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THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH
ON
THE HEBREW-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

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INTRODUCTION

THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem and Purpose of the Thesis

1. The Problem Stated

The problem of this study is to examine the results of the impact that the life of Elijah made in his own day and in subsequent history and to determine insofar as possible the reasons for and the extent of his influence on the Hebrew-Christian tradition.

By "influence" is meant "to produce an effect." It may be both quantitative and qualitative in its aspects. By "the Hebrew-Christian tradition" is meant Jewish life and religion and Christian life and religion. It is the plan of the thesis to limit the study to the period from the time of Elijah to the close of Revelation. Additional interesting information could be presented particularly in the Hebrew tradition subsequent to the period treated. A study of the Mohammedan ideas of Elijah are excluded. It may be said that they in part parallel those of the Jews.

Only the effect on the early stages of the Christian movement are given. The influence of Elijah on the Church in the early centuries is indicated but not treated. The Roman Catholic Carmelite movement claiming to have stemmed from Elijah is of interest but is largely out of the scope of the thesis.

The implication of the thesis is that Elijah had an influence upon the Hebrew-Christian tradition. It further implies that this influence is felt down through the centuries. The final implication is that the discoveries made by this study will be helpful to anyone interested in understanding a great prophet of Israel.

2. The Purpose Defined

The immediate purpose is to learn how influential Elijah was in his own age, then in subsequent ages.

The more remote purpose is to present a study of a character in the Bible in the light of recent scholarship including the field of archaeology and to trace the influence of this man upon his race so as to show how it affected their beliefs in the New Testament period. The last study of Elijah of any real worth was completed prior to the end of the last century. This study did not deal with the influence of the man but was almost totally a character study.

B. The Justification of Such a Study

1. Its Attraction:

"Trees and fields tell nothing; men are my teachers." Plato's words from "Phaedrus" are as true today as when they were uttered. Men learn from other men. Mankind is constantly looking for a model for their pattern of living. This study concerns such a man. Though sometimes neglected he has come down through history as a famous character of the past.

He is no ordinary man but one who lived a life elevated into the realm with God. He was a man who was heroic and outstanding in his day. He was a man who knew and was jealous for his God. A study of such a man cannot help but impart to the student something of the courage and the righteous zeal which was Elijah's.

He will lead to God, the God of Carmel and the God of Horeb. He will lead to a God who wants action, and receives it from those who truly know Him.

The "still small voice is still speaking" not just to Elijah but to all who will hear.

The study of such a man must increase one's faith, ignite one's courage, and send one forth to act in the drama of life for his God.

2. Its Contribution:

It will be the first study to the knowledge of the author of this man from this approach. A few others have written biographies. Some have written poems, some music, and some drama, but none have studied his influence upon his race.

When one clearly sees a problem there is always an innate desire to work toward its solution. The difficult thing is to discern what are the more urgent problems that need solution. In order to work through to the solution of any problem the intellect is the prime mover. It, too, receives much of the precious ore that is produced by the labor of its own hands. As a student stands in the presence of a task he may be sure that he will be rewarded intellectually. He will emerge the wiser. In this particular case he will be better equipped to appraise the life of any other man. He will be endowed with a clearer understanding of the specific period of Elijah, of the broader field of the prophets, and the still larger field of the Old and New Testaments. Not only this, but he will gain a greater understanding of those years which preceded the birth of our Lord. Finally, he will become better acquainted with one of the interesting avenues of study in the New Testament. With such knowledge further studies of this sort will be much easier to undertake.

C. Mode of Procedure

1. In Preparation of the Material

In the initial stage of this study of Elijah the material is widely dispersed. The first step is to gather this material and then to determine from it the primary sources for study. The Bible is the best source. It contains a brief biography of Elijah and a record of his subsequent influence in the prophets. His influence extends through the inter-Testament period in legend and tradition, finding expression in the writings of that period. In the New Testament is found further evidences of his influence, and a rather definite expectation concerning his reappearance. Having discovered this material a framework is developed from an inductive study of it. Each segment of source material is subjected to the process of inductive analysis in order to obtain the evidence which is to serve as the basis of the synthesis which is the projected plan of this work.

