

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Master of Sacred Theology Thesis

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-1-1983

### Deus Absens-An Old Testament Judgment Motif

David Adams

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, adamsd@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/stm>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Adams, David, "Deus Absens-An Old Testament Judgment Motif" (1983). *Master of Sacred Theology Thesis*. 502.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/stm/502>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Sacred Theology Thesis by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

**DEUS ABSENS: AN OLD TESTAMENT**

**JUDGMENT MOTIF**

---

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology**

---

by

**David L. Adams**

**May 1983**

Approved by

*Horace D. Hummel*

**Advisor**

*Quentin F. Wesselschmidt*

**Reader**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	1
<b>II. THE ABSENT GOD IN NEAR EASTERN MYTHOLOGY . . . . .</b>	4
Myths of Absence . . . . .	4
Hittite Mythology and the Role of Telepinus . . . . .	5
The Myth of Telepinus . . . . .	8
Absence Myths and the Old Testament . . . . .	13
<b>III. THE LAW . . . . .</b>	15
Genesis 3 . . . . .	15
Genesis 4:14-16 . . . . .	16
Exodus 33:3 . . . . .	18
Leviticus 26:31 . . . . .	23
Numbers 12:9-10 . . . . .	24
Numbers 14:39-45 . . . . .	26
Deuteronomy 1:41-46 . . . . .	27
Deuteronomy 23:14 . . . . .	28
Deuteronomy 31:16-18 . . . . .	30
Deuteronomy 32:19-20 . . . . .	32
<b>IV. THE PROPHETS: THE FORMER PROPHETS . . . . .</b>	33
Joshua 7:12 . . . . .	33
Judges 16:20 . . . . .	34
I Samuel 4 . . . . .	36
I Samuel 8:18 . . . . .	43
I Samuel 16:14 . . . . .	44
I Kings 9:7 et al . . . . .	47
<b>V. THE PROPHETS: THE LATTER PROPHETS . . . . .</b>	52
Isaiah 1:15 . . . . .	52
Isaiah 8:17 . . . . .	53
Isaiah 57:14-21 . . . . .	55
Isaiah 58:3 . . . . .	56
Isaiah 59:1-2 . . . . .	58
Isaiah 63:10 . . . . .	59
Jeremiah 7:15-16 . . . . .	61
Jeremiah 11:11 and 14 . . . . .	62

Jeremiah 14:11-12 . . . . .	63
Jeremiah 15:1 . . . . .	64
Jeremiah 18:17 . . . . .	65
Jeremiah 23:39 . . . . .	66
Jeremiah 32:31 . . . . .	68
Jeremiah 33:5 . . . . .	69
Jeremiah 52:3 . . . . .	69
Ezekiel 7:22 . . . . .	70
Ezekiel 8:18 . . . . .	71
Ezekiel 10-11 . . . . .	72
Ezekiel 20:3, 31 . . . . .	74
Ezekiel 39:23-24 . . . . .	75
Hosea 5:6 . . . . .	76
Hosea 5:14-6:6 . . . . .	78
Hosea 9:12 . . . . .	81
Amos 5:22 . . . . .	82
Micah 3:4-7 . . . . .	83
VI. THE WRITINGS . . . . .	85
II Chronicles 30:9 . . . . .	85
Psalms 27:9 . . . . .	86
Psalms 51:11 . . . . .	87
Psalms 66:18 . . . . .	88
Psalms 78:59-60 . . . . .	88
Psalms 89:46 (Masaretic Text 89:47) . . . . .	89
Proverbs 15:29 . . . . .	90
VII. THE VOCABULARY OF DIVINE ABSENCE . . . . .	92
Separation from Yahweh . . . . .	92
The Refusal of Future Accompaniment . . . . .	93
The Departure of Yahweh . . . . .	93
Yahweh Sends Others Away . . . . .	94
Loss of the Presence of Yahweh . . . . .	94
Yahweh Removed His Presence . . . . .	94
Dismissal from Yahweh's Presence . . . . .	95
Cultic Absence . . . . .	96
VIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	97
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	100

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When G. Henton Davies observed that modern Biblical studies had failed to investigate the concepts surrounding the motif of Divine Presence in the Old Testament, he was most certainly correct.<sup>1</sup> Since that time, twenty years ago, little progress has been made. There remains relatively little work on the specific Biblical usage of this controlling motif in Old Testament thought. Even less discussed has been the complex of thought surrounding the motif of the Absent God. One of the few works that even seems aware that such a motif exists is another brief article by Davies where it is mentioned but does not play a major part.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this study is to show that not only was the Deus Absens, the Absent God, an important part of Old Testament thought, but also that this motif was used by the various authors of the Old Testament as one means to express the judgment of God. This is not to say that

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Henton Davies, "Presence of God," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 5 vols., ed. G. A. Butterick et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:874.

<sup>2</sup>G. Henton Davies, "The Presence of God in Israel," in Studies in History and Religion, ed. E. A. Payne (London: Lutterworth Press, 1942), pp. 11-29. Another recent work that mentions this motif is W. Brueggemann, "Presence of God, Cultic," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, Keith Crim, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 680-83. The strength of the Brueggemann article is that he recognizes the theme of cultic absence with which we shall deal in this study.

every text in which God's absence is referred to must be understood as a judgment text. In some cases God's Absence is to be attributed to His transcendent nature rather than to His judgment. This is particularly true of the many passages in the Psalms in which the Psalmist wonders where God is and why He does not act for His servant. In other texts, Isaiah 45:15 for example, God's hiddenness refers to His mysterious way of acting rather than to his absence in judgment. In turn, both of these may have their roots in what Gerhard von Rad viewed as the distinction between the theology of manifestation and the theology of abiding presence in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> When all of these texts are omitted there still remain a significant number of texts in which God's absence is directly connected with His anger. The Present God becomes the Absent God in judgment. It is with these texts and with this motif that this study is concerned.

The study is complicated by the fact that this theology of the Absent God is not expressed in any one Hebrew term. Rather, a wide variety of phrases exist to express the departure of the Presence of Yahweh and the blessings associated with it. As one might expect, the common terms for expressing the Presence of God appear in these contexts. Thus we find the "glory" (כְּבוֹד) of Yahweh departing or the people being rejected from before His "face" (פָּנֵי). Where these common terms occur this study will not attempt to retrace oft-covered ground by demonstrating again the role of such terms as the Hebrew way of expressing in concrete what modern western thought expresses in the abstract.

---

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 2 vols. trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 1:237.

Rather, the reader is referred to existing word studies which may be found in the standard reference sources or to specific articles or studies mentioned in the footnotes and bibliography. In this way we hope to concentrate on demonstrating the relationships among the large number of texts in which Yahweh becomes, or threatens to become, the Absent God in order to judge or punish His wayward people and motivate them to return once again to a proper relationship with Him. We will, however, comment on the various phrases used to express this theology as we encounter them and discuss the variety of these expressions in a later part of our study.

This study, then, intends to consider the large body of texts in which Yahweh's displeasure with His people is expressed by His departure or His refusal to allow them access to His Presence. These texts occur in a variety of types of literature dating from different periods of Hebrew thought, though the greatest majority date from the late pre-exilic period. We will argue that these texts reflect a common understanding in Hebrew theology in which the Absence of Yahweh was one way in which He exercised judgment upon His people. As a prelude to these texts it is important that we note some characteristics of Absence Myths in general and of the Hittite myth of Telepinus in particular.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ABSENT GOD IN NEAR EASTERN MYTHOLOGY

We would certainly not intend to suggest that one can move without hesitation between the religions of the Ancient Near East and the theology of the Old Testament. There are fundamental and far-reaching differences in thought. However, where similarities exist that might enlighten our understanding or aid our interpretation we are required to be aware of them and consider their evidence and how they might be of assistance. Israel was not the only people to be concerned with the question of God's presence and absence. Many of the surrounding peoples pondered the same problems and, in some cases, arrived at similar answers. Most of the religions of the Ancient Near East felt that the absence of a god was related to hardship for his people, though only rarely was this thought to be an act of judgment on the part of the god.

#### Myths of Absence

Theodore H. Gaster has demonstrated in detail the connection between myth and seasonal rituals in the Ancient Near East.<sup>1</sup> He is certainly correct in pointing out that many of the myths in the ancient world exist to express a certain explanation of the functioning of the natural world, particularly the cycle of the seasons.<sup>2</sup> One of the types

---

<sup>1</sup>Theodore H. Gaster, Thespis (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-106



of myth that is often connected, explicitly or implicitly, with the seasonal pattern is the myth of absence. These absence myths share, as a common characteristic, the view that the barrenness of the winter season is due to the absence of the god (or goddess) of fertility, vegetation, or other factor contributing to the fruitfulness of the earth.<sup>3</sup> The best known of these absence myths are the Babylonian Tammuz myth, the Syrian Adonis myth, the Canaanite myths of Baal and Aqhat, the Greek Persephone myth, and the Hittite myth of Telepinus. Of these we are most interested in the Hittite myth of Telepinus because only in the Telepinus myth is the absence of the God viewed as an act of divine judgment. In the other absence myths the cause of the absence of the god or goddess is death or abduction. Yet in every case the absence of the deity results in harsh, barren conditions and suffering among the inhabitants of the earth. As a body they demonstrate the widely-held view of the ancient world that the absence of the gods is one of the chief causes of life's hardships and that one of the purposes of the cult was to help insure that continuing presence of the gods, or conversely, to restore the divine presence when it had disappeared.

#### Hittite Mythology and the Role of Telepinus

There has not been a great deal of significant literature written in the field of Hittite mythology. No doubt a large part of this problem has been the relative lack of literary texts that explain the role of the deities. When combined with the vast number of names associated with the

---

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Hittite "Yuzgat Tablet" tells of the devastation wrought by Hahhimas (Frost) in the absence of the Sun god.

Hittite pantheon the interpreter finds that it is impossible to reconstruct a coherent system of Hittite mythology, if one ever existed to begin with. O. R. Gurney summarizes the nature of the problem:

Every writer on Hittite religion has remarked that the Hittite texts contain an enormous number of divine names, many of which are still no more than names to us. . . . This pantheon developed from simple beginnings into a highly complex system through an increasing tendency to gather in the local cults.<sup>4</sup>

This does not mean that we do not know which gods were which, but that we have little evidence as to how these many gods, the "thousand gods of the Hatti," were viewed in common thought and how they were thought to be related to one another. The previously quoted study by Gurney gives one of the best analyses of what is known of the development of the Hittite pantheon, based on lists drawn from treaties.<sup>5</sup> Bratton agrees, emphasizing that the tendency toward syncretism and the assimilation of Hurrian and Babylonian deities has produced, "much overlapping of functions and interchanging of names."<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, he has suggested a basic outline of the Hittite pantheon.<sup>7</sup> We are particularly interested here in the role of Telepinus.<sup>8</sup> Telepinus is alternately referred to as the god of fertility and the god of vegetation. Gurney notes that, from

---

<sup>4</sup>O. R. Gurney, Some Aspects of Hittite Religion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>F. G. Bratton, Myths and Legends of the Ancient Near East (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970), pp. 146-47.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 138

<sup>8</sup>Also frequently spelled Telepinu or Telipinu.

a treaty of Suppiluliuma I, Telepinus follows the heaven and sky gods and the weather gods in importance, preceding the moon-goddess, the protectors of oaths, and the god of war.<sup>9</sup> These are not strictly local deities but were "universal" in character. The treaties also show that the cult-centers of Telepinus were Tawiniya, Turnitta, and Hanhana. He is also sometimes called a diety of Kastama, a site closely linked with the holy city of Nerik.<sup>10</sup> The name of Telepinus appears in several ritual texts, perhaps indicating that he occupied a significant place in the thought of the common people, a common characteristic of fertility deities in general.

In addition to appearing in treaties and ritual texts, Telepinus plays a minor role in the Yuzgat Tablet where he is described by the supreme god:

That son of mine is a doughty wight! He can hoe, he can plow, he can irrigate, he can sow! What is more, he is as hardy as a rock!<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately in Yuzgat Tablet Telepinus is no more successful than the other gods who try to overcome the winter frost. However once the supreme god is victorious in his battle with the frost, the sun and Telepinus are joint recipients of great honors in the ritual.

All of this indicates that Telepinus was a figure of some importance in the Hittite pantheon. A popular figure, Telepinus was responsible for the fertility of the earth and its ability to produce food. It is only natural that Telepinus' anger be a source of concern to the

---

<sup>9</sup>Gurney, pp. 4-5

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 6

<sup>11</sup>Gaster, p. 289.

people and that the loss of the blessings of his presence be considered a catastrophe. The extent of these concerns is clear in the Telepinus Myth.

### The Myth of Telepinus

The exact origin and purpose of the Telepinus myth are unknown. The text itself seems to imply use in a public ritual, as seen in the references to widespread suffering at the departure of Telepinus, the various attempts by the gods and human ritual invoked to convince Telepinus to lay aside his wrath and return, and the mention of the king at the end. While agreeing to this evaluation of the early setting of the myth, Gaster points to the several variations on the text and suggests that these support the possibility that in later times the myth was used in times of individual crisis as well.

Preserved at least three versions and in a number of mutually complementary recensions, this myth came later to be used as a "narrative spell" for the aversion of more private and domestic disasters. In its original form, however, it must have clearly been designed for a more public and general occasion, for the result of the magical procedure is said to be the return of prosperity and increase to the king and queen, implying a state ritual.<sup>12</sup>

Among the other versions of this myth is at least one in which the main character is not Telepinus at all, but rather the sun-god. To what extent the protagonists were interchanged is uncertain, but that does not change the value of the Telepinus Myth to our study of the Absent God motif in the Old Testament. Here we have a clear mythological account

---

<sup>12</sup>Gaster, p. 295.

of a god whose anger causes him to depart, causing hardship and barrenness upon the earth.<sup>13</sup>

a. The God's Anger, His Disappearance and Its Consequences

(The upper third of the table, about 20 lines, is broken off. It probably told the reasons for the god's anger.)

(1) Telepinus [flew into a range and shouted:] "There must be no inter[ference!]" In his agitation] he tried to put [his right shoe] on his left foot and his left [shoe on his right foot]. . . .

(5) Mist seized the windows, smoke seized the house. In the fireplace the logs were stifled, at the altars the gods were stifled, in the fold the sheep were stifled, in the stable the cattle were stifled. The sheep neglected its lamb, the cow neglected its calf. Telepinus walked away and took grain, (fertile) breeze, . . . and satiation to the country, the meadow, the steppes. Telepinus went and lost himself in the steppe; fatigue overcame him. So grain (and) spelt thrive no longer. So cattle, sheep and man no longer (15) breed. And even those with young cannot bring them forth.

The vegetation dried up; the trees dried up and would bring forth no fresh shoots. The pastures dried up, the springs dried up. In the land famine arose so that man and gods perished from hunger. The great sun-god arranged for a feast and invited the thousand gods. They ate, (20) but they did not satisfy their hunger; they drank, but they did not quench their thirst.

b. The Search for the Vanished God

The Storm-god became anxious about Telepinus, his son: "Telepinus, my son (he said) is not here. He has flown into a rage and taken (with him) every good thing." The great gods and the lesser gods began to search for Telepinus. The Sun-god sent out the swift Eagle (saying): "Go! Search every high (25) mountain!"

"Search the deep valleys! Search the watery depth!" The Eagle went, but he could not find him. Back to the Sun-god he brought his message: "I could not find him, him, Telepinus, the noble god." The Storm-god said to Hannahannas: "What shall we do? (30) We shall

---

<sup>13</sup>The following text of the Myth of Telepinus is the translation given in James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 2nd ed. (Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 126-28. The footnotes in Pritchard are omitted. The entire text has been provided so that the reader can follow the events for himself.

die of hunger," Hannahannas said to the Storm-god: "Do something, O Storm-god! Go! Search for Telepinus Thyself!"

The Storm-god began to search for Telepinus. In his city he [knock]s at the gate, but he is not there and opens not. He broke open his bolt and his lock, [but he has no luck]. The Storm-god. So he gave up and sat down to rest. Hannahannas (35) sent [out the Bee]: "Go!. Search Thou for Telepinus!"

[The Storm-god s]aid [to Hannahannas]: "The great gods (and) the lesser gods have searched for him, but [did not find him]. Shall then this [Bee] go out [and find him]? Its wings are small, it is small itself. Shall they admit that it is greater than they?"

Hannahannas said to the Storm-god: "Enough! It will go (and) find him." Hannahannas sent out the little Bee: "Go! Search thou for Telepinus! When thou findest him, sting on his hands (and) his feet! Bring him to his feet! Take wax and wipe his eyes and his feet, purify him and bring him before me!"

The Bee went away and searched . . . the streaming rivers, and searched the murmuring springs. The honey within it gave out, [the wax within it] gave out. Then [it found] him in a meadow in the grove at Lihzina. It stung him on this hands and his feet. It brought him to his feet, it took wax and wiped his eyes (and) his feet, [it purified him] and [. . .].

[Telepinus . . .] declares: "For my part I had flown into a rage [and walked away. How dare] ye a[rouse me] from my sleep? How dare ye force me to talk when enraged?" He grew [still more infu]riated. [He stopped] the murmuring springs, he diverted the flowing rivers and made them flow over their banks. He [blocked off] the clay pits, he shattered [the windo]ws, he shattered the houses.

He had men perish, he has sheep and cattle perish. [It came to] pass that the gods [despaire]d (asking): "Wh[y has Te]lepinus become [so infur]iated? [Wh]at shall we do? [What] shall we do?"

[The great Sun-god (??) decl]ares: "[Fetch ye] man! Let him [t]ake the spring Hattara on mount Ammuna [as . . .]! Let him (man) make him move! With the eagle's wing let him make him move! Let man make him move! With the eagle's wing [let man make him move]!"

(A gap follows in which Kamrusepas, the goddess of magic and healing, is commissioned to pacify Telepinus and to bring him back.)

### c. The Ritual

#### ENTREATY

(The beginning is mutilated)

(11) "O Telepinus; [Here lies] sweet and soothing [cedar essence. Just as it is . . . ], [even so let] the stifled [be set right] again!

"Here [I have] upthrusting sap [with which to purify thee]. (10) Let it [invigorate] thy heart and thy soul, O Telepinus! Toward the king [turn] in favor!

"Here lies chaff. [Let his hear (and) soul] be segregated [like it]! Here lies an ear [of grain]. Let it attract his heart [(and) his soul]!

"(15) Here lies sesame. [Let his heart (and) his soul] be comforted by it. Here [lie] figs. Just as [figs] are sweet, even so let Te[lepinus]' heart (and) soul] become sweet!

"Just as the olive [holds] oil within it, [as the grape] (20) holds wine within it, so hold thou, Telepinus, in (thy) heart (and thy) soul good feelings [toward the king]!

"Here lies ointment. Let it anoint Telepin[us]' heart (and) soul]! Just as malt (and) malt-loaves are harmoniously fused, even so let thy soul be in harmony with the affairs of mankind! [just as spelt] (25) is clean, even so let Telepinus' soul become clean! J[ust as] honey is sweet, as cream is smooth, even so let Telepinis' soul become sweet and even so let him become smooth!

"See, O Telepinus! I have now sprinkled thy ways with fine oil. So walk thou, Telepinus, over these ways that are sprinkled with fine oil! (30) Let sahis wood and happuriasas wood be at hand! Let us set thee right, O Telepinus, into whatever state of mind is the right one!"

Telepinus came in his fury. Lightning flashed, it thundered while the dark earth was in turmoil. (35) Kamrusepas saw him. The eagle's wing made him move out there. It took off him (iii) the rage, it took off him the anger, it took off him [the ire], it took off him the fury.

