feasts due.<sup>12</sup>

We see then that the exiles were cast into altogether new circumstances. What kind of substitute religion could they have here in Exile? The only way to answer that question was to go back to the Law of Jehovah, which by now, as discussed in chapter I, they had again become anxious to obey, realizing that it was because of their transgressions of Jehovah's Law that they had brought upon themselves their present condition. And as they studied the Law, reading the Law in their public meetings, they practised a religion which came as close as possible here in exile to the divinely commanded one.

Edersheim, in his discussion of the Law in Messianic times, includes these words:

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12. Ibid., p. 285.

Even the destruction of the Temple, and with it the necessary cessation of sacrifices if, indeed, which is a moot question, all sacrifices did at once and absolutely cease - only caused a gap; just as exile from the land could only free from such laws as attached to the soil of Israel. The reading of the sacrificial sections in the Law - at any rate, in conjunction with prayers, but especially study of the Law, took in the meantime the place of the sacrifices.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of Ezekiel in this return to the study of the Law cannot be forgotten. Ezekiel was constantly on the alert, warning his people, guiding his people, so that the return to Jerusalem and the new Temple which he had promised them might become a reality. Drucher says that Ezekiel proved to be "the balm of Gilead" to the exiles.<sup>14</sup>

One of the important elements in the religion of the Jews in Exile was the restoration of the observance of the Sabbath. It seems that the Sabbath, now without its customary sacrifices, became the chief and regular day of worship. Fowler tells us: "From the exile onward this day became, among the orthodox Jews, a more and more prominent and cherished institution."<sup>15</sup> We can see how important the observance of the Sabbath was, especially to Ezekiel, in the stress he lays on the Sabbath and the denunciation of all those who do not observe this day.<sup>16</sup> The accepted opinion seems to be that the Sabbath became the day set apart for weekly congregational worship. With a complete

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13. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. II, Appendix XIV, p. 764.

14. Drucker, The Culture of Ancient Israel, p. 121.

15. Fowler, op. cit., p. 143.

16. Ezek. 20, 12-24.

lack of duties for the priest to carry out in these services, the work and the words of the prophet became more and more important, with his preaching, admonishing, and comforting.<sup>17</sup> We can readily realize how vital a thing the Sabbath became in the everyday life of the exiles.

Before leaving the subject of the Sabbath, we may in passing note that Ezra, in the period following the return from the Exile, makes no mention of the Sabbath, neither an exhortation to observe it nor an abjuration against those who desecrate it. However, it becomes a very important issue in the work of Nehemiah to put an end to the most obvious indifference to the Sabbath. To us it seems that this might be an argument against those who argue that Nehemiah preceded Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem. From what we have seen of the Jewish character, his aptitude for forgetfulness, his ability to slip back into his evil ways as quickly as he could reform, it would seem very probable that Ezra did not have to cope with the problem at all, that the newly-returned exiles still maintained the observance of the Sabbath as they had in Babylon. However, after the Temple was built and sacrifices were again being offered, would it seem improbable that the Jews felt that it was no longer necessary to observe the Sabbath as strictly as they had before? This is merely another theory, but further discussion of the matter would

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17. Many feel that it was her, among these conditions, that the author of the so-called "Deutero" or "Second" Isaiah became active.

prove interesting.

The effect of the new surroundings and circumstances, encountered in Babylon, very likely became evident in the Jewish life with the seeming necessity of elaboration of the Mosaic law. We cannot dwell on this subject to any great extent, for there is little actual proof from the writings of this time to substantiate this idea. However, such elaboration would seem very likely, at least to the extent that much more emphasis was placed on minor demands of the Law than ever before. Permit us to quote here from an article written by Philip E. Hughes in the *Evangelical Quarterly*, 1940: "There was an unforeseen danger that the Jews, in contrast with their former faithlessness, would proceed, as it were, to the opposite extreme, and with a fresh, but proud, zeal strive even to surpass in their actions and observances the demands of the divine ordinances by the addition of numerous self-imposed rules and regulations, which had no place in their law. This, indeed, was what actually came to pass."<sup>18</sup> What evidence we have for such an addition of rules seems to be largely limited to the sphere of rites and rituals. Oesterly feels that circumcision was one of the rites especially stressed, since the Jews were, in the Exile, conscious of being different from other people and needed to emphasize certain rites to show how

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18. Hughes, "The Jewish Problem in the Ancient World," *The Evangelical Quarterly*, 1940, p.249.

of our paper. Suffice it to say that the above remarks on different they really were. He refers also to the strenuous observance of the ancient laws regarding purification, forbidden food, clean and unclean animals.<sup>19</sup> Others mention the fact that special memorial days were observed to remember the great days of deliverance, the day of the destruction of the Temple, and the like. From Ezekiel himself we get some impression of this necessity to elaborate upon the Law. He is looking to the future Jerusalem rather than to the conditions of the Exile at this time, but the idea is there. In chapter 44 he restricts the priesthood, not to the Levites, but to the family of Zadok alone; the civil ruler is commanded to look after the sacrifices in chapter 46; he allots lands to the priests near the Temple in chapter 45; Also in chapter 45 he makes very definite prescriptions for the observances of the feasts and for the decoration of the Temple. The new kinds and spheres of occupations in which the Jews labored very likely gave rise to heretofore unknown sins which had to be combatted. The Mishna tractate Shabbath contains a great deal of material on Sabbath rules which can be traced back to this period in the Exile.

There are many who are convinced that the Exile formed the surroundings for the origin of the Levitical Code, called by some the Holiness Code or Priestly Code. The subject itself is an important section of a thorough study in Old Testament Isagogics, which would take us beyond the scope

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19. Hughes, op. cit., p. 249.

of our paper. Suffice it to say that the above remarks on the elaboration upon the Law has been based upon the internal and external evidences which conclusively prove that the so-called Holiness Code did not originate in the Exile but was known in the Exile, having been passed on to them as the Pentateuch, written by Moses some 900 years before.<sup>20</sup>

Before leaving the period of the Exile, we must mention the origin of an important institution which became the center of the Jewish community and religious life. We speak of the synagogue. The details of this origin and development will be treated later under a separate heading. However, we must emphasize again the fact that it was the new conditions forced upon the Jewish people during the Exile that gave rise to the synagogue. Realizing that Jerusalem had really fallen, that the Temple with its sacrifices could no longer be for them a sanctuary where they could observe their religious customs, that for the preservation of as much of their Jehovah-worship as was possible in Exile, they must needs inaugurate a new center where they might gather for worship, fellowship, and instruction. The answer to their problem was the synagogue. More of that later.