2. In the Advanced Stage

Having secured the foundation upon which to work, the aim has been to investigate the secondary sources that may be able to throw light on the more difficult problems involved. These sources as by no means in agreement so that extreme care must be exercised to evaluate their contribution properly. These sources are from

numerous books of a general nature that give an admirable picture of the whole pattern of prophecy but, in large, have a meagre allotment of material for our specific problem. The main force of the work is to deal with the primary sources and to work out from there, when advisable, to other material. The foundation will be kept in mind as the superstructure is built.

D. Sources of Data

1. In Scripture:

The Bible, though there is not a large amount of space given to Elijah, is the most revealing source of material yet found of Elijah. It condenses an immense amount of information without which a study of this type would be worthless. References aside from the account in the Book of Kings are quite scattered, and are found on through the New Testament.

2. Tradition:

Much of our information in the inter-Testament period is traditional in character. It is not to be completely discounted on the basis that it may be legendary but, as will be seen, it is valid evidence of the influence of the prophet. It is the attempt of this work to explore every avenue of this type and to project the relevant material to the forefront.

3. Writings:

By "writings" is meant any works about Elijah that are attributed to have been written within the scope of the period studied. The material will be presented. The evidence will be given as to its authenticity, and conclusions drawn therefrom.

4. History:

The historical sources stem from the results of archeology. The archeologist uncovers buried history. The best and latest studies in the archeological and historical field will be consulted and relied upon.

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH
IN HIS OWN TIME

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH IN HIS OWN TIME

A. Introduction

Before one can ascertain the contribution of any person it is helpful and at times needful that one have a clear picture of the man's environment. A thorough knowledge of the period in which the man lived, the nation in which he lived, its customs and its conditions, a study of those nations surrounding this nation are all advisable. It is well also to know something of the social life of the day. But the most important thermometer of the life of any nation is its religion. If it is vibrant the nation's health is good; if it is found to be subnormal, or feverous, with internal infections, the life of the nation is at stake. Before turning to Elijah one should first of all look at what history, archeology, and the Old Testament have to tell about these important matters. As a play would be difficult to perform without scenery, so it would be difficult to understand this great character without first setting

the stage for his appearance.

The latter part of this chapter will deal with his emergence and the influence that he exerted upon Israel and other nations in his own time.

B. The Conditions of His Own Nation

1. Politically.

a. Internal

To a certain extent the above title is ill advised, for a real case has been made by Kiel and others¹ that Elijah was not an Israelite. Be this as it may, it was with the Israelites that he did his major work, and it is the kingdom of Israel with which this study is most concerned.

In order to get a clear and accurate picture of the condition of the Northern Kingdom at the time of Ahab, king of Israel, it is necessary to go back to the time just prior to the original split between the two kingdoms. Solomon at this time built Milo and repaired the walls of Jerusalem. Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, who is to be the future king of the Northern Kingdom, is described as a mighty man of valor and industrious. Solomon,

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1. Karl F. Kiel, Commentary on the Book of Kings, Vol.1, p. 266-7; another source is Cornill, C.H., The Prophets of Israel, p. 11

therefore, placed him in charge of the laborers of the tribe of Joseph (Ephraim). A prophet, Ahijah, clad himself in a new garment, and then tore it into twelve pieces. He told Jeroboam:

"Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to thee ... because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians ... they have not walked in my ways to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and mine ordinances, as did David his father." 1

A command is given Jeroboam:

"...if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and I will build thee a sure house, as I built for David .." 2

Solomon, hearing these things, seeks to kill Jeroboam. Jeroboam flees into Egypt, and there he stays until the death of Solomon. Upon his death he is recalled and is apparently the spokesman for the assembly of Israel, which meets at Shechem. It is then that the request is made of Rehoboam that the burden of the laborers be lightened. The answer came that the burden would be increased. The children of Israel, upon hearing this, answered the king, "What portion have we in David?

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1. I Kings 11: 26-33 (Underscoring is mine)
2. I Kings 11: 38

neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your¹ tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." So the kingdom was split. Rehoboam wanted to start a civil war to regain possession but desisted because of public opinion.