#### KAMRUSEPAS' RITUAL OF PURIFICATION

Kamrusepas tells the gods: "Come ye, o gods! See! Hapantallis is shepherding the Sun-god's sheep. (5) Select ye twelve rams! I want to fix long days for Telepinus. I have taken death, one thousand eyes. I have strewn about the select sheep of Kamrusepas.

"Over Telepinus I have swung them this way and that. (10) From Telepinus' body I have taken the evil, I have taken the malice. I taken the rage, I have taken the anger, I have taken the ire, I have taken the fury.

"When Telepinus was angry, his heart (and) his soul were stifled (like) firebrands. (15) Just as they burned these brands, even so let Telepinus' rage, malice (and) fury burn themselves out! Just as [malt] is barren, (as) people do not bring it to the field to use it for seed, (as) people do not make it into bread (or) put it in the storehouse, even so let Telepinus' rage, [anger], (20) malice (and) fury become barren!

"When Telepinus was angry, [his heart (and) his soul] were a burning fire. Just as this fire [is quenched], even so let (his) rage, anger (and) fury [be quenched] too!

"O Telepinus, give up thy rage, [give up] thine anger, (25) give up thy fury! Just as (water in) a pipe flows not upward, even so let Telepinus' [rage, anger (and)] fury not [come] back!

"The gods [were gathered] in assembly under the ḫatalkešnaš tree. For the ḫatalkešnaš tree I have fixed long [years]. (30) All gods are now present, (including) the [Is]tustayas, the Good-women (and) the Mother-goddesses, the Grain-god; Miyatanzipas, Telepinus, Inaras, Hapantaliyas (and) the Patron of the field. For these gods I have fixed long years; I have purified him [O Telepinus]!

(35) "[. . .] I have taken the evil [from] Telepinus' body, I have taken away his [rage], [I have taken away] his an[ger], I have taken away his [ire], [I have taken away] his fury, I have taken away his malice, [I have taken away his] ev[il]."

(small gap)

#### MAN'S RITUAL

(The beginning is lost, but Telepinus is addressed:)

"(When) thou [departedst] from the ḫatalkešnaš tree on a summer day, the crop got smutted. (When) the ox departed [with thee], (iv) thou wastedst its shape. (When) the sheep departed with thee, thou wastedst its form. O Telepinus, stop rage, anger, malice (and) fury!

"(When) the Storm-god comes in his wrath, the Storm-god's priest (5) stop him. (When) a pot of food boils over, the (stirring) spoon stops it. Even so let the word of me, the mortal, stop Telepinus' rage, anger, and fury!

"Let Telepinus' rage, anger, malice, (and) fury depart! Let the house let them go, let the interior . . . let them go, (10) let the window let them go! In the . . . let the interior courtyard let them go, let the gate let them go, let the gateway let them go, let the road of the king let them go! Let it not go to the thriving field, garden (or) grove! Let it go the way of the Sun-god of the nether world!

"The doorkeeper has opened the seven doors, has unlocked the seven bolts. (15) Down in the Dark earth there stand bronze cauldrons,



their lids are of abaru-metal, the handles of iron. Whatever goes in there comes not out again; it perishes therein. Let them also receive Telepinus' rage, anger, malice (and) fury! Let them not come back!"

d. The God's Home-Coming

(20) Telepinus came home to his house and cared (again) for his land. The mist let go of the windows, the smoke let go of the house. The altars were set right for the gods, the hearth let go of the log. He let the sheep go for the fold, he let the cattle go to the pen. The mother tended her child, the ewe tended her lamb, (25) the cow tended her calf. Also Telepinus tended the king and the queen and provided them with enduring life and vigor.

Telepinus cared for the king. A pole was erected before Telepinus and from this pole the fleece of a sheep, was suspended. It signifies fat of the sheep, it signifies grain of corn . . . (and) (30) wine, it signifies cattle (and) sheep, it signifies long years of progeny.

It signifies the lamb's favorable message. It signifies . . . It signifies fruitful breeze. It signifies . . . satiation . . . (end of the text lost)

Absence Myths and the Old Testament

We have pointed out the Hittite myth of Telepinus because it alone of the Ancient Near Eastern absence myths views the absence of a god as an act of judgment. We shall argue that the Old Testament contains a similar theme. But what shall we say of their relationship? Is the Old Testament merely borrowing an idea from Hittite mythology? That can hardly be the case. While the Hittites are known to the people of Israel, there is never any hint of religious contact. Nor could we imagine that the prophets, who condemned every type of pagan influence, would so readily adopt and use a theme from Hittite mythology.

The answer lies elsewhere. At the center of Israel's religious thought is the concept of her being chosen by Yahweh. This, in turn, makes the very existence of Israel dependent on Yahweh's gracious act alone. Only as long as he chooses to dwell with her is she His people. How, then, could His displeasure with her be expressed in greater terms

than by the withdrawal of the one thing which gives her life: Himself. In the course of this study we shall see a great variety in the way this theme is expressed. The very variety of expression and application of this theme argues that the Old Testament motif of Yahweh's judgment by His absence is a uniquely Israelite development. While there may be absence myths in other religions around Israel, these are all concerned with the cycle of the seasons, an aspect that never emerges in relation to this theme in the Old Testament.<sup>14</sup> This total absence of any seasonal aspect precludes the possibility of any direct connection between the theme in the Old Testament and in the surrounding nations. While there may ultimately be some connection and some relationship between the two, it is so far removed in time and thought from the Biblical application of the theme as to offer the interpreter very little, if any, support. Only the most general background material surfaces in a study of the Near Eastern Myths of Absence.

---

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Gordon May in "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 56 (December 1937):309-21, argues that the Ezekiel account of the departure of the  $\text{Y}^{\text{h}}\text{w}^{\text{h}}$  from the Temple is related to the seasonal phenomenon of the summer solstice. However he takes no account of other passages in which Yahweh judges by His absence and therefore fails to realize that this motif is a large part of the prophetic language for presenting Yahweh's judgment. By failing to place this one text in its proper context he misses the point of the text entirely.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAW

We look first to the core of Old Testament thought, the Law.<sup>1</sup> If Israel viewed Yahweh's absence as an act of judgment we would expect to find that theme present here, though perhaps not in so large a measure as in the prophets.

#### Genesis 3

At the very outset of the record of God's dealing with mankind we meet the sad reality of the Fall. The record of Genesis 3 does not specifically mention the separation from God's presence as one of the consequences of mankind's rebellion against God. Yet we do see evidence that this separation is one of the results of the sin of Adam and Eve. The account does not state the nature of the fellowship this first human couple enjoyed with their Creator in the Garden, nor is it within the bounds of this study to speculate on this matter. Suffice it to say that they enjoyed the Presence as no humans since then have done. Yet after disobeying the divine command they were at once aware of the new gulf between themselves and the Presence they had previously known. And

---

<sup>1</sup>Here and throughout this study the references to and quotations of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament are taken from K. Elliger and W. Rudolf, eds., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977).

so we read that as they heard the sound of God walking in the Garden they "hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God among the trees of the Garden (Gen. 3:8): וַיִּתְחַבְּאוּ הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה . This not a judgment passage per se. Nonetheless, we would be remiss not to notice the connection between the sin committed and the consequential separation from the Presence.

Moreover, the judgment that does follow includes expulsion from the Garden and, inherent in it, a certain separation from the Presence. Thus the Absence of God enters the experience of mankind. At this point we must pause to note that there is a certain "absence" inherent in the very nature of God's transcendence. But before the fall there was no sorrow, no pain, no sense of loss or abandonment associated with this absence. After the Fall the Absence of God became part of His judgment on this sinful world. The Absent God is now God in judgment.

.....  
Genesis 4:14, 16

Here we meet the first instance in the Old Testament of separation from the Presence as a judgment motif. After the murder of Abel by Cain, God pronounces a judgment upon Cain. This judgment involves banishment from a certain area. Cain interprets this as banishment from the Presence of Yahweh. וְהָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ הֵיוּ מְצֵלִים מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה .  
וַיִּמְפְּנֵיהָ אֱלֹהִים .

Interpreters differ on the precise meaning of this last phrase (וַיִּמְפְּנֵיהָ אֱלֹהִים). Von Rad associates this dismissal from God's presence with the withdrawal of God's protection. "Cain sees immediately that a life far from God is a life that God no longer protects."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Gerhard von Rad, Genesis (London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 107.

A. Dillman follows the same general thought, noting that in ancient times places where divinity was manifested were regarded as places of security against the avenger.<sup>3</sup> The opinion that Cain was concerned with his own safety rather than with being separated from the Presence for spiritual reasons is acceptable enough. Yet more important to this study is the realization that dismissal from the Presence here constitutes an act of judgment. As H. C. Leupold notes:

He [Cain] feels that in such favored portions of the earth God can be thought as being present in a more intimate sense. To be barred from this portion of earth is, therefore, to him synonymous with hidden from God. . . . For though the sinner has no personal desire for communion with God, he may yet recognize, as a result of training and earlier experience, that to be kept from approaching God is a grievous punishment.<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of how Cain thought of the matter, he was sure that separation from the Presence was a part of his punishment.

Most commentators take the Niphal form  $\text{אָצִיִּיִּי}$  as a simple passive. U. Cassuto argues that it should be understood as a conative imperfect, "I shall seek to hide," with the implication that Cain will not be able to hide from the Presence.<sup>5</sup> This is less likely especially since 4:16 notes that Cain goes out from the Presence. In either case, even Cain's desire to hide from the Presence (if Cassuto is correct) is a sign of separation from God which is the result of his sin.

---

<sup>3</sup>A. Dillman, Genesis, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1897), 1-13.

<sup>4</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 1:209.

<sup>5</sup>U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), 1:224.

This section is concluded in 4:16 by the simple note that Cain departs from the Presence: **וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֹהִים קַיִן מִלְּפָנָיו יְהוָה**. The judgment, once pronounced, is now carried out.

Exodus 33:3

A. H. McNeile refers to Exodus 33 as perhaps the most difficult passage of its length in the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup> We are tempted to agree but on different grounds. Leaving behind the problem of isolating sources, which vexes most critical commentators, we still find considerable interpretative difficulties awaiting us.<sup>7</sup> With Martin Noth we find that the theme that runs through this passage is "the presence of God in the midst of his people."<sup>8</sup> Despite the protestations of Chadwick<sup>9</sup> we agree with the majority of commentators that Yahweh threatens not to accompany his people to the promised land. Moreover we wish to call particular attention to the fact that this threat was God's direct judgmental response to the episode of the "Golden Calf" in Exodus 32.

---

<sup>6</sup> A. H. McNeile, The Book of Exodus (London: Methuen & Co., 1908), P. 210.

<sup>7</sup> While all critical scholars see this as a broad mixture of J & E material, there is considerable disagreement over the extent of the influence of D. Some feel that the D source was a major factor while others prefer to see the hand of a Deuteronomistic redactor (R<sup>d</sup>). For more specific details of each commentators position, please see the respective commentaries.

<sup>8</sup> M. Noth, Exodus (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 252.

<sup>9</sup> G. A. Chadwick, The Book of Exodus. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 434.

Part of the difficulty in interpreting this passage arises in the phrase **וְשַׁלְחָתִי לְפָנֶיךָ מַלְאָךְ** of Ex. 33:2, particularly the identification of the **מַלְאָךְ**.<sup>10</sup> The question is simple; the answer is complex. Does "an angel" here refer to the same being as "my angel" (**מַלְאָכִי**) in Ex. 32:34? And, in turn, are either (or both) of these the same as the angel of Ex. 23:20? On the surface the obvious answer is yes, they are all the same. Cassuto takes this position and identifies all three with Yahweh Himself. Commenting on Ex. 23:20, he writes:

In the Biblical conception, there is no precise distinction, as I have explained, between the Lord and His Angel, and this clearly indicated by the expression, for My name is in Him. The connotation of the words My name is, 'I in My glory,' and I and he are the same.<sup>11</sup>

However, this hardly represents the unanimous opinion of all interpreters. George Rawlinson represents another significant group of interpreters when he writes:

Note the change from "my angel" (ch. XXXII. 34) to "an angel; which, however, would still have been ambiguous, but for what follows in ver. 3."<sup>12</sup>

Following this view, one would conclude that the omission of the definite article on **מַלְאָךְ** indicates that this is another angel than the angel

<sup>10</sup>At this point we note the BHS footnote indicating that some Hebrew manuscripts as well as the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac, some Targum manuscripts, and the Vulgate support reading the definite article, yielding **הַמַּלְאָךְ**, and making the identification with the Angel of the Presence much clearer. However, significantly the LXX does not support this inclusion of the definite article. Moreover it is quite easy to explain its inclusion as an attempt to make the text clearer and the Angel more easily identifiable. With both MT and LXX support we can be confident that **מַלְאָךְ** represents the original reading.

<sup>11</sup>U. Cassuto, Commentary on Exodus (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967), p. 306.

<sup>12</sup>George Rawlinson, Exodus, 2 vols. (London: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906), 1:1973.

of Ex. 32:34. Further this is a refusal of God to allow the Presence to accompany this people after their sin. So Alan Cole writes:

I will send an angel before you: God's messenger, a promise repeated here from 32:34. However, unlike the 'messenger' of 23:20, 21, this promise is a virtual refusal of the direct presence of God (verse 3).<sup>13</sup>

Neither interpretation is without its difficulties. If the

אֱלֹהִים if 33:2 is the Angel of the Presence, then God certainly does seem to contradict Himself when in the very next verse He says:

כִּי לֹא אֶצְלָהּ בְּקִרְבָּהּ כִּי-עַם-קִשָּׁה-עִרְרָה  
אֲנִי וְ-אַכְלָהּ בְּעִרְרָהּ

How can God on one hand send the Angel of the Presence (if the Angel is

Yahweh) along with the people and then say that He will not go up with

them? The alternative is not much better. To take מַלְאָכִים of 33:2 as

"another angel," while certainly grammatically possible, seems strained in a context where the same word was used to refer to a specific angel.

Moreover, Hebrew does not always repeat the definite article when it is not necessary to define the subject, as could be the case here since it

is assumed the subject is the Angel already spoken of. Further, we would

have to assume that the purpose of the omission was to distinguish be-

tween the two angels. Even Rawlinson, however, observes the ambiguity

of the distinction as quoted above. Moreover, Hebrew has a perfectly

good word for "another" (אֲוֹרָה) and the author could have used it here

(מַלְאָכִים אֲוֹרָה) if it was his intention to distinguish between the two. We

tread on thin ice if we try to insist that the author's intentions can

be absolutely understood in what is an admittedly ambiguous text.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Cole, Exodus (London: Tyndale Press, 1973), p. 222.



How are we then to understand this passage? The most natural reading of the text would be to take the מַלְאָךְ as the same angel we have previously met, despite the omission of the definite article. This leaves us with a seeming contradiction between 33:2 and 33:3. Cassuto offers what may be the best solution.<sup>14</sup> He suggests that the point of 33:3 is that Yahweh will not allow His Presence to be within the camp of the people who have sinned. Hence the Tabernacle is not to be erected at this time. According to him, Yahweh is saying:

All that I have promised the Patriarchs I shall carry out, but on no account shall I cause My Presence to dwell in the midst of Israel's camp through the Tabernacle that they will build to My name, as I said I would, because the people are no longer worthy thereof. Although I gave you detailed directions with regard to the construction of the Tabernacle, and at the commencement of the instructions I said to you (XXV8): 'And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst', and at the end I said to you (XXXIX 46) that I brought the children of Israel forth out of the land of Egypt that 'I might dwell among them', yet now, seeing that they were unfaithful to Me, and I shall not dwell in their midst. I shall give them My protection and help from afar, but they shall not be privileged to see the symbol of My presence in the midst of their camp.<sup>15</sup>

This may be suggested by the choice of מִקְדָּשׁ rather than מִשְׁכָּן, but we cannot push the distinction too far.

This interpretation has other benefits as well. The immediate introduction of the Tent of Meeting, Moses' private tent, in Ex. 33:7-11 makes sense as the alternative to the Tabernacle when God would not allow the latter's construction. Further, the prayers of Moses in 33:12 may be seen as Moses asking God to allow the construction of the Tabernacle and so to dwell in the midst of the camp, tantamount to full forgiveness

<sup>14</sup>Cassuto, Exodus, p. 426

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

for their previous sin. God's affirmative and gracious response leads to the construction of the Tabernacle as described in the following chapters of Exodus.

If one prefers to interpret the  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$  of 33:2 as "another angel," the case for seeing the Absence of God as a judgment motif is even stronger. By that interpretation God would be refusing to accompany them from the mountain at all. In our interpretation we prefer to see God as refusing to allow His presence to dwell within the camp. While absenting Himself by not dwelling among them, God does not abandon them completely.

G. Henton Davies suggests that Sinai might have been the original "promised land" and that being sent away from there was another expulsion from "paradise."<sup>16</sup> While this may have some support in the Jewish tradition that sin and death would have departed from Israel with the arrival of the Ten Commandments if Israel had not sinned by the "Golden Calf," nonetheless the point of the text is not that they have to leave that place, but whether Yahweh will accompany them as they go on their way.

Brevard Childs summarizes the situation we find in this text quite well when he writes?

The General sense of the immediate context of these verses is clear enough. God plans to withdraw his presence as a sign of judgment. The difficulty arises when one attempts to understand how this role of the angel as a poor substitute relates to the other messenger who rather embodies the divine presence (Ex. 23:23).<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>G. Henton Davies, "The Presence of God in Israel" in E. A. Payne, ed., Studies in History & Religion (London: Lutterworth Press, 1942), pp. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup>Brevard S. Childs, Exodus (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 588.

God absented Himself from the people by refusing to "go up in their midst." This was most certainly in judgment for the rebellion and sin of building the "Golden Calf." As before, we see that the absence of God is a direct expression of His judgment upon sin.

.....  
Leviticus 26:31

Though perhaps not as direct as the statements in Gen. 4:5 and Ex. 33:3, Lev. 26:31 reflects the same theology: the Absent God is God in judgment. In particular we are interested in the last phrase of the

verse: וְלֹא אָרִיחַ בְּרִיחַ נִחְתָּקֶם. We shall see, as we progress, that the refusal by God to allow "cultic" access to Himself by His wayward people is one of the chief ways in which He expresses His absence. As here, this may mean the refusal to accept offerings or, as in Isa. 1:15 for example, it may be expressed by a refusal to hear prayers. Rather than departing, God forbids others to come near Him. Among the blessings of obedience listed previously is the blessing of God's Presence. This is specifically stated in 26:11-12:

וְנִתְּתִי מִשְׁפָּנִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְלֹא-תִגְעַל נֶפֶשׁ אֶתְכֶם וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי  
בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְהִיָּתִיר לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי לְעַם

In contrast with the intimate fellowship with God that accompanies obedience, God refuses even to smell the offerings of the people if they disobey. There can be no question but that this is judgment on God's part. The entire section from 26:14-26:33 explicitly states the punishment of disobedience in contrast with the previously expressed blessings.

One might be tempted to see all of the passages in Leviticus which prohibit access to God by the "unclean" as a judgment in this same vein.

These might be either judgment on a specific person for a specific fault or judgment upon sin in general. However, as these passages are not an explicit expression of this theology, but rather an interpretation based on it, they have not been included in this study.

Numbers 12:9-10

Here we have quite an interesting passage. Like the account of the punishment of Cain (Gen. 4:14-16), the punishment is directed against an individual (in this case Miriam) rather than against the people as a whole. Moreover, here the departure of Yahweh is not pictured as the punishment in itself as much as it is the source of the consequences which constitute the punishment. In this regard this passage shows some similarity to the Hittite Myth of Telepinus where the departure of the god brings on dire consequences for the people being judged.