Although the New Babylonian empire was very powerful and had made great progress as far as becoming a recognized

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20. We insert here a note of appreciation to Dr. Walter Roehrs for his lectures on Old Testament Introduction, based upon an outline by Dr. Leupold of Capital University, which took on new importance when used as source material for this study.

power in a world of powerful nations, it also, even as Assyria and those before Assyria, was destined to fall. The decline came rapidly. Historians tell us that four Babylonian rulers followed Nebuchadrezzar on the throne of Babylon. The hasty fall of Babylon can be largely traced to the same weakness which hastened the fall of Jerusalem, namely, a lack of proper leadership. Till its fall, Babylon saw its rulers vie with each other for power, often resorting to murder to achieve their purposes.<sup>21</sup> Two of these rulers are mentioned in the Bible. Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadrezzar, is mentioned in 2 Kings 25,27 as having released Jehoiachin from bondage in Babylon. Neriglissar, the brother-in-law of Evil-Merodach, is probably the Nergalsharesar mentioned in Jer. 39, 3 and 13 as being one of the officers entrusted with the care of the captured city of Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> The only other Babylonian leader mentioned is Belshazzar, the man referred to in Daniel 5,30 as the last king of Babylon. Belshazzar was co-regent with Nabonidus, the fourth of the kings referred to above, ruling over Babylon while Nabonidus was in Arabia.

In 539, Babylon fell to one of the greatest leaders the world has ever seen, Cyrus the Great, of Persia. Up to the year 559, Persia had been subservient to the Medes, who with Nebuchadrezzar, had united to defeat the Assyrians.

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21. Finnegan, Light From the Ancient Past, p. 189.  
 22. McCurdy, op. cit., Book XI, chap. III, p. 393.

However, in 559, Cyrus marched against Astyages, king of the Medes, and with the help of a revolt on the part of the Median army, overcame Astyages and took the capital city of Ecbatana. Although the sovereignty of Persia was established, Media continued to be honored along with Persia, so that in Esther 1, 19, the rulers could be rightly called "the Persians and the Medes" and in Daniel 5, 28, they could be spoken of as "the Medes and Persians". Cyrus continued his conquests, defeating Croesus, the king of Lydia in 546, and finally defeating Nabonidus and Belshazzar, taking Babylon with but little resistance in 539. This then was Cyrus, who called himself "king of the world"; the one who had been prophesied by Isaiah as "the anointed and the friend of Jehovah",<sup>23</sup> the one whom the Lord called in righteousness,<sup>24</sup> the co-worker with Jehovah, who is to rebuild Jerusalem, lay the foundations of the Temple,<sup>25</sup> and, most important of all, to restore the exiles to their homes.<sup>26</sup> The fulfillment of all these prophecies came to pass in the year 536.

Cyrus was a man with a very sympathetic spirit. Even though Croesus and Astyages had been defeated in battle, their lives were spared and they were provided for for the rest of their lives. Cyrus was also far different from

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23. Is. 44, 28.

24. Is. 42, 6.

25. Is. 44, 28.

26. Is. 45, 13.

former rulers in so far as his type of government is concerned. McCurdy describes it thus: "Tiglathpileser III, Nebuchadrezzar, and Cyrus stand for three Oriental types of government. The first aimed to rule by denationalizing and disintegrating, the second by denationalizing and conserving, the third by local protection and personal oversight."<sup>27</sup> Cyrus was not in sympathy with the Assyrian and Babylonian policy of deportation and exile. Therefore he decreed that all those people who had been already taken captive in exile should be returned. Herodotus tells us that there were a number of these groups who were freed from exile. Most important for our consideration is the fact that Jehovah had kept His promises, the prophecy of Jeremiah was now being fulfilled. The Jewish people were at last free to go home. Cyrus is rightly called the servant of Jehovah. Jehovah was once more proving that He had not forsaken His people.

In Ezra 1 we read Cyrus' decree concerning the Jewish exiles:

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth,

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27. McCurdy, op. cit., Book XI, chap. VI, p. 427.

let the men of his place help him with silver,  
and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts,  
beside the freewill offering for the house of  
God that is in Jerusalem.

This was the beginning of a new period in the history of the Jewish nation. We are concerned in this chapter with the relationship of the Jew to the Law of Jehovah. With the return of the exiles to Palestine, there came a period of absolute obedience to this Law. It is true, as we have pointed out, that a great reform had begun in Exile; the full implication and fruition of that reform was achieved in the period following the Exile. It is in this period that we come into contact with one of the great men of Jewish history, the great reformer, Ezra.

The first return from exile had been led by Zerubbabel,<sup>28</sup> who was aided by Jeshua.<sup>29</sup> Under their direction and in the face of great opposition by the leaders of the nations surrounding Jerusalem, the Temple was finally completed. The great work of Haggai and Zechariah in their continual exhortation and comforting of the people to continue their work must not be overlooked. Jehovah was providing ample assistance for His people that they might be restored as a nation. With the completion of the Temple came also the purification of the priests and Levites, the restoration of sacrificial offerings, and the keeping of the Passover.

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28. Ezra 2,2.

29. Ezra 3,2.

What great joy must have filled the hearts of these people, that now, a full 70 years after their beloved Temple had been destroyed, they were now able to live as they had longed to live these many years. Jehovah had indeed blessed them.

Sixty years after the dedication of the Temple, a scribe who had remained in Babylon up till this time, began his long journey to Palestine. Moore, in quoting the Megillah, says that Ezra did not accompany Zerubbabel and Jeshua in their return since he at that time was studying under Baruch son of Neriah, who was the disciple and amanuensis of Jeremiah.<sup>30</sup> (It must be remembered also that Ezra at that time must have been quite young.) Ezra was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given." The purpose of Ezra's coming to Jerusalem is given us in Ezra 7,10: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgements." His charge was to call the people back to the worship of the true and only God, and to the observance of the Law. The latter phrase describes Ezra's work exactly. The Law was again being forgotten, at least as much of it as they had from the Exile. We are told that they had not separated themselves from their heathen wives.<sup>31</sup> From the way in which this problem was handled we get a true

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30. Moore, Judaism, p.6.