The importance of Jeroboam is in what he now does in the new Northern kingdom. Having been a builder under Solomon, he recognizes the effect of having strong cities. His first project is to build Shechem and then Penuel. He realizes that this is not enough. It is almost inevitable that the people of the Northern kingdom will be drawn to Jerusalem by the Temple. The religious interest must be removed from Jerusalem and be placed in his own country. With this in mind Jeroboam took counsel, the result of which was the production of two calves of gold. He said unto them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."² These were set up, one in Bethel, and one in Dan, so that they might be convenient to the worshipper. Much discussion has been invoked by the matter of the calves. Albright feels that

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1. I Kings 11: 40 - 12:16
2. I Kings 12: 25-29

the calf was selected in contrast to the cherubim in the Temple of Solomon.¹ The cherubim, he would imply, were the product of Canaanitish influence. He would further say that "Jeroboam represented Yahweh as an invisible figure standing on a young bull of gold."² He indicates that some scholars have interpreted the calves to be images of Jehovah, but that this is contrary to present knowledge of Syro-Palestinian iconography in the second and in the first millennia B.C. He further states that it is otherwise unparalleled in Biblical tradition.³

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1. W. F. Albright: From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 229.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

To investigate the variance of views see James Fleming: Personalities of the Old Testament, p.168, footnotes 1-3. Here one group composed of Holscher, Oesterley and Robinson, Lods, and Leslie maintain that the calves were images of Yahweh, a second view that they were his footstool is held by Eichrodt, and a third and final view is held by Meek that Jeroboam was re-establishing the worship of the bull god of the ancient Israelitish confederacy. Albright in this same reference cites Obbink as an exponent of the pedestal theory.

Davis in his Dictionary of the Bible article entitled "Calf" ties it in with the Egyptian worship of Apis, the sacred bull of Egypt. Certainly the Israelites had been indoctrinated in this worship prior to their deliverance. It is noted also that Jeroboam spent time in Egypt and could well have imported it again into Israel. References in Albright on "Hathor", the Egyptian cow goddess, in "From the Stone Age to Christianity" pp.160,170. Also see Finegan, Jack: Light from the Ancient Past, pp.73,74,92, 95 noting figure of this goddess, figure 39.

F.W. Farrar: The First Book of Kings, pp.290-295

J.W. Jack: Samaria in Ahab's Time indicates some ivories were found in Samaria which were from Egypt.

There is evidence to the contrary. For one thing Jeroboam presents them to the people as "gods", not as God. The writer of the account immediately pronounces this as sin, though according to some he may be prejudiced. This evidence coupled with the Aaronic golden calf, and the recent arrival of Jeroboam from the country where the cow was worshipped, would certainly lend credence to the belief that they were images of a pagan god. He further adds, when he presents them to the people, that they are the gods "which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." This shows a close connection between the two.

Jeroboam does not stop with the creation of images; he goes further. He built houses on the high places. He also chose a non-Levitic priesthood and ordained a feast at a different time (8 month 15 day) according to his own choice.

Jeroboam was immediately confronted by an unnamed prophet who prophesied the downfall of the altar as¹ he was standing by the altar to burn incense at Bethel.

A wild and lusty period follows, full of anarchy and bloodshed. Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, was murdered by Baasha. Zimri headed a conspiracy and murdered Elah, the son of Baasha. This conspiracy led to the selection

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1. I Kings 12:28 - 13:1f . This prophetic confrontation proved no determent to King Jeroboam.

of Omri, the captain of the host, as king in the camp of the army. Omri went up to Tirzah, the original capital of the northern kingdom, and lay siege to it.¹ Zimri burned the castle and threw himself into the fire. Omri was not yet king, for a competitor arose in the form of Tibni. It seems from the account that this split the kingdom into half. A civil war broke out which continued four years (932-928), Tibni was killed² and Omri remained the sole ruler (928). It is thought that Tibni was a native of Tirzah. Omri may, for this reason, have desired a new location for this capital. It is suggested that with the palace burned and with an opposition party just lately quelled it was the part of wisdom that the location of the capital be changed. Omri selected an oblong hill six miles northwest of Shechem.³ He purchased it for about \$3,800 and called it "Shomeron" - "place of watch."⁴ The new capital was built here by Omri. He erected a palace and other dwellings and took up his residence there a year after his victory over Tibni (927).⁵