The account is familiar. Apparently Moses and Miriam and Aaron were in the Tent of Meeting when Yahweh appeared in a pillar of cloud ( קִרְבַּיִן מִצִּיּוֹן ) outside the tent and called them outside (where they would be in view of all the people). He then rebukes Miriam and Aaron for speaking out against Moses' marriage to the Cushite (taking the imperfect as implying that they were doing this regularly and not just on this one occasion). After declaring his support for Moses, Scripture says that Yahweh's anger burned against them and he departed.

וַיִּתֵּן אֵף יְהוָה נַגְדָּם

The cloud withdrew from the tent (וַיִּסְתַּחֲרֶה עַל הַתְּנָיִם) and immediately (וַיִּפְּצֵה) Mariam was afflicted with a skin disease.<sup>18</sup>

One could argue that here the departure of Yahweh simply is meant to imply that the discussion was finished and that it is not at all connected with judgment, as for example in Gen. 17:22 and 18:33. This is one possible interpretation, and a common one. However, the close connection between the anger and the departure of Yahweh in verse 9 and the emphasis on the suddenness of Mariam's outbreak of disease after the departure of the cloud in verse 10 indicate that something stronger is intended. Here Yahweh's departure is more than just, "as a judge departs from his judgment-seat after trying and convicting evil-doers."<sup>19</sup> Here Yahweh's departure is a sign of His wrath. He removes himself in judgment and Mariam's skin disease is a further expression of His wrath for her role in the matter.

Admittedly, the case for interpreting this text as an example of our motif is less clear than some of the previous ones and some of the ones yet to come. Nevertheless the strong sense of the immediacy connecting the anger, here also the departure of God, is an act of judgment.

---

<sup>18</sup>We do not propose to shed any ink over the exact nature of Marian's affliction. Most scholars recognize that the word וַיִּפְּצֵה does not mean exactly the same thing as we think of when we hear the term "leprosy." A more general term for skin disease is to be preferred. For more detail consult the more recent commentaries or see R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, (London: The Tyndale Press, 1969), pp. 607-10.

<sup>19</sup>R. Winterbotham, Numbers (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906), 132.

Numbers 14:39-45

Num. 14:39-45 is preceded by the account of the report of the spies and the consequent reaction of the people. Moses pronounces God's judgment upon the people for their unbelief. In 14:40 the people, now realizing that they had sinned, plan to do what God had previously told them despite the changes brought about by their disbelief. Moses warns (verse 41) that their attempt will fail. In 14:42 he clearly spells out the reason their plans will fail:

כִּי אֵין יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּכֶם

Yahweh, who previously fought the battles of the people for them (see Ex. 14:14), will now not even accompany them into battle. Moses repeats the threat, this time with a clear explanation of the reason for the absence of Yahweh.

כִּי-עַל-פִּנּוֹן שִׁבְתֶּם מֵאַחֲרַי יְהוָה  
וְלֹא יְהוָה יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם

It is their own fault that Yahweh will not accompany them. God's absence is His just judgment for their departing from Him.

The people do not heed the word. Even though both Moses and the Ark (the person and thing which might have insured God's Presence among them) remain in the camp, the people attempt to fight the battle anyway and the promised defeat becomes a reality.

For the first time we meet the Absence of God in a military context. Previously God's presence had made victory certain. Here God's Absence spells defeat. Both the broader context and Moses' words make it clear that the Absence is a judgment upon the sin of the people. Also

worth noting is that here the representative of the Presence is not the cloud or some other "theophanic" element, but simply Moses himself and the Ark of the Covenant.

Deuteronomy 1:41-46

Here we have a passage very closely related to the account of Num. 14:39-45 which we have just considered. Indeed it is part of Moses' recounting of the events which have led Israel to this juncture in her history. As with the account in Numbers, Moses clearly gives the reason for their military defeat. They had disobeyed God's instruction and as a result of their actions God has refused them His accompanying Presence:

לֹא תַעֲלוּ וְלֹא-תִלָּחֲמוּ כִּי אֵינְנִי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם  
וְלֹא תִנְגְּפוּ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

Despite the warning the people, as we have seen, attempted the battle and were defeated. In this telling of the events, Moses adds a footnote to explain further God's judgment upon the people. After the defeat Moses

ways: וְתִשְׁבוּ וְתִבְּכוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא שָׁמַע  
יְהוָה בְּקִלְקֶם וְלֹא הֶאֱזִין אֲלֵיכֶם

Now the previously implicit judgment motif becomes explicit. In Deut.

1:43 Moses spoke God's command to the people but they refused to hear

(לֹא שָׁמְעֶתֶם). Now, in return, God's judgment follows in kind. Yahweh

refuses to hear (לֹא שָׁמַע) or to "give ear" (וְלֹא הֶאֱזִין). Pre-

viously in Lev. 26:31 we have seen that God's refusal to smell the people's offerings was an act of judgment. Here we have a similar thought. As

in Isa. 1:15, God refuses to hear their prayers. As an act of judgment

the God whose Presence ensures that prayers are heard now, in absence,

turns a "deaf ear."

In this account we have two ways of expressing Divine Absence used. In verse 42 we have the simple phrase **כִּי אֵינֶנִּי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם**, similar to phrases used in Ex. 33:3 and Num. 14:39-45. In addition there is the refusal of God to hear prayers in the phrases **וְלֹא שָׁמַע** and **וְלֹא הִשְׁמָעוּ**. This is the first time we have encountered this mixture of metaphors for referring to Divine Absence. Previously, in Gen. 4:14-16, we had another mixture of phrases with Cain "being hidden" (**אֶסְתֵּר**) and then "going out" (**יָצָא**) from the Presence of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 23:14 (Masoretic Text, 23:15)

In our comments on Lev. 26:31 we indicated that there might be some possibility that the legal prescriptions forbidding "unclean" things or people from entering the Presence of Yahweh could be connected in a general way with the theology of absence. Yet Leviticus offers very little if any direct evidence for that interpretation. In Deut. 23:9-14 there is at least a hint that this interpretation may be correct. In a broader context of legal regulations we meet in verses 1-8 of Deuteronomy 23 a list of those not allowed into the assembly. Verse 9 begins the "rule of the camp," giving regulations for the cleanliness of the camp on military expeditions. We need not pause to consider the specifics of the instructions since it is the conclusion to the regulations that most concerns us.

כִּי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּקִרְבְּךָ לְחַצְלֶיךָ וְלַתְּבוּ  
 אֲיֹבֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהָיָה מִחֲנִיֶּךָ קִדּוּשׁ וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה בָּךְ  
 עֲרֹוֹת דָּבָר וְשָׁב מֵאִחְרֵיֶיךָ

In verse 14 (Masoretic Text 23:15) the reason for the regulations is given.

The camp must be "holy" (**קִדּוּשׁ**) because Yahweh is stolling about



( מִתְּהַלְּלִים ) in it. If he sees anything offensive ( עֲרוֹת דְּבָר ),<sup>20</sup>  
He will no longer accompany them and fight for them.

The implied threat of the withdrawal of God's presence from the camp, and hence His protection, is certainly to be viewed as a threat of judgment in response to the people's violation of Yahweh's sense of holiness. If the possibility of God's Absence were not a real danger in the minds of the people, this warning would have been both unnecessary and useless. The lack of any mention of God's anger does not preclude this text being viewed as judgment. Yahweh is holy and cannot tolerate unholiness among His people. His absence would have been in response to their offending His holiness and must be viewed as judgment even if God's wrath or anger is not specifically mentioned.

Some commentators see the reference to God's presence here as an allusion to the Ark.<sup>21</sup> While the Ark is certainly pictured as the seat of the Presence Among the people, it is doubtful that they thought of the Ark as strolling about the camp. Here it is clear that while the Presence is associated with the Ark, it is not viewed as limited to it.

---

<sup>20</sup>The phrase עֲרוֹת דְּבָר, literally "nakedness of a thing" here does not refer to personal immorality as is clear from the context, but to something more generally opposite of "holy" ( קֹדֶשׁ ). The phrase "something indecent" is frequently suggested as a possible translation but this too has overtones of personal morality to the modern ear. The point of the text is that nothing offensive to Yahweh's holiness should be found in His people's camp and so the more neutral translation "something/anything offensive" is preferred here.

<sup>21</sup>Peter C. Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 300. And also J. A. Thompson, Deuteronomy (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), p. 241.

We certainly should not push this text into supporting a claim that all the passages which prohibit imperfection or uncleanness from entering Yahweh's presence could be adduced for support of the view that God's absence is a judgment motif. Nor can we ignore the fact that uncleanness was prohibited access to the Presence. In Deut. 23:14 (15) we do have an explicit example of the view that Yahweh would tolerate nothing offensive to His holiness and would withdraw His Presence if any such thing were found among His people.

.....  
Deuteronomy 31:16-18

Here and in the following chapter (see Deut. 32:19-20 below) we have a clear statement of the theme that the Absence of God is an Old Testament judgment motif. God takes Moses aside at the end of his life and work to tell him that, despite his leadership, the people will one day go astray and forsake Yahweh and break his covenant (31:16). God then spells out His response.

וַחַרְהוּ אַפִּי בָּו כִּי־וַחֲזַבְתֶּם וַחֲזַבְתֶּם וַחֲזַבְתֶּם וַחֲזַבְתֶּם  
כִּי־מַהֵם וְהִדְהוּ לְאֹכַל וְיִמְצְאוּהוּ רְעוּת וְצָרוֹת וְאָמַר  
בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא הִלֵּא אֶל־פִּי־אֵן אֵלֹהֵי בְּקִרְבִּי מִצְאוּנִי  
הִרְצוּת קִשְׁיָה וְאֵנִכִּי הִסְתַּר אֶסְתַּר פְּנֵי בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא  
עַל־כֵּן־הִרְצָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה כִּי כָּתַב אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרָיִם

Several metaphors are used by Yahweh to describe His judgment: His anger will burn against them (וַחַרְהוּ אַפִּי בָו); He will forsake them (וַחֲזַבְתֶּם); and He will hide His face from them (וְהִסְתַּר אֶסְתַּר פְּנֵי בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא). The result of these actions will be that the people will suffer much hardship and trouble. Note how clearly the judgment of Divine Absence is spelled out

in this text. Yahweh's face (which is His Presence) will be hidden from His wayward people. This recalls the judgment upon Cain, who recognized that part of his punishment also consisted in being hidden (סתר) from God. The result of Yahweh's hiddenness is that much hardship will come upon the people (רעות צרות). Again, this recalls the view of the Hittite Telepinus Myth.

The people realize that their difficulties are connected to the Absence of God. So they say:

הֲלֹא עַל-כִּי-אֵין יְהוָה אֲלֵינוּ בְּקִרְבֵנוּ מִצְּאוּנוּ הַרְעוֹת הָאֵלֶּה

Yet God does not change His mind. He reaffirms that He will hide His face because of their sin. Some commentators mistakenly suggest that the statement of the people is not a recognition of the withdrawal of God's Presence, but that the people are blaming Yahweh for forsaking them rather than admitting their own fault.<sup>22</sup> Phillips writes:

Rather than admit that the disasters facing Israel are due to her own disobedience of the covenant law, she will instead blame God for deserting her.<sup>23</sup>

This misunderstanding of the text arises from the failure to recognize that God's absence is one motif of judgment expressed commonly in the Old Testament. The point is that God has in fact withdrawn His Presence from Israel, not by way of "deserting her," but as a judgment upon the sin of Israel. The statement of the people is not an accusation that God has

<sup>22</sup>For this view see Anthony Phillips, Deuteronomy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 208. And also G. Ernest Wright's view in G. A. Buttrick, Walter R. Bowie, Paul Scherer, John Know, Samuel Terrien and Nolan Harmon, ed.s, The Interpreters' Bible, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), 2:514-15.

<sup>23</sup>Phillips, Deuteronomy, p. 208.

deserted the, but the recognition that their troubles have arisen because God has withdrawn His Presence as a punishment upon their sin.

No other interpretation will satisfy God's own words in verse 17

(וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פְנֵי מוֹתָם) and verse 18 (וְאֵלֶיךָ הִסְתַּרְתִּי אֶת פְּנֵי) (פְּנֵי בָאֵם הָהוּא).

#### Deuteronomy 32:19-20

In the song that God tells Moses to give to the people (Deut. 31:19) the theme of judgment in Absence that we have seen in the previous chapter returns. After stating the sin of the people (32:15-18) the first judgment upon them is given in 32:19-20, especially verse 20, where we read:

וְיִאמַר אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֶתְיַרְהוּ פְנֵי מוֹתָם אֲרָאָה מָה אֲמַלְתֶּם

The connection between the sin of the people and the judgment of God contained in this verse is explicit in the next line:

כִּי דוֹר גְּהוֹפֵכֹת הָמָּה בָּנִים לֵאמֹר לֵאמֹר

There can be no question at all but that in this text, as well as in the previous one, God's absence is a direct expression of His judgment upon the sin of the people.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROPHETS: THE FORMER PROPHETS

While we have found a great many texts in the Pentateuch that reflect our theme, we would expect to find many more in the prophets, where there is a greater direct concern for judgment (and restoration) in general. The former prophets present us with a more chronological account of the pre-exilic period than do the latter prophets. Nonetheless, the theology of the period is clearly expressed there, including our theme.

We should note in advance that the section titled 1 Kings 9:7 actually includes a great many more texts in the book of Kings which reflect the same theology as 1 Kings 9:7.

#### Joshua 7:12

Even those commentators who show some awareness of the concept of divine Absence in other places have overlooked the reference here. Most are concerned with the discussion of Achan's sin, the אָרְוָה, and (more recently) the expression of corporate personality implied in the account. Here we are rather concerned with the judgment pronounced by God. Other matters are not unimportant but do not affect our interpretation of the text.

Chapter 7 records the defeat of Ai and Joshua's prayer to Yahweh (7:6-9). In the following verses Yahweh replies to Joshua and gives the

reason for their defeat. They have sinned (7:11) and transgressed the covenant by taking things which were under the ban (חֶרֶם).

In 7:12a Yahweh connects their military defeat with their transgression. This is followed by a statement promising continued judgment unless they remove the offense.

לֹא אֶסֶדֶךָ לְהַיּוֹת עִמָּכֶם אִם-לֹא תִשְׁמְדוּ  
הַחֶרֶם מִקִּרְבְּכֶם

The choice is clear. They may have Yahweh or the חֶרֶם, but not both. As we have seen before, there is a close association between the Presence of Yahweh in the camp and the success or failure of Israel's military ventures. The defeat at Ai was a result of Yahweh's withholding His support. His judgment is that unless the people remove the חֶרֶם from their midst, His absence from their midst will become permanent. The remainder of the account records how the people follow Yahweh's instruction and remove the חֶרֶם from their midst.

#### Judges 16:20

In the well-known account of Samson's life (Judges 13-16) there are several references to the ways in which the Presence of Yahweh assisted Samson.<sup>1</sup> It is appropriate, then, that when Samson broke his Nazarite vow Scripture is specific about the departure of the same Presence. And so we come to Judg. 16:20. We need not retell the details of Delilah's deception. After she had the barber cut off Samson's seven locks of hair she awoke him. Samson plans to defeat his adversaries as before but Scripture inserts the editorial comment:

<sup>1</sup>Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14.

!הוֹיָא לֹא יָדַע קִי יְהוָה סָר מִצְלָיו

Why had Yahweh departed? It is clear that the unique gift Samson had been given was a result of his special relationship to Yahweh. As we have previously noted, it was the "Spirit of Yahweh" which Scripture says gave Samson his special abilities. Now that this special relationship has come to an end through Samson's disobedience, the Presence which had empowered Samson also departed.

In Judg. 16:17 Samson had told Deliliah that his strength (קִי) would depart if he was shaved. This may perhaps be a parallel on the personal level with the recognition that Yahweh was the strength of Israel in battle on the national level. In any case, clearly there is a close association with Samson's strength and the Presence of Yahweh. They existed together and they departed together.

The superhuman strength of Samson did not reside in his hair, but in the fact that Jehovah was with or near him. But Jehovah was with him so long as he maintained his condition as a Nazarite. As soon as he broke away from this by sacrificing the hair which he wore in honour of the Lord, Jehovah departed from him, and with Jeohvah went his strength.<sup>2</sup>

In this regard we note in passing that there is no specific mention of Yahweh's return or the Spirit's "coming upon him mightily" in the account of the end of Samson's life. This does not, however, preclude that interpretation of the events. In verse 22 the text makes specific reference to Samson's hair beginning to grow again. Verse 30 says that Samson exerted his קִי which, as we have seen, was identified with Yahweh's

<sup>2</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1887), 423.

presence. Further, in Old Testament thought there is no possible way to conceive of Samson's, or anyone's, being able to perform such a super-human task without Yahweh's help. Thus we may conclude that the Presence did return to Samson for that brief moment.

In this text, as in the others we have examined, we see that the clear verdict of Yahweh is that He will not be found in the presence of unrighteousness. His Presence is withdrawn from all who turn from His instruction and follow another way. The Old Testament provides us with examples of both personal and community judgment in this way.

#### I Samuel 4

The previous texts have provided us with a relatively straightforward presentation. We have found a sequence of sin, judgment by departure (or threat of departure), and, in some cases, restoration.<sup>3</sup> However, we now come to a far more difficult text in 1 Samuel 4 and following, commonly called "the Ark narrative." The challenge here is not to show that the Presence departed from Israel. That is obvious from the text, especially as stated in the naming of Ichabod (1 Sam. 4:21-22). Rather, the challenge is to demonstrate that there is a judgment of God involved with this departure of the Presence.

The crucial issue is whether chapter 4 is to be connected with chapters 1-3. On the whole, interpreters are divided over the relationship of 1 Samuel 4 to 1 Samuel 1-3. One view, which for brevity we shall

---

<sup>3</sup>In other cases the restoration is omitted entirely. At times the threat of departure is not carried out. Still others, in which the Absence is temporary, are resolved with the return of the presence.



call the "traditional" view is that chapter 4 with the defeat of Israel and the capture of the Ark is the fulfillment of the prophecy of judgment upon the house of Eli for the behaviour of the latter's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Thus the unity of the narrative is stressed.<sup>4</sup> However, the more common view among recent commentators is that chapter 4 represents a separate, discontinuous unit, from chapters 1-3. W. H. Hertzberg sums up the standard approach of this group:

The second main section of the Books of Samuel has no direct connection with the first. A concrete link is, in fact, only provided by the place Shiloh, with the Ark and the priesthood there. But not a word is said of the offense of the sons of Levi, nor is Samuel mentioned. Conversely, nothing in the first main section suggests the urgent political situation, and Eli appears only as priest, not as judge. Both sections do, however, mention Eli's extreme old age. From these features it has rightly been concluded that the second main section originally had no independent existence.<sup>5</sup>

This view stresses the discontinuity of the narrative.

Anthony F. Campbell, in his study of the Ark narrative, argues passionately that neither chapters 1-3 nor chapter 7 and following are related to chapters 4-6. In fact, he supports Wellhausen's view that chapters 1-3 were written after 4-6 and are dependent upon it.<sup>6</sup> His assessment, with which we have taken issue, raises several points, summarized below:

---

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of this unity see John T. Willis, "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary" Journal of Biblical Literature 90 (1971):288-308. We cite this article not because we agree with its every detail, but simply as a more recent expression of the view of the unity of the Ark narrative with 1 Samuel 1-3.

<sup>5</sup>W. H. Hertzberg, I and II Samuel (London: SCM Press, 1964) pp. 46-47.

<sup>6</sup>Anthony F. Campbell, The Ark Narrative, SBL Dissertation Series, vol. 16 (Missoula, MT: The Society for Biblical Literature, 1975), pp. 173-178 and p. 200. The Campbell traces this view back to Wellhausen.

1. The catastrophe of chapter 4 is national in scope not personal, as required by the forecast of judgment on Hophni and Phinehas in Chapters 1-3.