31. Ezra 9,1-2.

picture of the strictness which Ezra attached to the Law. He began immediately to show the people what the Law demanded. There was no compromise with Ezra where the Law was concerned. It was either-or! We are reminded of the strict legalism with which John Calvin dealt with his people. No matter how painful the process, unswerving adherence to the Law was absolutely necessary. It could not have been an easy thing for these people to leave the wives, and probably also the husbands, with whom they had made the long trip from Babylon to Palestine, with whom they had suffered the hardships of rebuilding and reorganizing their homes and their city. There were, no doubt, many children who lost their fathers and mothers because of this very harsh decree. Yet it was for this that Ezra had been called, and it is gratifying to see that the people immediately realized this, for we read that the people voluntarily made a new covenant in which they pledged their absolute obedience to the Law of Jehovah.

Later on, another great leader came from Babylon, whose name was Nehemiah. His main purpose was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which had evidently been left to lie in the ruins of many years. Nehemiah joined forces with Ezra to complete this great reformation of both social and religious conditions. Before the walls had been completed, the people came to Nehemiah, complaining of evils to which they were being subjected by the rulers and nobles: their land was being

held in mortgage because they did not have enough money to buy food; also their children were being used as slaves, probably to help pay the debts of their fathers. Nehemiah, like Ezra, did not spare the offenders, but demanded that the property of the people be returned to them. Again the offenders complied. How different an attitude from that which we saw in the days of Jeremiah.

Ezra, during this time, seems to have been absent from Jerusalem. It is generally accepted that Ezra had returned to Babylon for a time. However, he now returned, and his first action was the reading of the Law of Moses. The result was the oath made by the people in Neh.10,29: "They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgements and his statutes." The reading of the Law did not, however, automatically make the people free from sin. We must be careful in judging the Jews and their actions, lest we become self-righteous, forgetting that the Jews had the same evil flesh which is ours. We read that later on Nehemiah had to correct the injustice which had been done to the priests by forcing them to go out into the fields and work for their living, thereby making it necessary for them to leave their duties in the Temple. In the same chapter (chap.13) we read how Nehemiah discovered that the Sabbath

Day was being desecrated to such an extent that there was absolutely no halt on this day from the selling of merchandise or from common labor. Nehemiah's threat to personally lay hands upon the offenders if they continued in their sins gives an accurate picture of how close to the very soul of Nehemiah was absolute obedience of the Law of Jehovah.

The result of this unwavering loyalty to the Law on the part of Ezra and Nehemiah could only have the effect of searing upon the peoples' hearts and minds the absolute necessity of obedience. The disobedient were cursed. We must not mistake this loyalty for false legalism and externalism. This was true zeal for doing as Jehovah willed.

There came, however, in this period, an additional emphasis, and that was the enforcing of laws which went beyond the sphere of the Mosaic Law. We read in Nehemiah 10, 32: "Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God." There was no prescription in the Law for these self-imposed obligations. But they were deemed necessary to fill out the religious system of the New Kingdom. It soon became the custom for certain men, well-versed in the Mosaic law, to expound and interpret the Law. These followers of Ezra were called Scribes, or the Sopherim, and together made up what is generally accepted to be the Great Synagogue, a kind of council which passed ordinances and regulations and issued them to the people as authoritative.

Ezra is considered to have been the leader of this council. These additions to the Law were later gathered together and published with the title, the Talmud. The authority of these added laws was never questioned as being only man-made, and therefore it was not up to the individual to decide whether he should obey them or not. There was a distinction made between the laws of the Sopherim and the Mosaic law, but both were necessarily obeyed. In fact, there is evidence that it was a more serious matter to transgress the laws of the Sopherim than the Mosaic law. What this adherence to man-made ordinances led to is obvious in the New Testament, where we see the Pharisees demanding observance of rituals and ceremonies which were not demanded by Jehovah. The beginning of such absolute legalism was here in the period of and following Ezra. It is interesting to note here what Sirach, the Apocryphal writer, has to say about the adopting of such man-made ordinances as law. In chap. 32,17: "The man of violence concealeth instruction and forceth the law to his necessity." Ezra, we believe, would have been shocked to see what his wholesome and Godly zeal for obedience of the Law had become as a result of the influence of certain men. More of this development later.

The Jewish nation was soon taken out from under the rule of the Persian Empire and was cast into a civilization that was to leave an immediate and long-lasting effect on the Jewish people, resulting finally in a crisis among the Jews

themselves during the period of Syrian rule.

In the year 331, Alexander the Great invaded and became master of the Persian Empire. With his death in 323, the great Alexandrian Empire fell into the hands of his successors, most important of whom were the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. In 322 the Jewish nation came under the rule of the Egyptian Ptolemies and remained more or less under them till 198, when the Seleucid lord, Antiochus Epiphanes, took Jerusalem under his rule. This period of 123 years was a comparatively peaceful period as far as the Jews were concerned. It is true, they were a buffer state between Syria and Egypt, but by and large they were allowed complete freedom. There were two great outcomes of being under the Hellenic rule. One was the Hellenization of the Jews, the other the further dispersion of the Jews. The Jews, to a far greater extent than ever before, became inhabitants of lands and cities thruout the civilized world.

As far as the Law is concerned, this period under Greek and Ptolemaic influence is comparatively silent. However, we do know that the Jews continued to observe a number of the duties demanded by the Law, both written and oral. They continued the paying of their temple dues, as well as making frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem. We get the impression, however, from reports issuing from the Jewish settlements in various cities of the world, that what was happening already in Ezra's time was now becoming the rule, namely,

that the added man-made laws were being observed much more closely than the Law of Jehovah given through Moses.