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1. I Kings 12 - 16:20
2. His death made the record stand at four kings, who met violent deaths, out of the six who had reigned.
3. H. H. Graetz: Popular History of the Jews, pp.89-90
4. John D. Davis: Bible Dictionary, article "Samaria"
5. The preceding dates have been taken from Graetz: Popular History, pp.89-90

Graetz indicated that.

"this was the beginning of the city which rivaled Jerusalem for two centuries, and which, after a desolation of over two centuries was to rise again only to renew its hostile attacks upon Jerusalem and Judah. The new capital gave its name to the entire kingdom which was designated as the land of Samaria." ¹

This new capital was much stronger than Shechem, the earliest capital of the land, and better than Tirzah, the capital of Jeroboam. It was located on an isolated hill about 350 to 400 feet above the valley. It could offer stubborn resistance to the best organized armies. Josephus describes it as a "watchtower" ² which commands a wide view to the west. About eight miles of the plain are visible, then a range of low hills, and beyond them ³ the Mediterranean, twenty-three miles away. The Harvard excavations at Samaria have proven that the city was uninhabited prior to the time of Omri. ⁴ The excavators found small, soft limestone caves in the hillside in which Obadiah could have hidden the prophets. One in-

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1. H. H. Graetz: Popular History of the Jews, p.90
2. Flavius Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, XIII,x,2
3. J. W. Jack: Samaria in Ahab's Time, p.2
4. Jack, op.cit., This book is based on the two volumes produced by the excavations made by Harvard University entitled Harvard Excavations at Samaria (1908-10). A more up-to-date article (though brief) is found in J. Finegan: Light from the Ancient Past, pp.154-7.

teresting discovery was that there was only one gate which is located on the west side of the city. The only approach to this gate is up the hill on the east around along the city wall to the western entrance. It is easy to see how such construction would assist in the defense of the city. The archeologists revealed strong walls about ten feet thick, a palace of large well-dressed yellow limestone, and private homes built of hewn stone. All this reveals¹ "its perfect organization, its riches, and its power." It is interesting to note that Jack indicates that such work would have required slavery or a program of near slavery to attain completion.² From the methods used³ this would seem to be accurate.

Not only did Omri change the location of his capital, but he altered other phases of the government. He sought alliances with foreign countries. One was made with Jehoshaphat, another with Phoenicia. It will also⁴ be noted that Moab was made a tributary.

By the time of King Ahab, Elijah's contemporary, the rule in North Israel was under rather strict control.

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1. Jack, op.cit., p.24
2. Ibid
3. Jack, op.cit, p.14
4. Cambridge Ancient History, Volume III, p.362

The government was perhaps in better shape than it had ever been or would ever be. Omri turned over to his son, Ahab, a strong and prospering nation. The reins of its destiny were placed in his hands.

b. External.

The internal political situation has been considered. Now consideration is to be given to the external situation.

To the south Egypt, one of the outstanding powers of the past, was in a period of impotency. The only influence she made on Israel was in trade which was stimulated by the Phoenician Alliance.

It has already been indicated that it was the policy to increase the power of the kingdom by alliances. In order to stimulate the commerce of the kingdom Ahab turned to the most logical nation - to the west. There, lying on a long, narrow strip of coastland, was the country of Phoenicia. She was almost entirely a maritime nation, trading as far west on the Mediterranean as Gibraltar, which was at that time considered almost the end of the world. And Ramos¹ claims the Phoenicians came to Brazil at this time. Her sailors even attempted to circumnavigate the continent of Africa. Classical authors say that the

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1. B.A.S. Ramos: Inscriptions and Traditions of Pre-historic America, p. 43f.