2. Chapter 4 makes no reference to the fulfillment of the prophecies as would be expected if it were the intention of this chapter to fulfill them. He also mentions that the prophecies of chapters 1-3 find their fulfillment in 1 Kings 2:26-27 (the dismissal of Abiathar by Solomon).

3. He further notes that Hophni and Phinehas are peripheral in chapter 4, and that Eli was not necessarily concerned about the fulfillment of the prophecies but about the dire straights of the nation in general.

4. Chapters 1-3 envision the events of chapter 4 because they are derived from it.

We shall attempt to respond to these points individually.

Campbell is certainly correct that the catastrophe of 1 Samuel 4 is national in scope. No one has ever said that it was not. Where Campbell goes astray is in his assumption that a personal judgment is required. He fails to recognize that the sins of Hophni and Phinehas are used in the account as an example of the perversion of the cult and the failure of the nation's leadership (which they and their father Eli, a judge according to 1 Sam. 4:18, represent). These are national issues, not personal ones. The national scope of the problem is further revealed in the people's failure to have the Ark with them in their first campaign (4:1).<sup>7</sup> They had forgotten Yahweh's previous blessings in battle and had taken their fate upon themselves. Only when they suffered defeat

---

<sup>7</sup>The Masoretic Text is incorrectly divided at this point. The phrase, "And the word of Samuel was to all Israel" is the conclusion of what precedes, not the introduction to what follows. This reading is supported by the LXX. The false impression given by the MT reading is that Samuel ordered the campaign. R. Payne Smith supports this view in I Samuel (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), p. 85.

did they think of Yahweh. And so in their superstitious apostasy they went to seek the Ark. This was not an action of faith and Yahweh could not honor it. This demonstrates the national, not personal, scope of the apostasy and the need of a national, not personal, judgment.

Secondly, the suggestion that an expected reference to the fulfillment is not found in chapter 4 is but an argument from silence. Given the immediacy of the judgment's following upon the prediction, no such reference is required. Campbell's suggestion that such an omission would have been "incomprehensible"<sup>8</sup> is absurd. In fact, the connection between the predicted doom in chapter 3 and its execution in chapter 4 is so readily apparent that a reference would have been unnecessarily redundant. Further, if some editor was clever enough to compose chapters 1-3 to go with the already existing chapter 4, he certainly would have been smart enough to see such an "incomprehensible" flaw and have satisfied the requirements by adding an explanatory note to chapter 4. No doubt if there were some reference to the fulfillment in chapter 4 it would be conveniently interpreted as a later addition to the text and excised by Campbell to substantiate his view. As to the reference to the fulfillment of the prophecies in 1 Kings 2:26-27, this is the end of the judgment upon Eli's house that begins in 1 Samuel 4. A note is required there because the event is so far removed from the prediction (unlike 1 Samuel 4 where no note is required). Even Campbell admits (in footnote 4 of page 175) that 1 Kings 2:26-27 is viewed as the conclusion of the judgment.

---

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, The Ark Narrative, p. 175.

In his third point, Campbell says that chapter 4 cannot be a part of the judgment on Eli's house because Hophni and Phinehas are only peripheral, not primary, characters. We have already pointed out that the sins of Eli's house are meant only as examples of the apostasy of the nation as a whole. There is no need for Hophni and Phinehas to be major characters in the account. The judgment is upon the nation as a whole. Eli's house is only a part of that. As to his comments about the cause of Eli's anxiety, Campbell is merely speculating. He offers no solid evidence to support his view. Again, since the prophecy of doom to his house has just preceded this event it is much more logical that it was the source of Eli's anxiety.

We come at last to the claim by Campbell, following Wellhausen, that 1 Samuel 1-3 was composed after chapter 4 and thus anticipate the events of the latter. He writes:

In sum, although ch. 1-3 clearly envision the events of ch. 4 as the beginning of the downfall of the Elides, there is no solid evidence in ch. 4 for dependence on any preceding material whatsoever.<sup>9</sup>

Yet his admission that chapters 1-3 "clearly envision" chapter 4 is ultimately an admission of the error of this interpretation of the entire text. While vigorously arguing for a total discontinuity between the two texts he is forced to admit that the former (1-3) envisions the latter (4). This is ultimately the same as saying that the latter assumes the former. In either case, the close connection between the two is affirmed. Campbell's case is flawed throughout.

What of our own interpretation then? First, we do not reject the possibility that 1 Samuel 4-6 might have circulated independently

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

for a time. This is acceptable as such, so long as it is not motivated by some hidden agenda. The Samuel-Kings cycle indicated from time to time that it is incorporating material with a previously separate existence.<sup>10</sup> This is well documented and not a matter for concern. There is no a priori reason why 1 Samuel 4-6 could not have a separate existence also, perhaps as a record of the travels of the Ark. At the same time we must admit that there is no solid evidence to require us to admit such a position either. We simply cannot say. Whatever the case may be, we are now confronted with the text in its context and it is there that we must interpret it. Campbell ignores this fundamental principle of interpretation. It is at that point that his interpretation begins to fall apart. If one accepts the premise that a passage must be interpreted within its context, then there can be no doubt that there is a firm connection between chapters 1-3, chapters 4-6, and what follows.

Chapters 1-3, in addition to recording the birth of Samuel, depicts the depravation of the nation by focusing on its leaders as examples. Hophni and Phinehas symbolize the degeneration of the cult in this period. Eli, the impotent "judge," similarly shows the failure of the leadership of the nation. In chapter 4 the people further demonstrate their apostasy by going out to battle without the Ark and apart from the leadership of the "judge." Only when they failed did they think to turn to Yahweh for help. They bring up the Ark in the hope that the Divine

---

<sup>10</sup>For example see the "Book of Jashar" in 2 Sam. 1:17-27 and 1 Kings 8:12-13 and references to the "Book of the Chronicles of the King of Judah (or Israel) in various places.

Presence which accompanies it will assure their victory. But Yahweh, knowing that their faith did not rest in Him, did not allow His Presence to accompany them. They were again defeated and the Ark was captured. The wife of Phinehas speaks for the people when she recognizes that the Presence, the glory (כְּבוֹד) has departed from Israel. Thus she names her son כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה.<sup>11</sup> This is most certainly an example of the absence of Yahweh as a sign of judgment. Even Hertzberg agrees:

But the compiler of the whole work surely felt that Israel no longer appeared worthy of the personal presence of the Lord. . . . .<sup>12</sup>

Chapters 5-6 trace the "adventures" of the Ark while in the hands of Israel's enemies. Here it becomes clear that even though God had withheld His Presence from Israel, He had not withdrawn it from the Ark. Yahweh wreaks havoc on Israel's enemies and proves Himself more powerful than their gods.

We come finally to chapter 7. We have argued from the outset that the disaster of chapter 4 was national in scope because the problem was national in scope. Chapter 7 confirms that view. Even though the Ark had been returned to Israel at Kiriath-Jearim, the situation begun in chapter 4 still existed. However in chapter 7 we have the restoration. In chapter 7:3-6, we have national repentance. I stress "national" to point out that chapters 1-3 pointed to a national, not personal apostasy. After the people repented, and as the Philistines were again

---

<sup>11</sup>Some commentators, William McKane, I and II Samuel (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 49 for example, point to a "popular and false etymology" lying behind the name "inglorious." This discussion need not delay us here. The Biblical text is not trying to offer an etymology based on the modern understanding of Semitic linguistics but rather based on how they understood the name and its significance.

<sup>12</sup>Hertzberg, I and II Samuel, p. 51

about to attack, Samuel prayed for the people and the text emphasizes that Yahweh answered ( וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל ). Whereas in chapter 4 Yahweh had not acted, this time he fought for his people and brought them victory. Chapter 7, then, is the complete antithesis of chapter 4. We have come full cycle: apostasy, judgment by divine absence, and restoration.

In this section, as before, we have seen that one of the ways that God expresses his judgment is by His absence. In this case His departure involved allowing the Ark to be captured. Only when the nation repented did the blessings of Yahweh's Presence return to His people.

#### 1 Samuel 8:18

The people felt that there was a problem with this system that Yahweh had given them. Eli had not been a particularly good judge and his last years, marked by his sons' evils, were the worst of all. Samuel had done very well, but his sons too were failures. And so the people felt that they wanted a king. In verse 7 Yahweh clearly understands this as a rejection of His own kingship. And so Yahweh conceded to the people's wishes. In doing so however he made it clear that He disapproved. And so when the day came that the people regretted their rejection of Yahweh and prayed for a change back to the old ways, Samuel warns them:

וְלֹא-יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת-קוֹלְכֶם

In judgment Yahweh will not answer them.

We have just seen how in 1 Samuel 7 Yahweh's answering Samuel's prayer was a sign that His Presence was restored in Israel. Here His refusal to answer marks His rejection of the people as they had rejected Him. In Deut. 1:41-46 Yahweh refused to hear His people. The motif of

"not answering" is quite similar to the motif of "not hearing." Both amount to a refusal to accept the prayers of the people. In turn these are both similar to the refusal to accept the offerings of the people as expressed in the phrase "not smelling" (Lev. 26:31). All of these contain the idea of "cultic absence."

#### 1 Samuel 16-14

The discussion of the problems of Saul and the rise of David has occupied many volumes of Biblical research and it is not the purpose of this paper to sift through all of them. Time and space do not permit us to treat even more recent works such as David M. Gunn's attempt to treat Saul as a tragic hero along the lines of Shakespear's Othello.<sup>13</sup> Rather, we intend to limit our discussion to the aspect of Saul that corresponds to our study, the judgment on Saul expressed by the removal of Yahweh's presence.

Most commentaries on 1 Sam. 16:14 tend to ignore the first part of the verse (the departure of Yahweh's spirit) and focus on the latter part (the coming of the "evil spirit"  $\text{רוּחַ אֲדָמָה}$  from Yahweh). Not all commentaries, however, miss the point that concerns us here. Some examples:

The divine power which enabled Saul to win victories is not said to be withdrawn; the leader without such power is like Samson, shorn

---

<sup>13</sup> David M. Gunn, The Fate of King Saul, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 14 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), Gunn's bibliography does, however, provide a handy place to start probing the problems in this area of Old Testament studies.



of his hair and deprived of his strength (Judg. 16). Thus the failure of Saul rests in the withdrawal of divine favor.<sup>14</sup>

Peter Ackroyd misses the connection between the "withdrawal of divine favor" and Saul's sin. This is no capricious game on God's part but a response to Saul's own failure.

With his anointing, the spirit of God is with Him, and only on His being rejected does it depart from him.<sup>15</sup>

Hertzberg does somewhat better as he directly connects the departure of Yahweh's spirit with Saul's rejection.

Note that David gains what Saul loses. The charismatic endowment reserved for the king of Israel passes from him to David and so Samuel's word of rejection of Saul is fulfilled.<sup>16</sup>

This is somewhat better still. Both Hertzberg and McKane touch on the connection between the departure of the Spirit of Yahweh and the rejection announced by Samuel.

Perhaps we will not be belaboring the obvious if we insist that the connection between Saul's sin and God's judgment upon him by the removal of His Presence be emphasized further. In 1 Sam. 15:3 Saul is specifically instructed to kill everything living in the camp of Amalek. However he disobeys this instruction (1 Sam. 15:9). By so doing he violates the  $\text{קִרְיָה}$  as did Achan (Joshua 7:12). In the same manner, the judgment involves the loss of the Divine Presence. In the case of Achan the entire camp was threatened. In Saul's case the judgment is more

---

<sup>14</sup>Peter R. Ackroyd, The First Book of Samuel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 134-35.

<sup>15</sup>Hertzberg, I and II Samuel, p. 140.

<sup>16</sup>William McKane, I and II Samuel, pp. 106-107.

personal. AS Saul rejected God's word, God now rejects him. As the commentators cited above have noted, this rejection consists, at least in part, of the loss of the Spirit of Yahweh's Presence that had been given him, and with it the loss of the right to rule as a king.

This accent on Saul's loss of the Spirit continues. For example we read in 1 Sam. 18:12 that Saul feared David because Yahweh's spirit was with him (David) but had departed from Saul.

וַיִּמְצָא שָׁאוּל סֵר

This, of course, recalls the statement of 1 Sam. 16:14:

וַיִּרְוַח יְהוָה; סָרָה מִשָּׁאוּל

In 1 Samuel 28 the accent on the Absence of Yahweh from Saul as a judgment is even clearer. 1 Sam. 28:6 notes that when Saul inquired of Yahweh, He did not answer him ( וְלֹא עֲנָהוּ יְהוָה ). We have seen before that Yahweh's refusal to answer is one way that he absents Himself in judgment. Saul then consults the medium at Endor. But he receives no comfort from Samuel. First Saul admits that Yahweh has left him (28:15)

וְאֵלֹהִים סָר מֵעָלַי וְלֹא עֲנָנִי עוֹד

But Samuel reminds Saul that Yahweh has not only departed from him but has become his opponent (28:16)

וַיְהוֹה סָר מֵעָלַי וַיִּהְיֶה עָרְדִּי

Then Samuel concludes by saying that is Yahweh's judgment upon Saul for disobeying the orders regarding the חֶרֶם on Amalek.

Finally, we have two references to the promise made to David that Yahweh's דָּוָה will not leave him as it had departed from Saul. In 2 Sam. 7:15 we read:

וְחִסְדֵי לֹא-יָסֹר מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי־אֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי מִמֶּם שְׂאֵל  
 אֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי מִלְּפָנָיָהּ

First Chron. 17:13 provides us with the parallel:

וְחִסְדֵי לֹא-אֶסִיר מִמֶּמּוֹ כִּי־אֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי  
 מִמֶּמּוֹ הִיָּה לְפָנָיָהּ

In these texts Yahweh's **חֶסֶד** presents His Presence in the sense that one of the ways that He expresses His **חֶסֶד** is by allowing His Presence to remain. The removal of Yahweh's presence is, then, a loss of His **חֶסֶד**.

Kings 9:7 (et al.)

In the books of Kings we meet for the first time a new phrase to describe the theology that we have met thus far expressed in a variety of ways. Here the phrase "I will send them out of My Presence" is used as a standard phrase to refer to God's judgment upon His people in the exile.

In 1 Kings 9:7 the dedication of Solomon's Temple has just passed and Yahweh appears to Solomon a second time. He confirms that He has heard Solomon's prayer and will indeed dwell in the house (9:3). After some personal words of blessing God warns of the judgment that will come upon the people if they sin. The judgment beginning in 9:7 contains several parts, but none more prominent than the phrase:

וְאֶת-הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לִשְׁמִי  
 אֲשַׁלַּח מִמֶּנּוּ פָּנָי

Even the Temple, the house where God has promised to dwell, is no

guarantee of His Presence when the people sin against Him.<sup>17</sup> He will throw even the Temple out of His Presence (פָּנָיו). פָּנָיו of course is the normal word for "face." It is commonly used with a variety of meanings. Of particular importance is its theological usage in the phrase "the face of God." God's face is His Person, His Being, His very Presence. At times the term becomes an almost hypostatic technical term for Yahweh Himself.<sup>18</sup> And so Yahweh threatens to execute harsh judgment upon Israel even if that means dispensing with the Temple which He has previously promised to inhabit. This warning ought to have discouraged those who in Jeremiah's time thought that no harm could come to them because of the Temple.

We find this phrase used elsewhere in Kings as well. Second Kings 17 recounts the sins of Israel (here the Northern Kingdom) and (2 Kings 17:18-41) the judgment of God upon them. Of particular importance is the beginning of the pronouncement of judgment (2 Kings 17:18-41). Here the same motif that we met in Yahweh's words (1 Kings 9:7) is repeated:

וַיִּתֵּן אֱנֹפֶן יְהוָה מֵאֵד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְרֶם מִצַּל פָּנָיו  
 לֹא נִשְׁאַר רַק שְׁבֵט יְהוּדָה לְבַדּוֹ

In this instance there is a shift of the verb from שָׁלַח to סָרַף (which we have seen many times throughout this study). This shift does not

<sup>17</sup>In the book of Chronicles we find the same idea repeated in the words:

וְאֵת-הַבָּיִת קָדְשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לְשִׁמִּי אֲשַׁלֶּיךָ מִצַּל פָּנָי  
 (2 Chron. 7:20).

<sup>18</sup>There is a brief account of the various uses of this term in Aubrey R. Johnson, "Aspects of the use of the term פָּנָיו in the Old Testament" Festschrift Otto Eissfeldt zum 60, ed. Johann Fück (Halle an der Salle: Max Neimeyer Verlag, 1947), pp. 155-59.

alter the essential meaning of the phrase. Israel is removed (Hiphil) from the Presence of Yahweh because of their sin. They are judged by not being allowed access to the Divine Presence. This same thought is repeated again in verse 23:

צַד אֲשֶׁר הָסִיר יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי

It is significant that these "theological" pronouncements precede the record of the exile of Israel by Assyria. Thus their exile constitutes the means by which Yahweh executed His judgment to "remove them from His sight."

This theme continues with the judgment upon Judah as well. Judah has escaped the pronouncement of judgment in 2 Kings 17:18-23 but their continued violation of the covenant with Yahweh eventually led to their own downfall. Second Kings 23:1-25 is well-known as the record of Josiah's reforms. Yet these were "too little too late" for Yahweh had been offended by Judah and had decided that they too were to become objects of His wrath (verse 26). So in verse 27 Yahweh pronounces the judgment that was foretold to Solomon and prefigured in the judgment to the Northern Kingdom.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אִם אֶת־יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר מִיַּד כִּי־פָנִי פָאֵשׁ  
הַסִּירְתִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמֵאֲשֶׁר אֶת־יְהוָה הִזְאִת אֲשֶׁר  
בְּחַרְתִּי אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֲמַרְתִּי שְׁמִי שָׁם

Judah also must be removed (again the Hiphil of סִירָה ) from Yahweh's Presence because of her continuing sin. The city and the temple are to be rejected (מֵאֵפֶס ). This latter phrase is best understood as a parallel implying that they too will be removed from the Presence (as foretold of the temple in 1 Kings 9:7).

As with Israel before her, the exile of Judah is interpreted as the fulfillment of these pronouncements of judgment. So the action of Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of Jerusalem after Jehoiakim's rebellion (2 Kings 24:1-2) are understood in this way. Thus we read in 2 Kings 24:3:

אֶךְ עַל-פִּי-יְהוָה הָיְתָה בְּיְהוּדָה לְקַטֵּר מִצֵּל פְּנֵי  
בְּחַטָּאת מִן-שָׁמַיִם כִּכְלֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

One final note is added by the author of Kings to the end of 2 Kings 24 to summarize the judgment against Judah and Jerusalem at the time of the exile (2 Kings 24:20);

כִּי עַל-אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה הִרְתָּה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם וּבְיְהוּדָה  
צֵד-הַשְּׁלֵכֹן אֶתְּם מִצֵּל פְּנֵי

Here we have another verb שָׁלַח but, as before, no real change in meaning can be detected. His throwing them out from His Presence is clearly here, as before, pictured as a direct judgment upon their sins.

We should here add a final comment upon the use of פְּנֵי. Some translations and commentators have chosen to translate this term "sight, eyes" in some of the passages in this section. This is certainly defensible from a linguistic perspective. Being dismissed from Yahweh's "face" is certainly to be cast out of His sight. However correct this may be from a linguistic viewpoint, it is less than adequate theologically if the force of the original is not maintained. What is crucial here is that the terminology of these texts expresses God's judgment upon Israel and Judah in terms of being cut off from Him. Their primary punishment is their inability to have access to their God. This "loss of access" is brought about by means of the exile. As in the case of Cain

(Gen. 4:14-16) being separated from Yahweh is involved with being separated from the land. For these reasons we prefer the admittedly more abstract term "Presence" for  $\text{פְּרִיָּוֶה}$  than the more concrete but less clearly theological terms "eyes" or "sight," particularly as these are more technically proper translations of  $\text{פְּרִיָּוֶה}$  (or its more common construct  $\text{פְּרִיָּוֶה}$ ) than of  $\text{פְּרִיָּוֶה}$ .