Josephus tells us that many Jews in the dispersion were losing their strict adherence to the Mosaic law.<sup>32</sup>

Whatever indifference there was to the Law during the above period became a matter of absolute God-lessness during the period of Seleucid rule. Previous rulers had been anxious to Hellenize the world but only in so far as they were a natural influence on others. This policy had the effect that many Jews began to adopt Hellenistic customs. No action was evidently taken against these Jews who were forsaking their own religion. However, the new king, Antiochus Iphphanes, changed the policy of former rulers and undertook to Hellenize by force. Some feel that it was to some degree due to the encouragement of the Hellenized Jews that Antiochus introduced his policy of force. This spirit of compromise is traced back to the time when Alexander was allowed to come into the Temple, something which was definitely impossible for a devout Jew to condone. Such compromising had spread to many Jewish families, especially to the upper classes. There was a definite attraction to the customs and fashions of the Greeks, as well as to the luxury afforded them if they allowed themselves to adopt Hellenistic practices. Many families enjoyed great wealth because of taxes taken by extortion and oppression. Moore feels that these

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32. Josephus, Antt. XII 4, 1ff.

Jews, up to the time of Antiochus, made no effort to promote the spread of such foreign ways except by being a bad example.<sup>33</sup> These Hellenizing Jews Antiochus gladly used to back up his projects for abolishing the old regime and establishing in its place the Greek culture.

The Apocryphal book of Maccabees tells us to what extremes Antiochus went to carry out his project. The first move on the part of Antiochus with his Jewish allies was to erect a Greek gymnasium, where, in accord with Greek customs, the human body was openly exposed, something altogether revolting to the Jewish sense of modesty. Greek fashions were introduced. Even the priests forsook their duties and indulged in the heathen exercises.<sup>34</sup> However, worse things followed. The Jews were commanded to put away the rite of circumcision; they were to forsake the holy covenant made with Jehovah; all the temple services, sacrifices, and observance of the Sabbath and festival days were to be immediately stopped; the writings of the prophets and Law-givers were to be destroyed; the people were to join in the celebration of heathen festivals. To enforce their program, Antiochus came with his armies and turned Jerusalem into a heathen shambles. "The temple was turned into a whore-house and a club for revellers." Idol altars were set up everywhere, the books of the Law were publicly torn up and burned, and

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33. Moore, op. cit., p. 49.

34. 2 Macc.4.

the penalty of torture and death was required if anyone was found in possession of a copy of the Scriptures.<sup>35</sup>

The result of the development of such a system of oppression was one which might well be expected if there were any orthodox Jews left in Jerusalem at all. For what was at the bottom of this whole movement of Hellenization if it wasn't a drawing away from the Law of Jehovah? In order then to fight this movement, there had to be a re-emphasis on the place of the Law in the life of every Jew. And there were many who realized just that: "Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant."<sup>36</sup> The books of Tobit and Ecclesiasticus show us how important the keeping of the Law was to many in Jerusalem, despite what might happen to them. In Tobit 19,20 we read: "All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and all wisdom is the fulfilling of the Law;" again, in Tobit 24,23: "All these things are the bark of the covenant of God Most High, the Law which Moses commanded as an heritage for the assemblies of Jacob." In Ecclesiasticus 21 we read: "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest too near it, it will bite thee . . . All iniquity is as a two-edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be

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35. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 265

36. 1 Macc.1, 62-63.

healed." again: "He that keepeth the Law of the Lord getteth the understanding thereof: and the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom."

But these Jewish loyalists again needed leadership to guide them. That leadership came with the Hasmonean or Maccabean family, who waged active war against the Hellenistic invaders. The Maccabees, led by Mattathias, gathered about them a large group of people who were ready to offer themselves for the sake of the keeping of the Law. What they achieved in their many and vigorous battles against the Syrians is simply stated and summed up in 1 Macc.2,42: "And they rescued the Law out of the hand of the Gentiles." An important element of this group were the Chasidim, a group who had launched themselves into the fight to restore the Jewish religion. The fight against the Syrian Hellenization was successful, and under the leadership of Judas, a treaty with the Syrians was successfully drawn up, which ended the Syrian tyranny over the Jewish nation, although the Syrians later broke this treaty. Actual and complete freedom from Syrian influence did not come till 142, under Simon, brother of Judas. However, after the treaty had been drawn up between the Syrians and Judas, the Chasidim realized that their purpose for fighting with the Syrians was not the same as that of the Maccabees. The Maccabees were interested in ejecting all the foreign element from their country and then to extend their country's borders, a purely nation-

alistic spirit; the Chasidim, on the other hand, were only interested in bringing the Law back to its proper place in the lives of the people, a purely religious spirit. At the time of John Hyrcanus, the Chasidim were known as the Pharisees, the Separatists. The characteristic feature of the Pharisees from this time on, despite their many conflicts with their own people who had Hellenistic tendencies, particularly the Sadducees, who were nominally keepers of the Law but favored compromise with the Greeks, was absolute and unswerving, obedience of the Law, on every point. It was their treatment of the Law which caused the Pharisees a great deal of trouble, for they became intolerably legalistic, going to the far extremes. They based everything on the traditions, Mosaic and otherwise. This extremism first became evident when the Pharisees were said to have refused to accept Hyrcanus as high priest, since Hyrcanus had been born while his mother was in Syrian captivity. From this point on the Pharisees became an entirely separate group, adopting their own type of clothing, subjecting themselves to all sorts of minute ordinances, and pledging themselves to fierce opposition against the Sadducees. According to Eggold, it was at the time of the reign of Alexandra, during the Golden Age of Pharisaism, that tradition was put on an equal basis with the Law, thus making it binding upon all the Jews.<sup>37</sup> Essentially this was no doubt true, but in a practical

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37. Eggold, The Pharisees, Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, p. 37

sense, tradition had been so considered since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