Phoenicians migrated from the Erythraean Sea (Herodotus¹ says the Persian Gulf) to the east coast of the Mediterranean Ocean. They called themselves "Canaanites", and their language resembled that of the Hebrew. They were called "Sidonians" by Homer and the Old Testament, mainly because Sidon was the principal city. They dealt in metals, gems, glassware, textiles, and even slaves. Being traders they spread their knowledge to seaport towns. They were governed by rulers that claimed ancestry from the gods.² They were an independent nation from 970-772 B.C.,³ which was the period between subjection by the Egyptian Empire and Assyrian Empire. It was during the latter part of this period that this alliance was made.

Tyre had also passed through a period of regicide. Josephus quotes Menander of Ephesus, who gives the list of kings and their deaths. This list runs from Hirom until Pygmalion, whose sister is said to have run away and built Carthage in Lybia.

Pygmalion "... was slain by his brother Pheles, who took the kingdom and reigned about eight months, though he lived fifty years: he was slain by Ithobalus, the priest of Astarte, who reigned thirty-two years and lived sixty-eight years..."⁴

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1. Herodotus, i 1; vii, 89
2. Karl Baedeker: Palestine and Syria, article on Phoenicia
3. Encyclopedia Britannica, article Phoenicia
4. Josephus, Apion, i, 18
See also Rawlinson: History of the Phoenicians

To this Rawlinson adds:

"Eth-baal, king of the Sidonians, seems to be rightly identified by Josephus with the Ithobalus of Menander, who reigned in Tyre, probably over all Phoenicia, within fifty years of the death of Hiram. This Ithobalus, whose name means 'with him is Baal,' was originally priest of the great temple of Astarte in Tyre. At the age of thirty-six he conspired against the Tyrian king, Pheles (a usurping fratricide), slew him and seized the throne. His reign lasted thirty-two years, and he established a dynasty which continued on the throne at least sixty-two years longer, to the death of Pygmalion." ¹

It was quite logical that Ithobal (Ethbaal) should desire to strengthen his own weak position on the throne by an alliance that would increase trade and assist militarily, if necessary. An offensive and a defensive alliance with Israel was concluded. The relationship was further strengthened by marriage by Omri's son and Ethbaal's daughter.

It has been mentioned that Moab was reconquered by Omri. It had been set free since the reign of Jeroboam. This conquest was not lasting since not long afterward Israel was overrun by Ben Hadad I, King of Damascus, ² who was an ally of Moab. However, Moab, seems to have ³ been tributary to Ahab at least most of the time.

This brings one to the Kingdom of Damascus. His-

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1. George Rawlinson: Kings, Books I and II
2. Graetz, op.cit., p. 991
3. Finegan, op.cit., pp. 157-8
II Kings 3:4

torians tell little concerning this period. The line of kings is not accurately given. "The belief that Damascus is the oldest city in the world still inhabited has much to recommend it."¹ It will be recalled that Abijah had a league with Tab-Rimmon of Damascus to assist him in his wars against Israel. Tab-Rimmon's son, Ben Hadad, came to terms with the second successor of Jeroboam, Baasha. Asa followed Abijah's policy. Syria established a quarter for Syrian merchants in Samaria.² Kraeling quotes from Kittle to indicate that Damascus was one of the reasons for the Phoenician alliance:

"Since the Armaeans controlled the highway to Akko it was natural that they should take advantage of their predominance to capture the Israelitic trade market. Through a clever stroke of diplomacy, however, Omri succeeded in off-setting this defeat; he renewed the covenant with Phoenicia." ³

Josephus makes mention of Damascus. The most noteworthy deals with the succession of kings, in which he quotes Nicolaus, the Damascus historian, in this regard, "When Hadad was dead, his posterity reigned for ten generations, each of his successors receiving from his father this his dominion, and this his name, as did the Ptolemies, in

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1. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, article "Damascus"
2. I Kings 15 - 20
Encyclopedia Britannica, op.cit.
3. E.G.H. Kraeling: Aram and Israel, p.50

¹
Egypt! This kingdom, though small at this time, was quite strong. She should have been more concerned with what was developing in the East, as this was to affect her in later years.