## CHAPTER V

### THE PROPHETS: THE LATTER PROPHETS

As one might expect, the number of instances of our theme increases dramatically in the later prophets. Though Isaiah and Jeremiah have the most occurrences, they are by no means alone. While the "southern" prophets predominate, the "northern" prophets, Amos and Hosea, are also represented. The growth of the importance of this theme quickens as the fall of Judah grows near, reaching its most important stage as the judgment is carried out.

#### Isaiah 1:15

At the outset of and indeed throughout, the book of Isaiah we find this motif of God's absence as a sign of His judgment on the people for their rebellion. Here, at the beginning, God harshly condemns their worship as unacceptable. Isa. 1:11-14 catalogues the condemnation of various aspects of the cult. God declares himself weary of the burden of their festivals and feasts (1:14). God brings his declaration of judgment to a head in the next verse (1:15).

וּבְפָרְשֵׁיכֶם פִּפְיֹכֶם אֶעֱלֶימָה עֵינַי מִכָּחַם  
אֶת-פִּי-תִלְבֹּן וְתִפְלֶה אֵינֹנִי שְׁמַע  
יְדֵיכֶם דְּמִים מְלֹא-

Yahweh declares that His eyes will be hidden from their prayer

( אֶעֱלֶימָה עֵינַי ) and that He will not listen ( אֵינֹנִי שְׁמַע ). This



is one of a number of texts we have seen in the course of this study where the refusal of God's cultic presence is His judgmental response. In this case we are given the reason for the rejection of the people's worship (יְדֵי כֹהֲנֵי חַלְלִים). We need not delay at this point by discussing the various proposals for interpreting the precise historical context of this judgment. For our purposes it is sufficient to point out the fact of Yahweh's refusal to hear the prayers of the people and see the clear relationship between this specialized form of Divine Absence and the judgment upon the sin of the people.

This type of cultic absence is not unique to the theology of Isaiah. Thus far we have met the refusal of Yahweh to smell sacrifices (Lev. 26:31; see also Isa. 1:13 where the incense of the people is called an "abomination"), to hear prayers (Deut. 1:45 and Isa. 1:15), and to answer (1 Sam. 8:18, 28:6, 28:15). In addition Yahweh threatens to hide his eyes, a thought parallel with His hiding His face in Deuteronomy (31:14-16; 32:20). All of this constitutes God's rejection of the worship of the sinful people by the withdrawal of the blessings of the Divine Presence in worship.

#### Isaiah 8:17

In the last section we saw that Isaiah had pronounced the absence of Yahweh's Presence in the cult in terms of His refusal to hear the prayers of his sinful people. Yet the theology of the Absent God in the Old Testament is not limited to such concrete expressions, as we have already seen in many places. So too in Isaiah we find more abstract expressions of the same judgment theology.

The details of the occasion of the settings of 8:17 are, of course, debated.<sup>1</sup> So also is the speaker. While the vast majority of commentators takes this as a statement by the prophets, Edward Young regards the speaker to be the Messiah.<sup>2</sup> His reasons are not particularly convincing. As the question does not directly affect our interpretation, we will not pause further except to note that we regard the speaker to be the prophet.

The verse reads:

וְחִפִּיתִי לִיהוָה הַמִּסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִבֵּית יַעֲקֹב  
וְקָנִיתִי לוֹ

but it is with the clause which describes Yahweh as "hiding His face from the house of Jacob" (הַמִּסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִבֵּית יַעֲקֹב) that particularly concerns us. Here once again we see that Yahweh's judgment is expressed in terms of the hiding of His face (Presence). Of this judgment Franz Delitzsch writes:

A time of judgment has now commenced, which would still last a long time; but the word of God was the pledge of Israel's continuance in the midst of it, and of the renewal of Israel's glory afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

Of this time of judgment, Young is more specific:

The Lord has hidden His face, as He had promised when revealing Himself to Isaiah in the inaugural vision. When punishment and

---

<sup>1</sup>Kissane, for example, pins this down to the year 734 and refers to Duham's dating to 701 as based on "frivolous grounds" in E. J. Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, 2 vols (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1960), 1:98-99. However, Leupold is less certain of the date, cf. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Isaiah, 2 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 1:114.

<sup>2</sup>Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 1:314-16.

<sup>3</sup>Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, 3 vols., trans. Rev. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881), 1:238.

devastation came upon the nation, the face of Yahweh was hidden. The entire nation, but specifically the southern kingdom felt His wrath and was shut out from His countenance.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever one may think of the occasion of the oracle or its speaker, it is clear that the judgment of Yahweh is expressed in the hiding of His face (Presence) from His people. Here, as before, the Absent God is God in judgment. His Presence, and the blessings that accompany His Presence, are hidden from those who by their disobedience and rebellion have separated themselves from Him. This is a theme that we have seen before and shall see again in Isaiah.

Isaiah 57:14-21

In the midst of this oracle (57:14-21) which promises the restoration of blessings to the rebellious people, Yahweh describes His actions of judgment brought on by the sin of His people. Despite the textual problems, the sense is clear. The coveteousness of the people has brought about Yahweh's wrath. In turn His wrath expressed itself in His actions:

אֶפְהָרָה אֶפְהָרָה אֶפְהָרָה  
אֶפְהָרָה אֶפְהָרָה אֶפְהָרָה

The suggestion to amend אֶפְהָרָה to אֶפְהָרָה with the versions fits the context better since Yahweh seems to be discussing his actions in the past. However the imperfect can be used to describe ongoing action in the past, "I kept on striking him."<sup>5</sup> While the emendation is possible, perhaps even likely, it is not demanded by, nor does it alter, the sense

<sup>4</sup>E. J. Young, 1:314.

<sup>5</sup>E. Kautzsch, ed., Gesenius; Hebrew Grammar, 2nd English edition, rev. A. E. Cawley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), paragraph 107b.

of the passage. The Hiphil infinite  $\text{לְהִצְפֹּתַי}$  is easily understood as an example of the infinitive used as a CASUS ADVERBIALIS.<sup>6</sup> The emendation of the QAL imperfect  $\text{הִצְפֹּתִי}$  to the infinitive  $\text{לְהִצְפֹּתַי}$  with the support of some Hebrew manuscripts is also likely, assuming that the  $\text{ל}$  entered the text by analogy to  $\text{לְהִצְפֹּתַי}$  or perhaps even as a parallel to the first person (though perfect) with the same root earlier in the verse ( $\text{קִצַּפְתִּי}$ ). If the emendation is accepted, this infinitive also could be understood as a CASUS ADVERBIALIS. This would result in the translation "and I struck him, hiding in anger." Most translations supply the object "my face" with the verb "hiding" ("Hiding my face in anger").<sup>7</sup> This certainly is in accordance with the sense here in this particular and with the use of  $\text{סָתַר}$  in general, as we have seen in the course of this study.

The theology of the passage agrees with those we have previously considered in the course of this study. Here Yahweh's anger is expressed by His hiding in anger. Interestingly, the result was the opposite of what God desired. The people did not repent and return as God had hoped but rather kept on turning away and continued in their apostasy. Nonetheless we have once again a strong example of the absent God as a motif of judgment.

Isaiah 58:3

This chapter of Isaiah is well-known for its description of the type of fasting that is pleasing to Yahweh, a confirmation that God does

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., paragraph 113 h.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, John L. McKenzie, The Anchor Bible: Second Isaiah (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1968), p. 160.

not accept man's works ex opera operato but rather is pleased with true repentance that flows from a heart set right with Him. The opening of the chapter finds God lamenting the fact that though His people are sinful they behave as if they were not, as though "they delight in the nearness of God" (58:2). With 58:3a God quotes the people's words "Why have we fasted but You do not see why have we humbled ourselves but you do not notice?"

לָמָּה צָמַנּוּ וְלֹא רָאִינוּ עֲיִנֵינוּ נִפְשֵׁנוּ וְלֹא תִדְעַ

In the second half of this verse and the next He provides an answer: it is because of the way in which they fast, outwardly but not inwardly.

Here, as in Isa. 1:15 and elsewhere, we see that one aspect of God's judgment through Absence is His refusal to hear or answer prayers or to smell offerings, His absence from the cult. God refuses to see their actions because He had made Himself not present. Though the people behave as those who "delight in the nearness of God" (58:2), their inner feelings belie their outward show of piety. Their fasting does not result in the blessings of God's Presence but rather in His ignoring their worship.

This not the case with fasting that is pleasing to Yahweh. Isa. 58:8-9 describes the results of the fast that Yahweh approves. Among those blessings are the presence of the קִבּוּד יְהוָה as a rear-guard.<sup>8</sup> Yahweh's hearing of prayers (58:9), and His answering the cry of the people by saying, "I am here" ( הִנְנִי ). In short, while Yahweh's

<sup>8</sup>Reading the Piel with the footnote. If you read the QAl with the Massoretic Text the idea of protection as one element of the blessings of God's presence is still clear in the text.

judgment upon false fasting is His absence, His blessing upon proper fasting is His Presence.

Isaiah 59:1-2

Beginning with an allusion to Isa. 50:2, the prophet here proceeds to tell the people that it is not the weakness of Yahweh that is responsible for their situation, but rather their own sin. They have brought about divine judgment by their own transgressions. This becomes very explicit in 59:2. The people's iniquities ( צִוְנוֹתֵיכֶם ) have become things which separate ( מִבְּדִיל ) them from their God. Moreover, their sins ( חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם ) have caused God's face to be hidden so that He cannot hear their prayers.<sup>9</sup> Again we have a very strong example of the way in which the Absent God motif is expressed in Biblical thought. Here the emphasis is upon the fault of the people rather than the action of God in judgment as a response, but the two cannot be ultimately separated. Also in this text it is clear that this absence of God is considered to be a calamity for the people. God, who cannot tolerate evil,

---

<sup>9</sup> Most commentators follow the versions which support the reading "His face" ( פָּנָיו ) rather than the Masoretic Text "face" ( פָּנָיו ). This emendation has little force except to make the imagery a little more concrete. One suspects that some commentators are eager for this emendation because they do not want to see a more "hypostatic" use of פָּנָיו at this stage in Israel's theological development. For an example of those who follow this line of thought, see R. N. Whybray, New Century Bible: Isaiah 40-66 (London: Oliphants, 1975), pp. 220-21. In fact the Biblical evidence points to the use of פָּנָיו in the more abstract sense of "Presence" at an early period of Biblical thought. As it is more difficult to explain the origin of פָּנָיו from פָּנָיו than the opposite, I personally prefer the Masoretic Text reading at this point, though the issue is not critical to the meaning of the text.

cannot dwell in the midst of a sinful and unclean people. Further, we see once again the major concern that God will not hear prayers expressed. If God does not hear, it is not because He cannot but because He will not.

Isaiah 63:10

Near the end of the Book of the prophet Isaiah, so renowned for its prophecies of salvation, we meet once again the theme of God's judgment in absence, this time in what must be one of the saddest laments in all of the Old Testament. The chapter begins with an account of Yahweh's judgment upon the nations (63:1-6). The next section (63:1-9) recounts the acts of loving kindness (חַסְדֵי יְהוָה) which Yahweh has performed for His people. At the end of this section (63:9) Isaiah refers to the angel who saved the people in their affliction (מַלְאָךְ כְּפִיז הוֹשִׁיעַם).

But the next section does not tell how the people responded in love and faith to these deeds of Yahweh. Rather, they were stubborn (קָרְבִי) and grieved His Holy Spirit (וַיִּצְבּוּ אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה קָדְשׁוֹ). In judgment Yahweh turns against them (וַיִּהְיֶה פָּדָי, a Niphal of הִפְדָּי) and becomes their enemy, fighting against them. Further, it is clear that the intimate relationship depicted in verse 9 is broken in that the angel of His Presence, who had before saved them, is now nowhere to be found. Isa. 63:11 resounds with the sad refrain, "Where . . .?" Where is the one who saved them? Where is the one who put His Holy Spirit among them? Clearly the sad answer is that He is not there. He has departed. No longer will the angel of His Presence save them. No longer will His Holy Spirit dwell in their midst. They have rebelled against God and now He has withdrawn.

This is made even clearer in the prayer which begins in 63:15. The prophet implores God to look from heaven (הֲבֵיט מִשָּׁמַיִם) and see His holy and glorious habitation. Yahweh used to dwell with His people but now, as an act of judgment, has withdrawn to His heavenly home. Again in this verse the sad refrain, "where. . . ." is sounded. The anguish of Yahweh's people when His Presence is withdrawn in judgment echoes through this passage. The prophet mourns the loss of the blessings of His Presence, recognizing that without the Presence of Yahweh they have become like those over whom He has never ruled and who were not called by His name.

But the prayer continues.<sup>10</sup> The prophet implores Yahweh to return, to tear open the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at His Presence. The prayer vibrates with the prophet's longing that the departed Presence might return. After this passionate plea the prophet admits the sin of the people (64:6, MT 64:5). The result of this is clear: Yahweh has hidden from His people (פָּנָה מִפְּנֵי עַמּוֹתָיו), Isaiah 64:7 (MT 64:6). There is no doubt for the prophet that Yahweh has hidden His Face as an act of judgment upon the sin of the people. They sinned and He hid Himself in His anger. All that the prophet can do is to pray and hope that Yahweh will not forget His people, but will remember and return to them. The intensity of the anxiety and grief felt by the prophet at the loss of the Presence is

---

<sup>10</sup>The difficulty over the division of the chapter at this point is insignificant. Clearly the break introduced at this point is artificial. All of Isaiah 64 belongs to the same prayer that concludes chapter 63.



underscored by the searching questions with which the prayer ends. Will Yahweh keep silent and remain absent from His people or will He return? The prophet must await Yahweh's answer.

Jeremiah 7:15-16

To this point in our study we have seen a variety of phrases used to describe the activity of God's departure in judgment. In some God has dismissed the people from His Presence, in others He has Himself departed. In yet others He has refused to allow His sinful people access to Him in prayer, in the cult, and through fasting. In this passage of Jeremiah we have two of these motifs combined: the dismissal of the people from His Presence and the refusal to hear prayers.

Jeremiah 7 begins with a call to true repentance and proceeds with a warning that the Temple is no guarantee of safety, no more than Shiloh was (Jer. 7:12-14). The announcement of judgment begins with the next verse:

וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִעַל פְּנֵי פָאֶשֶׁר הַשְּׁלַכְתִּי  
אֶת-פֶּל-אֲחֵיכֶם אֵת פֶּל-זֶרַע אֲפֹרִים

We have this same refrain throughout the Book of Kings. Time and again Yahweh announced that He would send the people from His Face (Presence).<sup>11</sup> The Northern Kingdom had been cast out from before Yahweh and now the threat of the same judgment was before the Southern Kingdom. Now Yahweh turns to the prophet to speak the remainder of His judgment.

<sup>11</sup>For example, see 1 Kings 9:1; 2 Kings 17:18; 1:23; 23:26; 24:3; and 24:20. The roots שִׁלַּח and פָּרַח appear to be used interchangeably to express this idea.

וְאַתָּה אֵל-תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּצַד-הַצַּדִּיקִים הַזֵּה  
 וְאַל-תִּשָּׂא אֲזַיְתֵם לְפָנַי וְתִתְפַּלֵּה  
 וְאַל-תִּפְגַּע-בִּי כִּי-אֵינֹנִי שֹׂמֵעַ אֹתָךְ

As Yahweh declared through Isaiah that He would not hear the prayers of the sinful people, so He now tells Jeremiah not even to pray for them at all. It is not Jeremiah's sin that has caused Yahweh to turn a deaf ear, but the people's. Yahweh will not even listen to anyone who prays for such a rebellious nation. We have seen before that Yahweh has refused to hear prayers as a sign of His absence in judgment. So here also the refrain is repeated. God, who hears all, closes His ears to the prayers for those whom He has cast out from before His face.

Jeremiah 11:11 and 14

This section has great similarity to the previous one in that not only does Yahweh refuse to hear the prayers of His people, but also He forbids the prophet to intercede upon their behalf. In verse 11 He declares that even though the people pray to Him, He will not listen:

וְזָעֲקוּ אֵלַי וְלֹא אֶשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם

This follows the announcement that He is about to bring inescapable disaster (רָצָה) upon them. Even in the hour of great need He will not hear and heed their calls for help. They have sinned and He now forbids them access to His Presence through prayer.

Not only does Yahweh refuse to hear the people's prayer, but also He forbids the prophet to pray for them:

וְאַתָּה אֵל-תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּצַד-הַצַּדִּיקִים הַזֵּה  
 וְאַל-תִּשָּׂא אֲזַיְתֵם לְפָנַי וְתִתְפַּלֵּה כִּי-אֵינֹנִי שֹׂמֵעַ אֹתָךְ  
 וְאַל-תִּפְגַּע-בִּי כִּי-אֵינֹנִי שֹׂמֵעַ אֹתָךְ

The first half of this is an exact duplicate of Jer. 7:16. Here, as there, Yahweh refuses to allow the prophet to intercede for the rebellious people. Part of His judgment upon them is His refusal to hear their prayers when His other judgments are carried out.

Jeremiah 14:11-12

In the earlier part of this chapter Jeremiah has prayed for the people on account of the drought that had come upon the nation. Beginning with Jer. 14:10 we hear God's reply. Yahweh rejects His wandering people. Then he turns to Jeremiah with the same instruction that He has given twice before:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל-תִּתְּנָם פֶּלֶל  
 בְּיַד-קְצָמִים הַזֵּה לְטוֹבָה

For the third time Jeremiah has been told not to pray for the sinful people. On this occasion, however, Yahweh expands upon this declaration:

כִּי בָצַמְתִּי אֶינְנִי שִׂמְחָה אֶל-רִנְתָּם  
 וְכִי בָצַלְתִּי אֶצְלוֹ וְיָמִנְתֶּם

Now a new element is introduced. We have previously heard Yahweh refuse to hear or answer prayers and heed fasting (Isa 58:3). In Lev. 26:31 he refused to smell their "soothing aromas." But here for the first time is the specific mention of His refusal to "be pleased with" (אֶצְלוֹ from רָצָה) their whole burnt offerings and grain offerings. As before, this is a part of Yahweh's "cultic absence," His refusal to accept the worship of His wayward people. It is Yahweh's absence from the cult that reveals the unacceptability of their worship. In Isa. 63:15 and 64:10-11 we saw that Yahweh had withdrawn from His Temple.

The same theme is repeated in the more famous passages of Ezekiel, to which we shall come in due time. Here the result of such absence is clear; without Yahweh's presence in the cult no activity of worship, be it prayer or sacrifice, is acceptable.

Jeremiah 15:1

Following the previous account of how God told Jeremiah not to pray for the people in response to his prayer, Jeremiah prays for them once more (Jer. 14:19-22). Again Yahweh responds that He will hear no prayers for them, not even if it were Moses or Samuel standing before Him. This of course recalls the successful intercessions by these two men of God in earlier days. But not this time. The rejection is reinforced by the command of Yahweh to Jeremiah:<sup>12</sup>

שֶׁבַח דָּלַל עֲנִי וְיִצְחָק

Not only will Yahweh not hear the prayers of the people, He will no longer tolerate their presence before Him. Again, we have an echo of the language of Jeremiah 7:15-16 and several places in the Book of Kings.

Keil believes that this command simply means that they are to leave the Temple.<sup>13</sup> In this conclusion he is supported by Cheyne.<sup>14</sup>

It may be that this is so. If that were the case it would support the

---

<sup>12</sup>Here the footnote suggestion to read  $\text{שֶׁבַח דָּלַל}$ , the  $\text{ד}$  being lost by haplography is probably correct. If the emendation is not accepted the same object must be supplied in any case. There is no change in meaning involved.