There is one more feature which was largely developed by the Pharisees, in addition to this legalistic extremism, which seems to have had its inception at this time. There grew the feeling, which later seems to have become an accepted doctrine, that the man who observed all the demands of the Law and the traditions was justified in the sight of Jehovah, thereby meriting a divine reward. In Ecclus. 3,30 we read these words: "A flaming fire doth water quench, so doth almsgiving atone for sin." Also Tobit 4,8-19 states: "If thou have little, be not afraid to give alms according to that little; for thou layest up a good treasure for thy self against the day of necessity; because alms delivereth from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness." The simple statement of Tobit 12,9 indicates how efficacious the keeping of the Law had become: "Alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin." We can well realize how important the Law was in the eyes of the Pharisees, if considered in that light, and also how important the Pharisees made the Law in the eyes of the people. It was by the works of the Law that the Jew was justified in the sight of Jehovah, according to the teaching of the Pharisees. How careful they had to be so that no part of that Law was transgressed. The effects of this teaching are readily seen from many occasions in the life of our Savior. The disciples

themselves seem to have been influenced by this teaching. In Matt. 19,27 Peter says: ". . . Behold, we have forsaken all and have followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican bears out the fact that Jesus was conscious of the dangerous effect of such a teaching of work-righteousness. The very first words of the rich young man in Matt.19,16 give evidence that such a doctrine had been imparted to the Jews: ". . . Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus' answers were always aimed at the sinfulness of this doctrine of work-righteousness, and the Pharisees were, on account of that, His bitterest enemies, not allowing themselves to believe that Jesus was really the fulfilling of the Law.

We have seen in this discussion how the Law developed as to its importance in the Jewish life, from its complete disuse in Jeremiah's time, its reemphasis during the Exile, absolute adherence to its demands in the great reform work of Ezra and Nehemiah, and its final achievement through the work of the Chasidim and Pharisees. The Jews had been forced to realize that it had been only because of their disobedience that they had been punished, especially in the Exile, and that through their obedience they were blessed by Jehovah. With such a background, is it any wonder that the Jews believed that the only access they had to Jehovah was through the Law? Their experiences in the past 600 years of the

period under discussion here tended only to emphasize to them the efficacy of absolute obedience to the traditions, both the Law of Moses and the writings of the fathers.

#### IV. The Sanctuary of Jehovah

There is one important aspect of the Jew's relationship to Jehovah which must be treated here. It has been characteristic of the Jew from the time of Cain and Abel to maintain a specific location where it might bring his offerings of praise and thanksgiving. We find throughout the Scriptural account of Jewish history the importance given to such a religious center. In earlier times it was simply an altar where the sacrifices could be brought, where the priesthood carried out its divinely-commanded duties. Later on, especially from the days of Moses to the time of the establishing of the United Kingdom with Saul as its king, this central seat of assembly was located wherever the Ark of the Covenant was placed and guarded by the priests. The grand climax of this need for a central place where the Jews could come before Jehovah came when Solomon erected the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple became the Great Sanctuary for the Jewish nation. All their great festivals were celebrated here at the Temple in Jerusalem; here was the dwelling place of the High Priests; here was the gathering-in place for all the dues, sacrifices, and special gifts; this was where Jehovah and the Jewish nation

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met. Due to the fact that many Jews lived quite some distance away from the Temple, it was made possible in the Deuteronomic law for people to conduct and maintain separate places of worship which were simply treated as "chapels" sprung from the main branch, the Temple. Such people were still obligated to pay their visits to the Temple at regular intervals throughout the year.

Many feel that the centralization of worship received new impulse under the reforms of Josiah. This is true, since the Jewish nation had up to that time forsaken the Temple altogether. But the reforms of Josiah were based on the Law which had lived among the Jewish people from the time of Moses. This centralization of worship at the Temple in Jerusalem was not a new addition under Josiah; it was simply a return to the traditional system of worship.

In the days of Jeremiah, the Temple still remained the great focal point for the eyes of the Jewish nation. The Temple was the sole object of their faith and trust in Jehovah. As long as the Temple remained, there was no need of fear that anything tragic might happen to the Jewish nation.

One can readily see where such thoughts and convictions might lead if the hearts of the people were not kept in tune with the true basis for Jehovah worship. When that very thing occurred, when the Jewish nation left off their trust and faith in Jehovah, they still insisted on continuing their Temple-"Worship", although to a far less degree. As long as the

simple acts of worship were continued, what had they to fear? The result was absolute externalism. That was the thing which Jeremiah saw when he came to Jerusalem. He was seeing for himself "The Grand Lie", works without faith. It was the very thing which Isaiah had seen and was forced to cry out against: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats."<sup>1</sup> How similar are Jeremiah's words in 6,20: "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? and your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me." Everything they did was abhorred in the sight of Jehovah. Yet, when Jeremiah accused them of their false worship, and often threatened them with dire punishments if they persisted in their wickedness, the people simply called back to him: ". . . the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." As long as they had the Temple and everything that went with it, polluted as it was, they felt safe.

What a shock it must have been for these same people when they realized that the Temple was gone! The exiles in Babylon were prepared for the news by Ezekiel. What would happen now? Were they to be cut off completely from Jehovah, since they no longer had the Temple to look to? We

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1. Isaiah 1, 11ff.

have emphasized the fact that through the preaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the Jew was taught to realize that he himself had unlimited access to Jehovah. However, it was an important part of the Jewish character to feel the need for gathering with their fellow Jews, and worship together.

Therefore we find that they simply adapted the practise of gathering together at various locations. Psalm 137 points out that at times they gathered along the banks of the river.

We have already seen that the leaders met in the house of Ezekiel and "apart from listening to his discourses, took counsel in all matters of communal concern."<sup>2</sup> We also find these gatherings in private homes of ordinary citizens.<sup>3</sup>

In the time of Ezra, such a gathering is found to have convened at the "watergate".<sup>4</sup> This new type of gathering came to be called edah, in contrast to the predominantly secular pre-exilic assembly, the kahal. The former term, used with predilection by exilic writers of the Old Testament, is correctly translated in the Septuagint by the word ~~συναγωγη~~ .

Neither edah, however, nor the closely related kenaset (Aramaic: hemishta) was ever reduced to the final and most specific meaning of the synagogue as the "house" of worship. The Talmudic tradition was, indeed, correct, when it defined edah as any religious congregation of ten Jews regardless

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2. Baron, The Jewish Community, p. 59.

3. Susannah 4 and 6.

4. Neh. 1,1-8.

of its locus or organizational form.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, as a result of the conditions in exile, the Jewish people became convinced that the Temple and its sacrifices were not necessary for true Jehovah worship. The important thing was that the individual's heart was right with Jehovah. The emphasis was thus shifted from the place of worship to the gathering of worshippers, the congregation, assembled at any time and any place.