If the eyes of the world were not fastened on Assyria to the east, they should have been. For over two hundred years the Assyrian Empire had been dormant. With the establishment of the dynasty of Ashurrabi about 1001 B.C. she began to wake. Tiglath-pileser II (966-934) was called "Shar Kishshati," a title which was reserved for mighty monarchs. Ashur-dan II (934-911) started a great building program. The first to conduct extensive campaigns was Adad-Nirari (911-889). His reign is summarized thus:

"He had restored the natural boundaries of Assyria, and once again enabled his country to rank as an important military power. Even so Assyria remained a small, though compact power, the task of restoring the supremacy once exercised north, south, east and west still remained." ²

He was followed by Tuklti-Nunurta II (889-884). In the five years that he reigned he followed the pattern set by his predecessor in the aim to establish an Assyrian Empire. This policy was carried out by a succession of monarchs "not always with immediate success but with a

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1. Josephus, Antiquities, VII,5,2
2. Cambridge: Ancient History, Vol. 3, p.9

persistence remarkable in the history of Western Asia.¹
It was their plan to expand to the west and the north and
to reach the Sea. They had learned from experience that
to do this they must not only conquer these territories
but govern them well. Their aim was that the "whole
territory as far west as Carchemish must become an inte-
gral part of Assyria."² This governing, as they directed
it, must be an assimilation of the peoples. At times this
was done by moving whole populations to a new area. They
"pursued such an aim with perseverance and energy over a
long course of years."³

The next ruler, who was contemporary to the
period under investigation, should have aroused, if he
did not, the interests of all the western people. He was
Ashur-nasir-pal II (884-859). He continued the previous
policy of assimilation. His methods were quite brutal at
times. The "governor of Nishtun who offered the most
stubborn resistance, was flayed alive ... a treatment
meted out by Ashur-nasir-pal to any who caused him trouble."⁴

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1. The Cambridge Ancient History, p.9
2. Ibid. p.10
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, additional accounts are to be found in Finegan,
Light from the Ancient Past, pp. 170-1

The nation expanded most in the west. He received no strong resistance in this direction. One ruler sent him gifts. One of the most remarkable events in his reign was his march to the Mediterranean in 876, at the start of the reign of Ahab. A historian describes it, saying,

"It is difficult to understand why Ashur-nasir-pal II was able without a blow to imitate so exactly the exploits of Tiglath-pileser in the west unless there was an Assyrian party working in his favor. Setting out from Kalakh in the month Elul, the king marched to Carchemish ... The Hittite Sangara, prince of Carchemish, paid a very heavy tribute . . . At last he reached the Mediterranean, and the great Phoenician cities Tyre, Sidon, Byblus, Tripolis and Arpal sent gifts." ¹

Here are his own recorded words: "Ashur-nasir-pal (884-859 B.C.) thus speaks (876 B.C.): 'I marched along the Lebanon and went up to the Great Sea of the land of Amor. In the Great Sea I washed my weapons. I sacrificed my gods.'" ² It is quite evident that Ahab was aware of this rising power in the east. It is interesting to note that the reverse was true, Assyria knew of Israel. Shalmaneser in his inscriptions refers "to the land of the house of Humri."

Thus it is seen that Ahab is presented with a kingdom which is allied with Phoenicia, which is under

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1. The Cambridge Ancient History, pp. 15-16
2. Ibid, p. 362

the shadow of Syria or Damascus, and which should be aware of a further threat from the east by Assyria. On the positive side she is on friendly terms with Judah and has Moab as tributary to **her**.

2. Socially

To understand the condition of the country socially one must consider the various groups in the kingdom. From the excavations of Samaria it is known that there were skilled artisans, and their helpers either slaves or of a near slave status. There were the agricultural workers with small farms out from the towns. There were the nomads who dwelt in tents, kept sheep or cattle, and wandered throughout the land in search of pasture. There was some feeling between the nomad and the farmer. Peake indicates that the Israelite who settled on the land to farm felt a compunction to worship the gods of his property, the local Baal if you wish. The shepherd felt that the old nomadic life of Abraham was the acceptable one and tended to worship the God of Abraham. "At a later period Canaan was for the Hebrews the land of corn and wine; but earlier it was pre-emi-¹nently 'a land flowing with milk and honey'". This conflict was intensified after the **lifetime** of Elijah.