<sup>13</sup>C. F. Keil, The Prophecies of Jeremiah, 2 vols., trans. David Patrick (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880), p. 255.

<sup>14</sup>T. K. Cheyne, Jeremiah (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906), p. 372.

idea of Yahweh's "cultic absence," His refusal to accept their worship. However, there is no solid evidence in the surrounding context to suggest that the site of this episode was the temple. Further, we have seen that the usage of the term "face" ( פָּנָיו ) often has the more abstract sense of "Presence" and need not be limited to the concept of Yahweh's presence in the Temple. This could simply mean, "send them away from Me." The effect would be the same in the long run. But if there is no solid evidence that the scene was the Temple, there is at least a hint that this might be so. In Yahweh's first response to Jeremiah's prayer (Jer. 14:10-12), which we discussed earlier, Yahweh mentioned the whole burnt offering ( כֹּלֵן ) and the grain offering ( מִנְחָה ) which He would not accept. This inclusion of these elements might indicate that the setting was indeed the Temple. While it is by no means certain, and does not alter the overall interpretation of the text, I tend to agree that the setting here is the Temple. If so, Yahweh's casting the sinful nation out of the Temple is a vivid picture of the way in which He denies His Presence as an act of judgment.

Jeremiah 18:17

Jeremiah's visit to the potter's house is the occasion for another oracle of judgment. Yahweh's indictment of the nation's fault runs throughout the chapter, reaching its climax in verse 13 and following. The announcement of judgment begins in verse 17. The judgment consists of two parts, the first being the scattering of the people like the East wind before the enemy:

פָּרֵץ אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם

The second part of the judgment, which is the part that concerns us at this point, announces that Yahweh will show them His back, and not His face, in the day of their calamity:<sup>15</sup>

עֲרַף וְלֹא-פָנִים אֶרְאֶה קִיּוֹם אִי־דָם

What exactly does this mean and why were these words chosen? This particular phrase seems to harken back to the description of the people's rebellion in Jeremiah 2:27 where we read:

כִּי פָנָיו אֵלַי עֲרַף וְלֹא פָנִים

Similar language is repeated once again in Jer. 32:53. Clearly we have another example of retribution in kind. Those who once ignored Yahweh are soon to be ignored by Him. But can we not say more? When God chooses to ignore those who were once His people is He not, in effect, cutting them off from His presence. We have seen how, in Jeremiah, there is a concern running throughout that Yahweh, in judgment, will not hear the prayers of His people or accept their worship. This "cultic absence" is the background for this passage as well. When Yahweh shows His back to the people He is making it impossible for them to have access to His blessings, declaring that He will not help them in their hour of need. His ignoring them, absenting Himself (if you will), seals their doom and reinforces the first part of this dual judgment.

#### Jeremiah 23:39

In the context of the condemnation of the false prophets we find another very specific reference to Yahweh's judging the people by expelling

<sup>15</sup>We agree with the footnote of BHS which suggests that אֶרְאֶה קִיּוֹם be read as אֶרְאֶה קִיּוֹם, the Hiphil rather than the Qal, as suggested by the versions. This repointing seems to be required by the sense of the text as well.

them from His Presence. In no uncertain terms the lying prophets are denounced throughout chapter 23. At the end of this long denunciation comes the announcement of judgment. Verse 33 contains the declaration that Yahweh will abandon them ( וַיַּטְשֵׁנִי אֱתֶכֶם ) and that He will no longer give them oracles. The judgment continues and reaches its climax in Jer. 23:39-40. We are particularly interested in 23:39:<sup>16</sup>

לְכֵן הִגַּדְתִּי וְנִשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם נָשָׂא וְנִטְשֵׁנִי אֶתְכֶם  
וְאֶת-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹתַי לְכֶם וְלֹא-בִלְוֵיכֶם מֵעַל פְּנֵי

Yahweh declares that He will cast out of His Presence both the people and the city. One could hardly expect to find a more explicit statement of the theme. The Holy God cannot tolerate a sinful nation in His Presence. In this instance, instead of Yahweh departing from the people, He sends them out from before Him. The effect is the same. The people are cut off from the Presence of God as an act of judgment.

<sup>16</sup>The text presents some problems here. The MT reads, "Therefore I am about to forget ( וְנִשְׁתִּי Qal of נִשְׁחָץ ) you certainly ( וְאֶתְכֶם Qal infinitive absolute of נִשְׁחָץ ) and cast you. . . ." However there is considerable support in the versions (see BHS footnote) for the reading, "Therefore I am about to pick you up (reading וְנִשְׁתִּי as a variant of וְנִשְׁאָתִי Qal perfect of נִשְׁאָץ certainly (reading וְאֶתְכֶם Qal infinitive absolute of נִשְׁחָץ ) and cast you. . . ." While this emendation has strong support among the versions, is easily explainable, and does perhaps fit the context better, there is a problem in that וְנִשְׁתִּי never occurs elsewhere as a variant of וְנִשְׁאָתִי in any of its 19 occurrences (with and without the waw). The interchange of MATRES LECTIONIS is, however, a recognized phenomenon and so this objection is not insurmountable. The interpretation offered here depends more on the force of the second verb ( וְנִטְשֵׁנִי ) than the first and so is not effected significantly.

Jeremiah 32:31

The prophet again prays for understanding in chapter 32 (32:17-25). As before Yahweh responds with an indictment of the nation which has always done evil in His eyes (32:30). In the following verse the condemnation is expanded:

כִּי עַל-אַפִּי וְעַל-חַמְתִּי הִיָּדְתָה לִּי  
 הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְמִן-הַיּוֹם אֲנִתָּהּ  
 וְצֵד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַקִּירָהּ מֵעַל פְּנֵי

The city which has always provoked Yahweh's anger and wrath will now be cast out of His Presence. The relationship is clear, the לִּי followed by the Hiphil infinitive introducing a simple result clause. The city shall be cast out of Yahweh's Presence as a judgment upon its sin. As we have already seen, this is a common concept in Kings and In Jeremiah.

In this particular instance the oracle of restoration (32:36-44) contains a specific reversal of this judgment. In Jer. 32:40 we read that, as a part of the everlasting covenant which Yahweh shall make with His people, He will not turn away from them (לֹא יִצְטוֹב מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם) and He will put it in their hearts not to turn away from His as well. This promise recalls the indictment spoken a few verses earlier (32:33) that the people had turned their back to Him, as well as the similar judgment of Yahweh which we have already discussed.<sup>17</sup> Clearly in Jeremiah as well and in Kings the idea that Yahweh would remove His Presence from the

<sup>17</sup> Jer. 18:17, where Yahweh threatens to turn His back to the people rather than His Face. See also Jer. 2:27 for similar language.



people, and the people from His Presence, was understood to be a powerful expression of judgment upon their sin.

Jeremiah 33:5

Following immediately after the oracle of salvation which ended the previous paragraph, and which contains the promise that in the future covenant Yahweh will not turn away from the people, comes this pronouncement of judgment upon Jeremiah's generation. Yahweh again repeats His intention to judge the nation by the removal of His Presence. There are difficulties with the text at the end of 33:4 and the beginning of 33:5.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately the latter part of the verse, the part which concerns us, is clear enough. It reads:

אֲשֶׁר הִסְתַּרְתִּי פְנֵי מַהְעִיר הַזֹּאת עַל כָּל רָצוֹנָם

Though there are some minor textual concerns, probably secondary difficulties resulting from the major corruption at the beginning of the verse (see BHS footnotes), they do not alter the general sense of the last part of the verse, that Yahweh is hiding His Face as a judgment upon their evils. Whatever else about this verse must be left clouded in doubt, that much is clear. Again we see that judgment is expressed by the removal of the Presence of Yahweh.

Jeremiah 52:3

Here once again at the end of the book of Jeremiah's prophecies our theme emerges in conjunction with the judgment upon the Southern

<sup>18</sup> Commentators suggest various ways of solving the problem but none of them is compelling convincing. John Bright in Jeremiah (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1965), p. 296 refers to the text as "hopelessly corrupt." While the situation may not be that desperate, it is certainly difficult. There is no readily apparent solution to the dilemma.

Kingdom. As Jeremiah records the events of the reign of Zedekiah he comments upon the continual rebellion of the nation:

כִּי עַל-אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה הִיָּתָה בְּיָדוֹ שְׁלִיטָה  
וַיְהִי דָהָה עַד-הַשְּׁלִיכֹן אוֹתָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי

The account which follows this comment describes the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The rebellion which provoked Yahweh's anger continued until the end, until the time when His casting them from His Presence was completed, the final fall of Jerusalem.

Not intending to belabor the obvious, we note once again not only the common theology but also the common vocabulary for the expression of this theology which exists between Kings and Jeremiah. For both the exile of the Southern Kingdom was thought of as a dismissal from the Presence of Yahweh, in line with the theology of Divine Absence which had been expressed in various forms throughout Israel's history.

#### Ezekiel 7:22

The first reference in Ezekiel to the absence of God as a motif of judgment comes in the lengthy proclamation of the coming doom of Ezekiel 7. Admittedly this is a minor reference and plays only a very small part in the judgment of both the judgment motif under consideration and the theology of Ezekiel. As one of many judgments Yahweh says:

וְהִסְבֹּתִי פְנֵי מַחֲקֵם

Keil takes this as a warning that God will remove His protection from the people.<sup>19</sup> This is certainly true insofar as protection is one of the

<sup>19</sup>C. F. Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel, 2 vols., trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1876), 1:108.

blessings of Yahweh's Presence. In this particular place the loss of His Presence leads to a loss of protection to the place that is to be defiled as well as to the people. Carley connects this to the priestly benediction (Num. 6:25).<sup>20</sup> This suffers from trying to find something priestly under every bush in Ezekiel. Keil is closer to the truth. The next clause, beginning with  $\text{וְלֹא־יִקְדָּשׁוּ־אֶת־מְקוֹמִי}$  should be taken as purpose, "so that they will profane my secret place." In this verse the removal of Yahweh's Presence, signified by His turning His Face away, is secondary in that it serves to remove the blessing of His protection. It is nonetheless significant that the loss of the Presence is associated with Yahweh's judgment upon the nation, particularly in light of what is to come in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 8:18

In the next chapter we come again upon the motif of the refusal to respond to prayer. Yahweh points out to Ezekiel the people performing various abominations in the Temple and then declares His judgment. He promises no pity on them and declares that He will not listen to their prayers:

$\text{וְלֹא־אֶשְׁמַע־אֶת־קוֹל־בְּנֵי־אִשְׂרָאֵל־וְלֹא־אֶשְׁמַע־אֶת־קוֹל־אִשְׂרָאֵל־בְּיָמָיו־אֵלֶּיךָ־יְהוָה$

In the context this is another way of saying that He will not have mercy on them. Yet it is not only that. Previously in Deuteronomy as well as Isaiah and Jeremiah we have seen that this idea of not hearing prayer is part of a larger picture of "cultic absence." Time and time again Yahweh

---

<sup>20</sup>Keith W. Carley, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 49.

has refused to take part in the cult when it is so profaned. So also in Ezekiel. By refusing to hear Yahweh announces His judgment upon the abominations of the cult.

#### Ezekiel 10-11

As we noted before, the Book of Ezekiel and these two chapters in particular, present a problem in that they could probably provide enough material to do a separate thesis on the theology of Presence and absence in Ezekiel by themselves. But, given that the purpose of this study is to observe the overall picture in the Old Testament and not to concentrate on any one author, it will not be possible to do anything approaching an in-depth exegesis of the material of these two chapters and the way in which they relate to the rest of the book.

Walter Zimmerli is correct in asserting that chapters 8 through 11 of Ezekiel belong together.<sup>21</sup> Nor is it insignificant that the vision regarding the abominations in the Temple and their consequences culminates in the departure of the Glory of Yahweh from the Temple. In fact, one might argue that the purpose of the great vision was to explain in detail the reasons that the theology of absence became a primary motif for expressing divine judgment in the pre-exilic period, as we have already seen in the work of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the book of Kings. It was not without cause that Yahweh turned His back on the nation and expelled them from His Presence. Jeremiah (52:3) said that the abomination that caused Yahweh's action continued until the very end and Ezekiel

---

<sup>21</sup>Walter Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, trans. Ronald E. Clement (Philadelphia: Fortress Pres, 1979), p. 215-17.

confirms that. It is no chance occurrence that these major sources of pre-exilic prophetic thought all agree at this point, though their expressions may differ.

But what of Ezekiel? The details of this familiar passage may not need repeating but we shall nonetheless trace the stages of the departure of the Glory of Yahweh from the Temple. Already in 8:4 Ezekiel mentions that the Glory of Yahweh was present in the Temple when he arrived there. In 9:3, just before executioners are sent out, the Glory of Yahweh moves from the cherub on which it had been (in the Holy of Holies?) to the threshold of the Temple. Again in 10:4 we are told that the Glory of Yahweh went up from the cherub (again singular as in 9:3 rather than plural as in 10:3) to the threshold of the Temple. We must draw the conclusion that the Glory withdrew during the carrying out of the executions. In 10:18 the Glory departs from the threshold and moves over the cherubim (now plural), and moving in the next verse over the east gate of the Temple. After the account of Ezekiel's prophesy against the leaders of the people the glory of Yahweh moves with the cherubim once again (11:22-23), this time from the east gate to the mountain which was east of the city, the end of the vision.

Ezekiel's vision of the departure of the Glory of Yahweh was his visual expression of what the other prophets were saying as well: Yahweh was judging the people by absenting Himself, making His Presence inaccessible to them. Yet along with the other prophets, Ezekiel confirms that this is not to be a permanent state. As Jeremiah (32:40) told of an everlasting covenant in which Yahweh would not turn His back to His people, so Ezekiel has a vision of the return of the Glory of Yahweh to

the restored Temple. In 43:1-4 we are shown how the Glory of Yahweh comes again from the east, moves over the east gate and settles once again into the midst of the people promising (43:9) to dwell among them forever (  $\text{וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם לְעֹלָם}$  ). In the same manner we are told (48:35) that the name of the city will be "Yahweh is here" (  $\text{יְהוָה שָׁמָּה}$  ). As the absence of Yahweh's presence is a sign of His judgment, so also His promise of the future abiding Presence is a sign of the new covenant which He intends to make with the faithful remnant.

Ezekiel 20:3,31

In Ezek. 8:18 we saw that the motif of refusal by Yahweh to hear prayers which is found in other prophets is found in Ezekiel as well. A similar theme is repeated in Ezekiel 20. The oracle is occasioned by an attempt of some of the elders of the community to seek guidance from Yahweh through Ezekiel. We are not told the nature of the guidance they requested. We are given Yahweh's response in detail. The first part of the response (20:3-39) is Yahweh's rejection of their abominations and the announcement of His judgment. The second part of the response (20:40-44) is the announcement of restoration after the judgment.

Within the first part of the response we come upon the idea that Yahweh will not "be inquired of" by the people in two places. At the beginning of the response (20:3) we read:

$\text{כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַלְדַּלְשׁ אֹתִי אֲמַרְתֶּם בְּאַיִם$   
 $\text{חִי-אֲנִי נְאֻם יְהוָה אֲדַלְשׁ אֶת-אֲדָרְשׁ לְכֶם$

Again, nearer the end (20:31) and following a lengthy indictment Yahweh repeats the idea, this time in the form of a question:

וְאֵינִי אֶדְרֹשׁ לְכֶם בְּיַד יְשׁוּרְאֵל  
 חַי-אֵינִי נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה אִם-אֶדְרֹשׁ לְכֶם

In Yahweh's refusal to "be sought" or "be inquired of" by the leaders of the sinful people we find another aspect of the same theology which manifests itself in other places in His refusal to hear and answer prayers and accept sacrifices. Clearly Yahweh intends to prevent all access to Himself by those whom He has placed under His judgment. He intends to withdraw His Presence from the cult and, as is clear in this passage, end His guidance of the rebellious people through the prophets. The time for guidance is passed: the time for judgment has come.

Ezekiel 39:23-24

Chapter 39 of Ezekiel is often discussed by those who are concerned with demonstrating that their particular eschatological theory best explains the identity of Gog. We are not at all concerned with that problem here. But at the end of the Gog discourse (39:22-25) Yahweh summarizes by saying that the nations will know that Israel has gone into exile as a judgment upon their sins. As a result of their behaviour Yahweh says (39:23):

וְאָמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּיַד יְהוָה  
 נִפְלְאוּ בְחַרְבֵי כְפֹלִים

In this passage the hiding of Yahweh's face is closely linked with the end of His protection of the nation. In the next verse the same idea of Yahweh hiding His face is repeated, this time without the connection to the removal of His protection:

פְּטִימָאֲתָם וּכְפִשְׁעֵיהֶם וַיִּחְסֵם אֱלֹהִים  
 וַיִּסְתֵּר פְּנֵי מַהֲרֵם

One might be tempted to say that the only issue here is with the protection given by Yahweh to His people except for the promise of renewal which follows a few verses later when Yahweh promises to gather them once again to their own land (39:29):

וְלֹא אֶסְתֵּיר עוֹד פְּנֵי מַהֲרֵם אֲשֶׁר שִׁפְכִתִּי אֶת-כֹּהֲנֵי  
 עַל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה

In this latter verse it is clear that the concern is not with Yahweh's protection of the nation but rather that His Presence is necessary element of the nation's existence. Only when Yahweh is present among them (as here represented by His not hiding His Face and the pouring out of His Spirit) are they the true Israel. It is in this light that we should understand the previous verses as well. The hiding of Yahweh's face not only ends His protection but also, and more importantly, ends the legitimate existence of the nation as well.

The Presence of Yahweh is the chief constitutive element of the nation of Israel. Just as in Deuteronomy the "place where Yahweh makes His name dwell" is the only place where true worship can occur, so also we might say that the people among whom Yahweh reveals His Presence are the only true people of God. When Yahweh departs or hides His Face He, in effect, declares they are no longer His people.

#### Hosea 5:6

In the fifth chapter of Hosea we come upon another quite clear presentation of judgment by Divine Absence. The opening verses of the chapter are an announcement of judgment upon the Northern Kingdom. Hosea



appears to be speaking about some specific historical events which are now lost to us. In 5:5 he includes Judah in the condemnation, though recent commentators frequently see this as a later addition.<sup>22</sup> The text of Hosea continues to address both in the next verse where the prophet says:

בְּצִאֲנָם וּבְזָרְקָם יִלְכּוּ לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה  
 וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם

Here most commentators correctly point out that the mention of sheep and cattle is probably a reference to a sacrifice that the people intend to make in the hope of averting the divine wrath.<sup>23</sup> Similarly they note that the term וּשְׂרָיִם is often used in cultic contexts. However Hans Wolff and Henry McKeating both go astray in their attempt to connect this with pagan rites.<sup>24</sup> While it may be true that there is a common theme present in both, to give the impression that this passage must depend on a non-Israelite theology for its content is entirely false. By now it should be clear that there was a well developed theology of absence with Israel in the pre-exilic period.

<sup>22</sup>Typical of this line of thought is, "The reference to Judah is the work of a Judean editor. By adding a third measure to the line he testifies that Hosea's indictment applies equally to Judah in later times," in James Luther Mays, Hosea (London: SCM Press, 1969), p. 84.

<sup>23</sup>For example see Hans Walter Wolff, Hosea, ed. Paul D. Hanson, trans. Gary Stansell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 100.

<sup>24</sup>For Wolff see the previous reference. For McKeating see Henry McKeating, Amos, Micah, Hosea (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 104. Both suggest that this echoes or is reminiscent of motifs of the Baal myth of the Absent god. As we have indicated earlier, only the Hittite Telepinus myth represents an absence myth where the absence is related to condemnation, as is the case here in Hosea.