However, the worth of the Temple and its corresponding services was not entirely discounted. We can see this from the great stress laid by Ezekiel on the preparation of the new Temple.<sup>6</sup> How important it was to the returned exiles under Zerubbabel and Ezra that the Temple should be rebuilt! Haggai does not attempt to conceal his indignation when he sees that the people have fallen into a state of disinterest, especially as regards the finishing of the Temple. From the time of the completion of the Temple in 516 down to its final destruction in 70 A.D. the Temple constituted an important element of the Jewish religion. We have mentioned the fact that the paying of Temple dues and pilgrimages to Jerusalem continued during the Greek period. Alexander was absolutely forbidden to enter the Holy of Holies. During the Maccabean period, it became evident that the act of Antiochus in desecrating the Temple was considered the worst of all his deeds. We notice also that the first task which the victorious Maccabees

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5. Baron, *op. cit.* p. 61.

6. Ezek. 40-48.

set themselves to was the restoring of the Temple, ridding it of all its heathen idols, giving it a thorough cleaning. In the New Testament era, the Temple was still considered the great sanctuary of Jehovah. The times that Jesus Himself spent in or near the Temple are ample evidence to show that the Temple still held a position high in the esteem of the Jewish nation. Today orthodox Jews consider the final destruction of the Temple to be the great catastrophe in the history of the Jewish nation. When we enter a Jewish synagogue today, we find that many features of the Temple in Jerusalem, its furnishings and customs, are still retained.

In spite of the importance of the Temple in later Jewish history, it was never restored to the influential position it held before the Exile. The Synagogue accomplished the task of uniting the Jews who were together in one dispersion; the Temple kept all the dispersions together to maintain the position of the Jewish people as a nation. The Synagogue had become for the Jews the important meeting place for worship, prayer, and instruction. Oesterly says that if it had not been for the synagogue the Jewish religion would have died.<sup>7</sup> The new kingdom of Israel had its original growth in the synagogue; it had learned the Laws of Jehovah in the synagogue; it had progressed as a nation as a result of its communal gatherings in the synagogue. It also served the purpose of keeping the eyes of the Jewish nation fixed on its

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7. Oesterly, op. cit. p. 332.

future in the world. Of this Baron says: "By orienting all prayerful assemblies in the direction of Jerusalem, it also focused world Jewry's attention on a single goal. The Jewish people could soon entertain the hope . . . that ultimately the Jerusalem "house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Is. 56,7)"<sup>8</sup>

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8. Baron, op. cit. p. 74.

If you will look at a map of Palestine, including the surrounding territories as far east as the Tigris, as far north as Asia Minor, as far south and west as Egypt, you will readily see in what position the Jewish nation stood in relation to the great powers of the world to as late as the Roman Empire.

#### V. The Nationalistic Ideal of the Jew

We have mentioned before that Palestine, the homeland of the Jewish nation, formed a buffer state for surrounding nations. Such a position became an important factor in the development of a nationalistic spirit which has never been broken down, despite the loss of the Jewish "Vaterland", despite the dispersion of the Jews to every "corner" of the globe, despite the new religious ideas which have caused dissension among the Jews themselves. The Jews of the world still form a powerful nation, with tremendous potential force. Though they do not have all the properties of an organized nation, such as a central seat of government, a land which they can call their own, and the like, yet they are united because they all are looking for the day when they shall be such an organized nation; some at the present time feel that they must begin by their own endeavors to bring this ideal nation into existence. Only the faithless Jew is not zealous in bringing this ideal to pass. Again, the geographical position of Palestine among the nations of the world has been an important factor in the establishing of such a nationalistic spirit.

If you will look at a map of Palestine, including the surrounding territories as far east as the Tigris, as far north as Asia Minor, as far south and west as Egypt, you will readily see in what position the Jewish nation stood in relation to the great powers of the world to as late as the Roman Empire. From the period of the Hittites, who came from the heart of Asia Minor, to the beginning of the Roman Empire, Palestine was the grand international battlefield. The "thorn in the flesh" was Egypt. Egypt was always a major nation to beware of, for any other nation making a bid for supremacy in this part of the world. The Hittites went after Egypt, having to cut through Palestine on the way; Assyria in the 500 years of its supremacy, used Palestine as its meeting place with Egypt, Syria and Israel; Baylon, having defeated the Assyrians, came through Palestine to squelch the rebellious nature of Egypt and Judah; Persia, already rulers over the remnant of the Jews, under Cambyses II, added Egypt to its Empire at Pelusium; Alexander, having made himself master of the entire eastern Mediterranean world including Egypt, went all the way to Persia to extend his possessions; Palestine was under the Ptolemies after the death of Alexander, but was wrested from the Ptolemies in 198 B.C. by the Seleucids; in 63 B.C. Palestine passed under the sway of the Roman Empire. It is doubtful that any land has experienced such a great amount of foreign oppression in a comparatively short 13 centuries. Perhaps no other nation has been passed back and forth

from one nation to another so much as the Jewish nation. The discouraging part of it all was that the Jews themselves were able to do little or nothing about their precarious situation.

More than this, Palestine was the strategic country for any nation to control if they were in any way interested in commercial activities. Palestine was at the western end of the Fertile Crescent, right between the sea and the great desert. All the important trade routes and highways either went directly through or bordered Palestine. It was exceedingly fruitful for any nation to control these trade routes. (For further information on this subject, see Glueck, The Other Side of the Jordan.)

From the time of Israel's conquering of Canaan, the Jews have realized their strategic position. It has been their constant hope that some day they would be able to keep outside nations from using their land as a "doormat". A number of Israelite kings attempted to achieve such a purpose, but their efforts were by and large in vain. The most they succeeded in doing was to bring more sorrow and misery upon their people and themselves.

The Jews also came to realize that, as a result of this constant foreign activity in their land, they were appropriating to themselves many foreign and heathen customs which were breaking down the lines of separation between Jews and heathenism. We have noticed that such a trend was especially noticeable in the years before the Exile. There was very little

difference between the actions of the Jewish people at this time and the heathen people living around them. Having allowed themselves to fall into such depths of sinfulness and vice, all the identifying characteristics and habits of the Jewish people were becoming less and less recognizable. If it had not been for the Exile in Babylon, it is very probable that there would be nothing today by which we could recognize the Jews for the nation they are. However, we know that the plan of Jehovah was not the disintegration of this nation until all Scripture had been fulfilled. It was, therefore, during the Exile that the Jewish nation became aware of the necessity of their casting off the heathenish practices and customs they had allowed themselves to adopt, and emphasize these marks of Judaism which identified them as the people of Jehovah, thereby making them completely separate from everything that might identify them with heathenism. Oesterly says:

It was during the Exile that there arose among the Jews, as never before, the consciousness of being different from other peoples; the conviction of superiority over others began to assert itself, and not without reason; for their grasp of the truth of the ethical righteousness of God, together with the corresponding demand made upon them as the people of God, marked them as outstanding, in a religious sense, on a much higher plane than any other people. They felt the need, therefore, of adopting an attitude of aloofness towards all who stood on a lower religious plane.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, for the first time, those passages in Leviticus 20, 20-26 really began to mean something to the Jewish people. They realized that when Jehovah says "Ye shall therefore

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1. Oesterly, op. cit. p. 267.

keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein spue you not out. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you; for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them," He really means it. We have no accurate examples of how the Jewish people made this feeling of separation evident during the Exile, but surely it was this separation which caused Zerubbabel and his people to deny the help of the Samaritans in building the Temple. It was this conviction also which demanded that heathen wives be separated from the Jewish people, according to the law repeated by Ezra. Permit us to quote Dr. Martin Meyer on this point:

There is no evidence that even Ezra and Nehemiah, who are so frequently referred to as types of narrow-minded Judaism, entertained any sentiments hostile to non-Jewish peoples. Their objections to inter-marriage with heathen and half-heathen peoples were based upon far higher grounds. They realized that the integrity of the restored nation and church was at stake. A loose compromise policy which would have continued to permit the Samaritans to further influence the ideals of nascent Judaism would have destroyed the Jew and eliminated his point of view at a time when it was phrasing itself and preparing for its largest service.<sup>2</sup>

We feel that Dr. Meyer has much in his favor in saying that the integrity of the nation would have been lost if Ezra had given in; however, in his anxiety to show how the Jew had been misjudged and not given a fair chance, Dr. Meyer has omitted to show that Ezra and Nehemiah acted just as the Law of Jehovah

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2. Meyer, "Jew and Non-Jew":, Jewish Tracts, pp. 6-7.

demanding, often going beyond His demands. We do not want to give the impression that the Jewish nation was now offensively hostile to all other people, nor that they refused to have anything to do with non-Jews. (In fact, the Greek period distinctly points to the exact opposite.) We do mean to say that the Jewish nation was now filled with a zeal to present their nation as completely Judaistic as possible, to be very careful that nothing might come among them which might spread heathen contamination. To this end the Jewish people were dedicated.

How this nationalistic zeal developed is most vividly shown by the actions of the faithful Jews during the Maccabean period. We cannot but marvel at these people who, despite the tremendous odds against them, nevertheless fought with every bit of energy in them to preserve their nation, and all the characteristics which have made it a truly Jewish nation, the people of Jehovah. This was truly the fight of a nation for its life. Later on they lost it. Right now the Jews are again putting their all against those who would hinder them from regaining this life. Every Jew is filled with the absolute conviction that they will some day be restored to their former place in the world. The Pharisees in the inter-Testament period were convinced of the same thing. They, however, went to the very extreme, and demanded absolute separation from anything non-Jewish. There was absolutely no compromise with the Pharisees and those Jews who followed the

demands of the Pharisees. And the great hope of all these Jews, both then and now, is the restoration of the Jewish nation as the great nation of the world, living in constant and close communion with Jehovah, living in their own land, free from all heathen interference, enjoying all the blessings of a merciful God. To bring this ideal Jewish nation into existence, the Jewish nation looks for their Deliverer, the Messiah.

Perhaps no other single feature of the Jewish life has done so much to keep the Jews united, though not as an outwardly visible nation, yet surely as a nation united in purpose, than the hope for the Messiah. From the time of the promise made by Jehovah in the Garden of Eden, Jewry has longed for the Deliverer. From the earliest times, this deliverer has been looked upon as one who should right the physical evils done to the Jewish nation, individually and collectively.

That this idea of a Deliverer from temporal evil was foremost in the minds of the Jewish nation is made evident from passages reaching far back into Jewish history. Whenever any social evil was committed against the true worshippers of Jehovah, it was Jehovah's rights that were being wronged; when a Jew was deprived of his property, it was Jehovah who was also robbed of his ownership; when the worshippers of Jehovah were hindered in the performance of their religious rites, it was Jehovah who was wronged. In this way the material interests of Jewish life were inseparably interwoven with the interests of the kingdom of Jehovah. Therefore,

we hear the many words of the prophets and psalmists yearning for a reign of justice and freedom. The only leader of such a reign must necessarily be a king, for to the Jewish mind the king was all in all. He would be a king who would reign in righteousness, and in righteousness he would relieve the oppressed and helpless. We might quote here passages from

#### VI. The Messiah, the Center of the Jewish Ideal

Perhaps no other single feature of the Jewish life has done so much to keep the Jews united, though not as an outwardly visible nation, yet surely as a nation united in purpose, than the hope for the Messiah. From the time of the promise made by Jehovah in the Garden of Eden, Jewry has longed for the Deliverer. From the earliest times, this Deliverer has been looked upon as one who should right the physical evils done to the Jewish nation, individually and collectively.

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we hear the many words of the prophets and psalmists yearning for a reign of justice and freedom. The only leader of such a reign must necessarily be a king, for to the Jewish mind the king was all in all. He would be a king who would reign in righteousness, and in righteousness he would relieve the oppressed and helpless. We might quote here passages from Psalm 72: 2, 12-14 to show what the general concept of the Deliverer was like:

He shall judge the poor of the people,  
 He shall save the children of the needy,  
 And shall break in pieces the oppressor . . .  
 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth;  
 The poor also, and him that hath no helper.  
 He shall spare the poor and needy,  
 And shall save the souls of the needy.  
 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence:  
 And precious shall their blood be in his sight.