James Mays does much better when he writes: "But Yahweh is not available to this unclean people through their sacrificial cult. In a time of need they learn that he has become an absent God."<sup>25</sup> This is one of the few passages in the Old Testament where the "Absent God" motif has been widely recognized. We have already indicated that the absence of God from the cult is one aspect of His judgment by absence that runs throughout the Old Testament under various expressions. That Yahweh would withdraw from those who seek to sacrifice to Him, thus making their sacrifice invalid, is consistent with the way in which His judgment has been expressed time and time again.

Hosea 5:14-6:6

There has been debate about the context of this passage ever since Albrecht Alt published his interpretation of this text in 1919.<sup>26</sup> Alt's entirely historical interpretation has proven to be quite popular and is reflected in more recent commentaries by Hans Walter Wolff and James Luther Mays. Another interpretation has been offered by E. M. Good.<sup>27</sup> In this article Good attempted to provide an entirely cultic interpretation to the passage. This attempt has not met with widespread acceptance.

---

<sup>25</sup>Mays, Hosea, p. 84

<sup>26</sup>Albrecht Alt, "Hosea 5:8-6:6 Ein Krieg und seine Folgen in Prophetischer Beleuchtung," Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift 30 (1919), 537-68.

<sup>27</sup>E. M. Good, "Hosea 5:8-6:6: An Alternative to Alt," Journal of Biblical Literature 85 (1966):273-86.



perhaps bear the punishment of their guilt) and seek His Face (Presence). This will come about when they are afflicted.

The close connection between 5:15 and 6:1 is confirmed by the fact that the Septuagint connects the last line of 5:15 with 6:1 and introduces the latter as a quotation. Hosea 6:1-3 is certainly a unit. The lion imagery reappears with the word "tear" ( דַּמְעָה ) in 6:1, reminiscent of the same term in 5:14. Further, the whole quote expands upon the theme of the people's seeking Yahweh introduced in 1:15. Of particular interest is the phrase in the middle of 6:3 which reads:

כִּי שִׁחַר בָּכּוֹן מוֹצֵאוֹ

Though Yahweh has departed the people certainly believe that He will return.

But what of 6:4-6? There are several reasons for claiming that it does indeed continue the same oracle. First, both Ephraim and Judah are mentioned in the preceding verses. That they are mentioned in 1:4-6 is no guarantee that the two sections belong together, but it is at least consistent with their unity. Second, there is a strong connection in thought between the two. Yahweh's response in 6:4 is a direct contrast to the people's statement of 6:3. When they say that Yahweh's actions are characterized by certainty ( בְּבִטְחוֹן ), He replies that they are unstable and ephemeral (characterizing them as כִּי עָנָן בֶּקָר and כִּי מַלְאָכִים ). Further, as they use water images to describe Yahweh ( כִּי מַלְאָכִים and כִּי מַלְאָכִים ), so He uses a water image to describe them ( כִּי מַלְאָכִים ). Third, the imagery of the dawn which begins in 6:3 ( כִּי שִׁחַר בָּכּוֹן מוֹצֵאוֹ ) is not concluded until 6:5 ( וְהַשְּׁפֵטִי אוֹר יָצֵא ), which should be emended with footnote 6:5 e-e to read ( וְהַשְּׁפֵטִי כְאוֹר יָצֵא ). And

finally, both 6:3 and 6:5 must be taken together to understand the resolution of the judgment by Divine Absence motif that was introduced in 5:15. The whole motif is as follows: in 5:15 Yahweh says that He will depart until they seek Him, in 6:1-3 they seek Him and anticipate His gracious return, in 6:1-4 (especially 6:5) Yahweh says that He will indeed return but in judgment rather than in grace.

Does this interpretation imply that 6:1-3 is insincere? Not at all. We see 6:1-3 as perhaps part of the liturgy of the cult. The words are sincere but not acceptable because the liturgy alone is not enough. This interpretation is supported by 6:6 where Yahweh tells them that it takes more than the ex opere operato performance of the rites of worship to please Him. Though the external aspects of liturgy and ritual may be correct and proper, they are nothing to Him if not accompanied by a faithful heart. In fact, if 6:1-3 is not understood to be a quote from a liturgical source then it is very difficult to see how 6:6 fits in this context since the elements of worship are nowhere else mentioned.

In summary, 5:15-6:6 is a dialogue dominated by the motif of judgment by Divine Absence. The declaration by Yahweh that He is departing can only be understood in the broader context of this theme which runs throughout the Old Testament. The response of the people and subsequent action by Yahweh is an expansion on the theme. The entire pericope is controlled by the departure of Yahweh in judgment.

Hosea 9:12

In a long section that comments on the coming punishment upon Israel (the Northern Kingdom) we find this phrase:

כִּי אֶגַּם אֲזִי לְהֵם בְּשׁוֹרֵי נְהֵם

Admittedly there is a problem in identifying the word בְּשׁוֹרֵי . The most common explanation is that this is an alternate form of בְּשׁוֹרֵי with a simple exchange of the sibilants.<sup>29</sup> Not only is it a quite plausible solution linguistically, but it also fits the context very well.

Yahweh's turning aside (or departing) here continues the idea of the glory of Ephraim flying away in the previous verse (9:11). The expressions clearly reflect the motif of Yahweh's departure in judgment. When Yahweh departs from His people it is indeed woe (אֵי) for them.

#### Amos 5:22

In the fifth chapter of Amos we come to another of the passages in which the judgment of Divine Absence is expressed in terms of Yahweh's refusal to accept the worship of the wayward people. The passage follows one of the "day of Yahweh" oracles in Amos. In 5:21 Yahweh declares that He hates (שִׂנְאֵתִי) and rejects the festivals of the people. The next verse moves from the more general condemnation of festival and assemblies to the more specific rejection of offerings.

כִּי אֶמְצֵא-עֲלֵי-לִי עֲלוֹת וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם לֹא אֶרְאֶה  
וְשִׁלְמֵם מִרֵּאֲיֵיכֶם לֹא אֶבְיֵט

This refusal to accept the offering of the people corresponds to the similar judgment in Jer. 14:12. In the broader context we have called

<sup>29</sup> See for example Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, Hosea (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1980), p. 543.

this aspect of Yahweh's judgment His "cultic absence." Here as elsewhere the refusal of Yahweh to participate in the cult is but one facet of the more general withdrawal of His presence from the people in judgment.

In the following verse (5:23) other aspects, the hymnic ones, of the cult are rejected. Mays observes that the force of these three verses is a total rejection of the Israelite cult, placing it on the same level as the Canaanite cult.<sup>30</sup> In this regard Mays is correct. Yahweh, who has nothing to do with the Caananite cult, now declares that He will have nothing to do with the Israelite cult as well.

Micah 3:4-7

We have pointed out on several occasions that the refusal of Yahweh to hear or answer prayers is to be associated with His rejection of sacrifices and other aspects of the cult. This, in turn, is but a part of a larger motif of judgment by Divine Absence that runs throughout the Old Testament. We have made these connections despite the fact that there is little direct evidence to link the two. The rejection of the cult is a refusal to allow the people under judgment into the Presence of Yahweh, hence a type of absence (in this case Yahweh absenting Himself rather than expelling others from His presence). However, here in Micah we have a very strong text which makes this implicit connection more explicit. In a section addressed to the rulers we read (3:4);

אֲדָרְשׁוּ אֶל-יְהוָה וְלֹא יַעֲנֵם אֲוֹתָם וְיִסְתָּר פְּנֵי מַהֲמָם  
 בָּצִיַת הַהֵי אֲשֶׁר הָרַבּוּ מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם

<sup>30</sup> James Luther Mays, Amos (London: SCM Press, 1969), pp. 106-08.

Here Yahweh's refusal to answer when they cry to Him is associated with His hiding His face (Presence) from them. Both are a judgment upon the doing of evil deeds by the rulers.

The text goes on to address the false prophets as well. Their condemnation (3:7) ends with the same result, Yahweh will not answer (פִּי אֵין נִצָּנֶה אֶלֶי־הוּא). Yahweh has hidden Himself in judgment. He has withdrawn His Presence. As a result He will neither hear nor answer prayer. Nor will He pay attention to the prophets. In judgment there is to be no access to God for the people. He has withdrawn and they are cut off.



## CHAPTER VI

### The WRITINGS

The occurrence of our theme is naturally less in the Writings than in the Prophets. The book of Chronicles contains some of the same occurrences as the book of Kings and these are mentioned in the discussion of Kings as well. Job contains several references to God's not hearing prayers, but these do not fall in passages that could be called judgment and so are not included here. The Psalms also abound in references to Yahweh's hiddenness and His failure to respond to prayer but, as we indicated in the introduction, these are probably related to concerns other than Yahweh's absence in judgment and so fall outside the bounds of this study. There are, however, several passages in the Psalms where the judgment aspect of Yahweh's absence is a factor and we shall deal with these in due course.

#### 2 Chronicles 30:9

This passage cannot be called a judgment text, but rather a promise. In this case the promise is that if the people will repent, they will find Yahweh willing to have compassion. But they are also told that He will not hide His face from them:

כִּי חָגוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וְלֹא יִסְתֵּר פָּנָיו מִפָּנֵינוּ

This is the other side of the coin from the judgment oracles. Nonetheless, the implication is that if the people do not repent and return to Yahweh, He will hide His face from them. In saying what Yahweh will not do it also confirms what He could do. If He carries out His judgment it will be through the hiding of His face, His absence.

Psalm 27:9

Psalm 27 is a poem of several different moods. Verses 1-3 present quiet confidence in Yahweh. Verses 4-6 are a comment on the wonders of Yahweh's house. But beginning with verse 7 and continuing through verse 10 we encounter a distressed, almost fearful, plea that Yahweh would not abandon the psalmist. These verses reach their climax in 27:9:

אֲלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם

Admittedly, the contexts says nothing about a sin for which the psalmist fears judgment. This is not a penitential psalm. However, the phrase

אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם certainly gives the impression that the psalmist fears retribution from God and this retribution might take the form of Yahweh's hiding His face.<sup>1</sup> The psalmist clearly fears being abandoned by a God who could hide His face. Though we cannot insist upon it, logic would seem to suggest that this is a form of judgment even though it is not explicit in the poem.

<sup>1</sup>The word אָסַף (Hiph. impf. of אָסַף of somewhat unspecific). Normally the root means to "incline" or "bend down," but may also have a transitive meaning in the Hiphil, as it must here with the object אֲנִי. Hence the translation, "Do not turn away/send away your servant in (your) anger."

Psalm 51:11

The liturgical use of this passage in the Christian Church has made it well known. Psalm 51 is a penitential psalm, a prayer for forgiveness by the psalmist. As a part of this prayer the psalmist expresses his desire that Yahweh not execute His judgment upon him for his past offenses, now recognized and confessed.:

אֶל-פְּשָׁעֵיכֶנִּי מִלִּפְנֵיךָ  
וְרַחֵם קִדְשֶׁךָ אֶל-תַּקֵּן מִחֲמַדִּי

The sense here is quite clear. The psalmist knows that Yahweh might judge his sins by removing His Presence from him. In asking for forgiveness the penitent prays that this judgment might be averted. Charles Haddon Spurgeon describes the position of the psalmist quite well:

David lamented before that sin had slain him and made him like a dead man, wanting a heart or quickening spirit; and now he fears lest, as the dead are abhorred by the living, so the Lord should cast him as a dead and abominable thing out of his presence. Whereof we learn that this is one of the just punishments of sin; it produces the casting out of a man from the face of God; and it may let us see how dear bought are the pleasures of sin when a man to enjoy the face of the creature deprives himself of the comfortable face of the Creator; as David here, for the carnal love of the face of Bathsheba, puts himself in danger to be cast out forever from the presence of the Lord his God.<sup>2</sup>

This is one of the very few undeniably clear texts in the psalms in which the separation from Yahweh's Presence is explicitly viewed as a judgment. The psalmist knows all too well the potential condemnation by God could result in his being cut off from the Divine Presence and prays that Yahweh's wrath might be turned aside.

---

<sup>2</sup>Charles Hadden Spurgeon, The Treasury of David, 7 vols. (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1888-1891), 2:469.

Psalm 66:18

There are many references in the Psalms to the psalmist's questioning why Yahweh has not heard his prayer or acted upon it. Outside the psalms the prophets said that Yahweh would refuse to hear or to answer or act because of the sin of the people. Few of the Psalms, however, indicate that Yahweh's refusal to hear or act may be related to a judgment upon sin. One of the texts where this connection is made is in Psalm 66. Here the psalmist rejoices because Yahweh has heard his prayer. This confirms to the psalmist that God holds him guiltless, for if he had harbored injustice in his heart Yahweh would not have listened to him (66:18):

אֵלֶּיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי בְּלִבִּי לֹא יִשְׁמָע נִדְבָרִי

We may conclude from this that Yahweh's refusal to hear prayers was often thought to be a judgment upon sin. This conforms to what we have seen outside the Psalms as well. In various places Yahweh's absence not only takes the form of a refusal to hear or respond to prayer, but also His refusal to participate in any aspect of the cult.

Psalm 78:59-60

This long psalm recounts many of the historical events of Israel's early history, particularly His past judgments upon Israel. The psalmist laments the faithlessness of the people, even after their entry into the promised land (78:54-58). Their continual rebellion provoked Yahweh's wrath and His rejection of Israel (78:59):

שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְעַבֵּר  
וַיִּשְׁמַד מֵאֵד בְּיַטְרָאֵל

This anger manifested itself in a judgment upon the cultic center of the nation, Shiloh, a judgment in which Yahweh Himself abandoned His dwelling place (28:60):

וַיִּטֹּשׁ יְהוָה אֶת-מִשְׁכַּן שִׁלֹּה  
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-מִשְׁכַּן שִׁלֹּה

And yet Israel had not learned. Just as Yahweh had once judged Israel by departing from Shiloh, so in the future He would withdraw His Presence once again, this time from the Temple in Jerusalem. The following verses record the destruction that followed Yahweh's departure, another reminder of the close association of Yahweh's Presence with His protection. This also was to be the pattern in Jerusalem. The people believed that Jerusalem could not be destroyed because Yahweh dwelled there. Sadly they had forgotten the lesson of Shiloh. Jeremiah (See Jer 7:12-14) tried to warn them of the lesson of Shiloh but they would not hear.

The psalmist, apparently writing between the building of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem, was aware of the theology of judgment by Divine Absence and its place in understanding the destruction of Yahweh's previous dwelling place in Shiloh. As we have seen, this theology comes to the surface once again in the pre-exilic prophets, particularly in the South.

Psalm 89:46 (Masoretic Text 89:47)

Even though, as we have said previously, there are very few texts in the Psalms in which the theme of judgment by Divine Absence is clearly present, there are many texts in which the reason for the hiddenness of God is obscure. At the outset we indicated some of the possible reasons for this. Nonetheless, some of these texts which fall on the

borderline of this study do have characteristics which would commend them to us. One such text is Psalm 89:46 (MT 89:47). Earlier in the psalm the poet has recounted God's blessings upon David, followed by a section lamenting Yahweh's more recent rejections (89:38-45). In the next verse we read:

צַד־מֵה יְהוָה יִשְׁתַּר לְנֹצֶה  
 תִּבְנֶה כְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ מִחֲמַדָּה

The previous judgments of Yahweh are summed up in this phrase: Yahweh has hidden Himself. The term "judgment" is never used, nor does the psalmist connect God's departure to any specific offense. However, it is certain that the departure of Presence (indicated by Yahweh's hiding Himself) is to be connected to His wrath which burns like fire. It is difficult to conceive of how the psalmist could have thought of Yahweh's hiding Himself in wrath apart from His judgment upon sin.

While this text does not specifically connect Yahweh's departure with some judgment, both the context and the mention of His wrath would seem to indicate that it is so. This is but one of many texts in the Psalms that fall somewhat on the borderline of this study. While not all of the texts that refer to Yahweh's hiddenness may be taken as examples of the theme of judgment by Divine Absence, this one certainly can.

.....  
Proverbs 15:29

As one might expect, the wisdom literature of the Old Testament does not provide us much material for our theme. Proverbs is no exception. There is only one text which may be read to support our theme and another which, though interesting, is too vague to call upon for support.

This latter text is near the beginning of the book (1:28).

Wisdom, the speaker, is telling what will become of those who do not heed the message. When calamity comes, the people (it is said) will call upon Wisdom:

אֵד יִקְרְאוּנִי וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה לְשֹׁחַרְרֹנֵי וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּנִי

Wisdom, like Yahweh, will not answer and will not be found. While this text is interesting, particularly in the light of later Christian interpretations of Wisdom as Christ, it is not clear enough to be a main part of this study. Certainly it represents the idea of absence in judgment even if the subject is Wisdom and not Yahweh Himself.

There is another text which is much clearer. In Prov. 15:29 we read:

רְחוֹק יְהוָה מִרְשָׁעִים  
וְתוֹפְפוֹת צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמַע

"Yahweh is far from the wicked," recalls this theme of absence in judgment. The next clause is adversative, "but the prayer of the righteous He will hear." This implies that in His distance from the wicked He will not hear their prayers. That Yahweh's distance from the wicked is an act of judgment is obvious. This again confirms that the refusal of Yahweh to hear prayers is related to His judgment by absence in the Old Testament.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VOCABULARY OF DIVINE ABSENCE

During the course of this study we have found a great variety in the expressions used to communicate the theology of judgment by Divine Absence. This may account, to some extent, for the general lack of recognition of this theme in the Old Testament. In this section we shall summarize the major expressions and vocabulary involved in this theme, dividing them into three sections; those verses which represent Yahweh's refusal to accompany the people or to allow them to be with Him, those verses which refer specifically to a separation from Yahweh's Presence ("face" פָּנָיו ), and those which belong to the related theme of cultic absence. Admittedly the distinction between the first two sections is a minor one, depending on whether or not the term פָּנָיו is specifically used in the texts. While this distinction may be artificial in some respects, I believe that at this stage, dealing as it does with specific expressions and vocabulary, the distinction should be maintained.

#### Separation from Yahweh

This section includes those verses which, as a part of Yahweh's judgment, the people (or an individual) are to be separated from Yahweh. In turn we will subdivide this group into three parts: Those verses in which Yahweh threatens not to be with the people in the future, those



in which He departs from them, and those in which he dismisses them from Himself.

#### The Refusal of Future Accompaniment

In this small group of verses we find that Yahweh in judgment threatens not to accompany the people in the future. The expressions are quite simple, being (with one exception) the use of  $\overline{\text{אִךְ}}$  with  $\overline{\text{בְּקָרְבְּךָ}}$  or  $\overline{\text{הִיְהוֹ}}$  with  $\overline{\text{לִּי}}$ . The sole exception is the use, in Ex. 33:3, of  $\overline{\text{עִלְּהֶךָ}}$  with  $\overline{\text{בְּקָרְבְּךָ}}$ . Those verses which use some form of  $\overline{\text{אִךְ}}$  with  $\overline{\text{בְּקָרְבְּךָ}}$  are Num. 14:42, Deut. 1:42 and Deut. 31:16-18. Those which use a form  $\overline{\text{הִיְהוֹ}}$  with  $\overline{\text{לִּי}}$  are Num. 14:43 and Joshua 7:12. We noted that all these instances precede the completion of the conquest of the promised land.