Thus the Messianic hope was the hope for one who should right all social and civil wrongs, and bring Israel to its own again. As McCurdy says it: "Under him Judah and Israel should dwell safely, each one under his own vine and his own fig-tree, none making them afraid" (I Kings, 4, 25, Mic.4, 4) enjoying the labor of his hands amid peace, order, good will and plenty."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the characteristic elements of the King's reign are mentioned in the writings of the prophets. Daniel 7,13-14 speaks of a "son of man, one of human form, who shall receive royal powers and authority from the Ancient of days". The king was to be of Davidic origin. Many passages in Isaiah, e.g. Is. 9,7, refer to this Davidic origin. In Jer. 23, 5ff. the prophet

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1. McCurdy, op. cit. Book VII, chap. VI, p. 221

speaks of the Branch of David who shall reign in justice. This King shall be endowed with special powers, special names, special deeds. Isaiah 32 tells us of this Kingly reign that the very character of the people under him shall be changed: "The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly." In other passages, the kingdom of the Deliverer shall be spread till it is universal and will be of endless duration (Jer. 33,17)

A new designation for this Deliverer is found in Ezekiel. The prophet speaks of a time when all the exiles shall be gathered together under one Shepherd. (Ezek. 34,22f.) Isaiah also speaks of this gathering together in 11, 10ff. This Shepherd is again of the line of David.

It must be mentioned that a number of passages which speak of this Deliverer seem to have a particular person in mind. Isaiah 45, 1 links the Messiah to Cyrus; the book of Haggai closes with Jehovah's words which make Zerubbabel a "signet", one who should be set up as ruler over the nation after the heathen nations are overthrown; Zechariah 6, 10-12 speaks of the Branch and applies the name to Joshua. Whether the Jewish people were able to interpret these Messianic passages at this time as referring to someone in particular, living at that time, or to someone who would come later is difficult to conclude. One definite conclusion we may make is that everything said of this Messiah seems to point to an

earthly, temporal King, who shall be sent by Jehovah and reign as Jehovah wills it.

The Messiah in the Apocryphal writings is treated in a slightly different light. There is no specific mention made of a Messiah at all. In many places, such as Enoch 25, 2 or II Esdras, an ideal kingdom is spoken of, but always with Jehovah Himself as head of the Kingdom.

There are a number of variations as to the Messiah mentioned in Jewish Apocalyptic writings. Enoch 52, 4 pictures him as King; Judah 24,6 speaks of Him as the Judge; Enoch 48,7 speaks of Him as the Savior of those who "have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness".

Some writers feel that the Jews, seeing that the prophecies concerning the Messiah did not come true by the time of the Maccabees, changed their ideas of the Messiah from a Deliverer in this world to the Ruler over the Kingdom of Jehovah on the other side of death. This may have been true of some Jews, but it certainly was not true of the more advanced Jews. From a number of instances in the Gospels, we get the very definite impression that the Jews, especially the Pharisees, but even also the disciples, still expected the Messiah to come and establish a kingdom on this earth, whose reign would be endless, and whose borders would be limitless. From just general observation, it seems that such is the hope of most orthodox Jews today, although it is true that there are some who do conceive of the Messianic Kingdom

to be after death.

#### Conclusion

The important consideration for the Christian Church here is that the Jews did not and have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Messiah. No matter how uncertain they may have been up till Jesus' time, there was and is no longer any excuse for not permitting the Holy Spirit entrance into their hearts, that they may see their one and only Savior, Jesus Christ, and thereby come to the "knowledge of the truth", that, even as He Himself said, Messiah's kingdom is not of this world, but that it is in the hearts of all those who believe and accept Him as their Savior. To the achievement of this tremendous but blessed task the Christian Church must rededicate itself.

part of the Jewish nation. He was always aware of the fact that true worship of Jehovah meant absolute and strict obedience to the Law of Jehovah and to the laws which had been laid down by the ancient fathers. As a result of such obedience, he felt that Jehovah would reward him with both temporal and spiritual blessings. The Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem was an important element in his worship-life, although he knew that the Synagogue was his real source of learning, admonition, and comfort. All important was the fact that he was one of a great nation which was bound together by the hope of a future Jewish nation which would again assert itself as the true people of Jehovah, powerful and invincible among other nations. To establish this great nation, there would surely come a

### Conclusion

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from such a study. However, we can definitely conclude that the Jew at the time of the Savior was an outstanding individual, characterized by very definite traits and characteristics. The real value of such a study is that we can now readily understand what made the Jew at the time of the Savior act as he did, think as he did, and teach as he did. He was filled with an eagerness to serve Jehovah, knowing that Jehovah was the only true God. He knew that he himself had direct access to Jehovah, although he felt that Jehovah, to a great extent, dealt with him as one part of the Jewish nation. He was always aware of the fact that true worship of Jehovah meant absolute and strict obedience to the Law of Jehovah and to the laws which had been laid down by the ancient fathers. As a result of such obedience, he felt that Jehovah would reward him with both temporal and spiritual blessings. The Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem was an important element in his worship-life, although he knew that the Synagogue was his real source of learning, admonition, and comfort. All important was the fact that he was one of a great nation which was bound together by the hope of a future Jewish nation which would again assert itself as the true people of Jehovah, powerful and invincible among other nations. To establish this great nation, there would surely come a

great king of the ancestry of David, who would lead His people to a position comparable to the kingdom of David himself only far more powerful, far more God-pleasing, and far more blessed. With such a hope, every Jew was bound with an almost unbreakable tie to his fellow Jew.

With such a character, we can readily see why the thought of Jesus Christ as the long looked-for Messiah was against everything that the Jew had ever been taught or had ever believed. How could this man who was very evidently not a king and who said Himself that he had not come to be a king be the Messiah? The answer to that question has been for the Jewish nation a definite "impossible"!

We are not offering these considerations as an excuse for the Jew, but only as a reason for his being as he was and is. On the basis of these considerations, the Christian Church must realize the position of the Jew and deal with him accordingly, knowing that the problem of bringing the Jew to the knowledge of His Savior entails an understanding of the Jewish character which has been developed for many centuries. May God bless us in our work among the Jews.

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