#### The Departure of Yahweh

This larger section of verses presents us with a much greater variety of texts, both in their vocabulary and in the book and periods in which they are found. Of the eight verbs used to express this idea, the most common is  $\overline{\text{סָרַח}}$  (to turn aside, go away, or leave). This verb is used in Num. 12:9-10; Judg. 16:20; 1 Sam. 16:14, 18:12, 28:15 and 28:16; 2 Sam. 7:15; and 1 Chron. 17:13. We should probably also include Hosea 9:12 where  $\overline{\text{שָׁרַח}}$  is almost certainly a variant of  $\overline{\text{סָרַח}}$ . The variety in vocabulary and the widespread pattern of occurrences both would indicate that this theme was commonly known and widely used in the pre-exilic and exilic theological community.

### Yahweh Sends Others Away

This group of verses is quite small and isolated. Except for the one reference in Ps. 27:9 where the psalmist prays that Yahweh would not turn him away (Hiphil of  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ו}$ , to turn aside), the only other place where this idea occurs (without the use of  $\text{אָנִיִּן}$ ) is in Genesis 3-4. There when Adam and Eve are being dismissed from the Garden (a text where the presence of this theme is somewhat questionable) the verbs  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ו}$  and  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ל}$  are used. In the following chapter when Cain is being dismissed for his killing of Abel the verbs  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ל}$  and  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ו}$  are used. As we shall later see,  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ו}$  is also used with  $\text{אָנִיִּן}$ . Given the non-explicit nature of the occurrences in Genesis 3, we note that the vast majority of uses of the idea of Yahweh sending someone else away from Himself occur with the word  $\text{אָנִיִּן}$ .

### Loss of the Presence of Yahweh

By far, the majority of the non-cultic references to judgment by Divine Absence involve the use of the word  $\text{אָנִיִּן}$ . These fall into basically two categories, those in which Yahweh removed His Presence and those in which He sends others out of His Presence.

### Yahweh Removed His Presence

Of the many verses which mention the removal of the Presence ( $\text{אָנִיִּן}$ ) by Yahweh, the large majority refers to the face of Yahweh being "hidden." These use the verb  $\sqrt{\text{הט}}\text{ו}$ , commonly in the Hiphil. This expression, Yahweh "hiding His Face," occurs in Deut. 31:14-16, 32:20; Isa. 8:17, 57:17, 64:7; Ezek. 39:23-24; Micah 3:4; and Ps. 29:9.

In 89:46 the root  $\overline{\text{סתר}}$  occurs without  $\overline{\text{סתר}} \overline{\text{בפני}}$  but the latter must certainly be supplied. This is the only place in the whole of this study where  $\overline{\text{סתר}}$  occurs without  $\overline{\text{סתר}} \overline{\text{בפני}}$ .

In addition to  $\overline{\text{סתר}}$  there are a few other verbs which are used to express a similar idea. In Isa. 7:15 the verb  $\overline{\text{צקע}}$  is used of hiding the eyes (  $\overline{\text{צקע}} \overline{\text{בפני}}$  ) though in the context this probably refers more to Yahweh's cultic absence. In Jer. 18:17 Yahweh is said to show (Hiph. of  $\overline{\text{ראה}}$  ) His back rather than His face. And in 2 Chron. 30:9 the same idea is implied where it says that Yahweh will not turn His face (  $\overline{\text{סתר}}$  ) from the people if they return to Him. In Ezek. 7:22 Yahweh declares that He will turn (Hiph. of  $\overline{\text{פנה}}$  ) His face from them.

#### Dismissal from Yahweh's Presence

The largest single group of texts are those in which Yahweh expels or threatens to expel someone from His Presence. Again we find a variety of verbs used. In 1 Kings 9:7 and Jer. 15:1 the simple verb for "send" (  $\overline{\text{שלח}}$  ) is used. More common is the slightly stronger verb "to throw" (  $\overline{\text{שליך}}$  ), used in Chron. 1:20; 2 Kings 24:20; Jer. 7:15-16 and 52:3; and Ps. 51:11. Another common verb is  $\overline{\text{סר}}$ , used in the Hiphil in the sense of "to cause someone to depart." This is found in 2 Kings 17:18, 17:23, 23:26, 24:3; and Jer. 32:31. Less common is  $\overline{\text{סתר}}$ . Cain laments that he must be hidden (Niph.) in Gen. 4:14-16. The other two occurrences (Isa. 52:9 and Jer. 23:5) are both in the Hiphil. The verb  $\overline{\text{שטט}}$  (to abandon) is used once in this study in Jer. 23:39 as is  $\overline{\text{צא}}$  in Jer. 15:1. Other verses using  $\overline{\text{שטט}}$  could

have been presented except that it is not always clear that Yahweh's Presence is involved in them.

#### Cultic Absence

Among the verses which refer to Yahweh's absence in terms of its effect on the cult we also find a variety of expression. In Jer. 14:12 and Amos 5:22 Yahweh says that He will not be pleased with their sacrifice (both using  $\overline{\text{גציה}}$  ). Yahweh threatens not to smell (  $\overline{\text{גחיה}}$  ) their offerings in Lev. 26:31 and not to see  $\overline{\text{גאה}}$  in Isa. 58:3. Parallel to this latter idea is His threat to hide His eyes (  $\overline{\text{עלם}}$  ) in Isa. 1:15.

Most common is Yahweh's refusal to be involved with the prayer of the people. He refuses to be enquired of (or sought)  $\overline{\text{דרש}}$  in Ezek. 20:3, 31. Frequently He refuses to hear (  $\overline{\text{שמע}}$  ), as in Deut. 7:41-46; Isa. 1:15, and 59:2; Jer. 7:15-16, 11:11, 11:14, 14:11-13; Ezek. 8:18; and in Ps. 66:18. The same is implied in Prov. 15:29. Alongside Yahweh's refusal to hear is His refusal to answer (  $\overline{\text{ענה}}$  ), as in 1 Sam. 8:16, 28:6, 28:15; and Mich 3:4 and 3:7. The same theme occurs in Job. 30:20 and 35:12 but in neither case is the judgment part of the context explicit.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate that there exists in the Old Testament a motif in which Yahweh's judgment and condemnation is expressed by His absence. In the opening sections we have pointed out that the idea of a god exercising his judgment by departing from the people is known outside the Old Testament as well as in the myth of Telepinus. We then proceeded by considering a large number of Texts in the Old Testament where this theme of judgment by absence occurs. The list is not exhaustive but does give the clearest examples in sufficient number to establish a consistent theme. Among these examples are some which relate to a secondary, dependent theme, that of cultic absence. This occurs where the writer applies the theme of judgment by Divine Absence to the cult and concludes that without Yahweh's Presence no valid worship may occur. In judgment Yahweh may absent Himself, thereby making the worship of the people unacceptable and invalid.

At the conclusion of this study we note that the overwhelming majority of these texts are pre-exilic. Ezekiel's texts from the exile are still concerned with judgment associated with the fall of Jerusalem. This not to say that the idea was lost after the exile. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah confirm that one of the aspects of the "new covenant" will be that Yahweh will dwell among His people permanently. This is so

central a theme that Ezekiel even gives the restored city of God the name "Yahweh is there" ( יהוה שמה ). In the post-exilic period the prophet Zechariah was certainly aware of the importance of this theme. His statements in Zech. 1:16 and 2:10-11 (and perhaps 10:6 as well) make it clear that Yahweh had departed from Jerusalem in judgment by referring to the restoration in terms of Yahweh's return.

In closing we should make one other point which we have not noted before. All of the texts in which Yahweh threatens to judge by His absence are directed against His own people, Israel. This motif never occurs in oracles against the nations. Yahweh expresses His judgment upon them in other ways. Perhaps the point is so self-evident that it need not be made, but that is doubtful. This should serve to underline the special relationship that exists between Yahweh and His chosen people. He has chosen to dwell among them and it is that fact which gives them their unique identity. So it is that the greatest punishment that God can inflict upon His people in His absence. When God departs He withdraws the one thing that makes His people unique: Himself. This carries over into the New Testament as well. St. Paul describes the eternal punishment of those who reject the Gospel as being "away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"

ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου  
καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ

in Thessalonians 1:9. This has contributed to the common Christian definition of hell as eternal separation from God. On a more positive note, God created the new Israel just as He created the first Israel, by His indwelling Presence. The promise of the presence of Christ with His

people (Matt. 28:20) confirmed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the constitutive force of the Church today just as Yahweh's presence among His people was in the Old Testament. His abiding presence is supplemented by His special presence in the sacraments where He reveals Himself as the creator of our life and faith in Him and the one who sustains us along the way to the final consummation of the city of Ezekiel's vision,  $\text{יהוה} \text{שׁוֹמֵר}$ .

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CONSULTED

- Ackroyd, Peter R. I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah. London: SCM Press, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The First Book of Samuel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Second Book of Samuel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Albright, William Foxwell. Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. London: The Athlone Press, 1968.
- Allen, Leslie C. The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.
- Alt, Albrecht. "Hosea 5:8-6:6. Ein Krieg und seine Folgen in prophetischer Beleuchtung," Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift 30 (1919): 537-68.
- Andersen, A. A. Psalms. 2 vols. London: Oliphants, 1972.
- Andersen, Francis I. and Freedman, David Noel. Hosea. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1980.
- Barr, J. "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament." Vetus Testamentum Supplement VII. Edited by G. W. Anderson, et al. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960.
- Binns, L. Elliot. The Book of Numbers. London: Methuen and Co., 1927.
- Boling, Robert G. Judges. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1975.
- Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Ringgren, Helmer, eds. Theological Dictionary of Old Testament, 4 vols. Revised ed. Translated by John T. Willis, Geoffrey W. Bromley, and David E. Green. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977-1980.
- Bratton, Fred Gladstone. Myths and Legends of the Ancient Near East. New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1970
- Bright, John. Jeremiah. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965.



- Brockington, L. H. "The Presence of God, A Study of the Use of the Term 'Glory of Yahweh,'" Expository Times 57 (October 1945):21-25.
- Brueggemann, W. "Presence of God, Cultic," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume, pp. 680-83. Edited by Keith Crim et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- Burney, C. F. The Book of Judges. London: Rivingtons, 1930.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.
- Buttrick, G. A.; Bowie, Walter R.; Scherer, Paul; Know, John; Terrien, Samuel; and Harmon, Nolan. eds., The Interpreters Bible, 12 vol. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Campbell, Anthony F. The Art Narrative. Society for Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 16. Missoula, MT: Society for Biblical Literature and Scholar's Press, 1975.
- Carley, Keith W. The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Cassuto, U. Commentary on Exodus. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. 2 vols. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961.
- Chadwick, G. A. The Book of Exodus. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892.
- Cheyne, T. K. Jeremiah. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906.
- Childs, B. Exodus. London: SCM Press, 1974.
- Clements, R. E. Exodus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. God and Temple. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Old Testament Theology. London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1978
- Clifford, Richard J. The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Coggins, R. J. The First and Second Books of Chronicles. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Cole, Alan. Exodus. London: Tyndale Press, 1973.
- Cook, G. A. Ezekiel. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936.
- Crenshaw, James L. Samson. London: S.P.C.K., 1979.

- Cunliffe-Jones, H. The Book of Jeremiah. London: SCM Press, 1960.
- Dahood, Mitchell. Psalms 1-50. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Psalms 51-100. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Psalms 101-150. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1968.
- Davies, G. Henton. Exodus. London: SCM Press, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Presence of God." In Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols. Edited by G. A. Buttrick et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962, 3, 874-5, 3:894-75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Presence of God in Israel." In Studies in History and Religion, 11-29. Edited by E. A. Payne. London: Lutterworth Press, 1942.
- Deane, W. J. Hosea and Joel. New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1906.
- DeVaux, Roland. The Early History of Israel. 2 vols. Translated by David Smith. London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1978.
- Delitzsch, F. Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1872.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A New Commentary on Genesis. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888.
- Dillman, A. Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1880.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897.
- Driver, S. R. The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Book of Samuel. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- Dyrness, William. Themes in Old Testament Theology. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1979.
- Eichrodt, Walther. Theology of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Translated by John Baker. London: SCM Press, 1961-1967.
- Eliade, Mircea. Myth and Reality. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.
- Elliger, K., and Rudolf, W., eds. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Stuttgart: Deutsch Bibelstiftung, 1977.
- Fairbairn, Patrick. Ezekiel and the Book of His Prophecy: An Exposition. 3rd ed. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1862.

- Farrar, F. W. The First Book of Kings. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Second Book of Kings. London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.
- Fohrer, Georg. History of Israelite Religion. Translated by David E. Green. London: S.P.C.K., 1973.
- Frankfort, Henri; Frankfort, H. A.; Wilson, John A.; Jacobsen, Thorkild, and Irwin, William A. The Intellectual Adventures of Ancient Man. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946.
- Fück, Johann, ed. Festschrift Otto Eissfeldt zum 60. Halle and der Salle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1947.
- Gaster, Theodore H. Thespis. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961.
- Gibson, J. C. L., ed. Canaanite Myths and Legends. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, Ltd., 1977.
- Goldman, S. Samuel. London: Soncino Press, 1951.
- Good, E. M. "Hosea 5:8-6:6: An Alternative to Alt," Journal of Biblical Literature 85 (1966):273-86.
- Gray, George Buchanan. Numbers. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1903.
- Gray, John, ed. Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. I and II Kings. London: SCM Press, 1970.
- Gunn, David M. The Fate of King Saul. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, no. 14. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980.
- Gurney, O. R. The Hittites. London: Penguin Books, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Some Aspects of Hittite Religion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Harper, William Rainey. Amos and Hosea. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936.
- Harris, R. Laird; Archer, Gleason L.; Waltke, Bruce, eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980.
- Harrison, R. K. Introduction to the Old Testament. London: The Tyndale Press, 1969.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Jeremiah and Lamentations. London: The Tyndale Press, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Leviticus. London: Inter-Varisty Press, 1980.
- Herbert, A. S. Isaiah 1-39. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 40-66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Hertzerg, H. W. I and II Samuel. London: SCM Press, 1964.
- Hervey, A. C. Judges. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906.
- Hyatt, J. P. Exodus. London: Oliphants, 1971.
- Johnson, A. R. "Aspects of the Use of the Term \_\_\_\_\_ in the Old Testament." In Festschrift Otto Eissfeldt zum 60, pp. 155-59.  
Edited by Johann Fück. Halle an der Salle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1947.
- Kaiser, Otto. Isaiah 1-12. London: SCM Press, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 13-39. London: SCM Press, 1974.
- Kautzsch, E., ed. Genenius' Hebrew Grammar. 2nd English Edition.  
Revised by A. E. Cowley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.
- Keel, Othmar. The Symbolism of the Biblical World. London: S.P.C.K., 1978.
- Keil, C. F. Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel. 2 vols.  
Translated by James Martin. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1876.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Books of Chronicles. Translated by Andrew Harper.  
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Books of the Kings. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Prophecies of Jeremiah. Translated by James Kennedy.  
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880.
- Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel. Translated by James Martin. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Ruth. Translated by James Martin. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1887.
- Kinder, Derek. Psalms 1-72. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Psalms 73-150. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.
- Kissane, Edward J. The Book of Isaiah. 2 vols. Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1943.
- Kramer, S. N., ed. Mythologies of the Ancient World. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Sumerian Mythology. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.
- Leupold, H. C. Exposition of Genesis. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Exposition of Isaiah. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968-1971; reprinted ed., Welwyn Herts., U. K.: Evangelical Press, 1977.
- Levine, Baruch A. In the Presence of the Lord. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974.
- McKane, William. I and II Samuel. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs. London: SCM Press, 1970.
- McKeating, Henry. Amos, Hosea, Micah. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- McKenzie, John L. Second Isaiah. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1968.
- McNeille, A. H. The Book of Exodus. London: Methuen and Co., 1908.
- McQueen, J. G. The Hittites. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1975.
- Mann, Thomas W. Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Martin, James D. The Book of Judges. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Mauchline, John, ed. 1 and 2 Samuel. London: Oliphants, 1971.
- May, Herbert Gordon. "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh." Journal of Biblical Literature 56 (1937):309-21.
- Mays, James L. Amos. London: SCM Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Hosea. London: SCM Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Micah. London: SCM Press, 1976.

- Miller, J. Maxwell, and Tucker, Gene M. The Book of Joshua. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Miskotte, Kornelis H. When the Gods are Silent. Translated by J. W. Doberstein. London: Collins, 1967.
- Mitchell, H. G.; Smith, J. M. P.; and Brewer, J. A. Haggai, Zechariah, Melachi, and Jonah. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912.
- Montgomery, James A. The Books of Kings. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951.
- Myers, Jacob M. I Chronicles. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. II Chronicles. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965.
- Noth, Martin. Exodus. London: SCM Press, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Leviticus. London: SCM Press, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers. London: SCM Press, 1968.
- Oesterley, W. O. E., and Robinson, Theodore H. Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development. 2nd ed. London: S.P.C.K., 1937.
- Otto, Rudolf. The Idea of the Holy. Translated by John W. Harvey. London: Oxford University Press, 1923.
- Plumptre, E. H. Ezekiel. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.
- Porter, J. R. Leviticus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Pritchard, James B., ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts. 2nd Ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.
- Pythian-Adams, W. J. The People and The Presence. London: Oxford University Press, 1942.
- Rad, Gerhard von. Genesis. London: SCM Press, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. God at Work in Israel. Translated by J. H. Marks. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Old Testament Theology. Translated by D. M. G. Stalker. New York: Harper and Row, 1962-65.
- Rawlinson, George. Exodus. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah. 2 vols. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.

- \_\_\_\_\_. II Kings. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.
- Ringgren, Helmer. Israelite Religion. Translated by David Green. London: S.P.C.K., 1966.
- Rowley, H. H. Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Form and Meaning. London: S.P.C.K., 1967.
- Sayce, A. H. The Hittites. London: Religious Tract Society, 1925.
- Scott, R. B. Y. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965.
- Slotki, I. W. Kings I and II. London: Soncino Press, 1950.
- Smith, Henry Preserved. The Books of Samuel. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912.
- Smith, J. M. P.; Ward, W. H.; and Brewer, J. A. Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Joel. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912.
- Smith, R. Payne. I Samuel. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_. II Samuel. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906.
- Snaith, H. N., ed. Leviticus and Numbers. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. Joshua. London: SCM Press, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Judges. London: SCM Press, 1981.
- Speiser, E. A. Genesis. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1964.
- Spurgeon, C. H. The Treasury of David. 7 vols. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1888-1891.
- Sturdy, John. Numbers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Taylor, John B. Ezekiel. London: The Tyndale Press, 1969.
- Terrien, Samuel. The Elusive Presence. Religious Perspectives, no. 26. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Vawter, Bruce. On Genesis. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977.
- Wade, G. W. The Book of the Prophet Isaiah. London: Methuen and Co., 1911.
- Watson, R. A. The Book of Numbers. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.

- Watts, John D. W. The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Weiser, Arthur. The Psalms. Translated by Herbert Hartwell. London: SCM Press, 1962.
- Westermann, Claus. Genesis. 2 vols. Neukirchen-vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 40-66. London: SCM Press, 1966
- \_\_\_\_\_. What Does the Old Testament Say About God. Translated by Friedemann W. Golka. London: S.P.C.K., 1979.
- Wevers, John W. Ezekiel. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969.
- Whybray, R. N. Isaiah 40-66. London: Oliphants, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Succession Narrative. London: SCM Press, 1968.
- Willis, John T. "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary," Journal of Biblical Literature 90 (1977), 288-308.
- Winterbotham, R. Numbers. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.
- Wolff, Hans Walther. Hosea. Edited by Paul D. Hanson. Translated by Gary Stansell. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Joel and Amos. Edited by S. Dean McBride, Jr. Translated by Waldemar Janzen, S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Micah the Prophet. Translated by Ralph D. Gehrke, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Woudstra, Marten H. The Book of Joshua. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981.
- Young, Edward J. The Book of Isaiah. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972.
- Zimmerli, Walther. Ezekiel 1. Translated by Ronald E. Clements. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Old Testament Theology in Outline. Translated by David E. Green. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978.