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1. A. S. Peake: The Servant of Yahweh, pp. 114-115

There was other social unrest in the land. With the increased commercial life as a result of the alliance with Phoenicia, there was rising a merchant class which was later to acquire so much wealth at the expense of the poor that prophets were to cry out for justice. From the excavations at Samaria one may infer that this was rapidly taking place, a wealthy merchant class was coming into being.

There is the likelihood that a great influx of Phoenicians caused difficulties with the natives. Kastein says, "Hosts of Phoenician priests and prophets swarmed over the land, and the Phoenicians began to settle in the country and above all in the towns." ¹ If this be true-and we have no reason to doubt it as there is additional evidence of confirmation ² - it would be only natural for the Israelites to be resentful of the artisans, the wealthy merchants, and the clergy who had peacefully invaded their homeland.

It may also be deduced that Omri in his various methods of expansion had to establish a large army. It is a well-known fact that this is costly. If one reads

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1. J. Kastein: History and Destiny of the Jews, p.41
2. W. F. Albright: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, p.13.
The presence of Phoenician objects of art throughout Palestine would contribute additional evidence.

the account of the battle of Karkar (854B.C.) one discovers that Ahab contributed a major portion of the troops for the engagement. The cost of such an enterprise was exacted from the population. This was a burden upon the people, as was the almost certain conscription of their manpower.

A clear picture of the clergy is not given. There is knowledge of the existence of over one hundred prophets of Jehovah. The priests appointed by the court, at least according to the custom instigated by Jeroboam, are not mentioned. It is quite possible that Omri did not appoint any who were outstanding enough to mention.

It is evident that there was an undercurrent of unrest among the populace. Yet it is well to remember that certain groups were prospering as never before. The soldiers gloried in their power and no doubt shared in the loot. The new vocation of merchant offered much to those who entered into it. The increased strength and prestige of their nation no doubt elevated the hearts of the people in spite of their misgivings. Actually, the people were in a state in which they could be easily swayed in any direction.

3. Spiritually

a. Worship of Jehovah

As has been indicated Jeroboam established a

new type of worship. There were different types of priesthood, two places of worship, a new feast day, and two images of calves. The writer of the Book of Kings has little to say of commendation for the conduct of worship in Israel. This is also true of the Chronicles.¹ The only evidence is that which is gleaned from the account of Elijah. There were men like Obadiah who were true to God. There were prophets of Jehovah. In addition, the Horeb incident indicates that there were people who were still true to Jehovah. It was a difficult day for the person who wanted to serve Jehovah. It was made more so in the reign of Ahab. Prosperity and religion seem to have had a difficult time together. It is quite evident that drastic measures were needed when the alliance with Phoenicia meant a threat to the worship of Jehovah.

b. Importation of Religions

(1) Nature of these religions

One of the reasons given by Ahijah the prophet for the dismemberment of the united kingdom was that Solomon had permitted the people to worship the goddess of the Sidonians, Astoreth. This name in the plural, Ashtaroth,

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1. II Chronicles 13: 8-20

has a Biblical history beginning in Genesis.¹ There are
commands given against this worship as early as Exodus.²
The goddess is first mentioned as being served in Judges.³
It is a part of the worship in both the Northern⁴ and
the Southern⁵ Kingdoms. Astoreth was the female Canaan-
ite goddess and was accompanied by the male Baal. The
discovery at Ras Shamra of a Ugarit library has helped a
great deal in understanding this type of religion. It
should be understood that Ugarit ceased to exist after
the twelfth century as a result of the invasion of people
from the north and from the sea and could not be a per-
fectly accurate picture of the ninth century era. It
gives a picture of the Canaanite religion shortly before
Israel entered into Palestine. "This religion was poly-
theistic, mythological and ritualistic, and was center-
ed to a large degree in the interest in the fertility
of the soil."⁶

Albright holds that the Canaanites and the
Phoenicians were one people in respect to language

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1. Genesis 14:5, also I Samuel 31:10
2. Exodus 34:13, also Deuteronomy 7:5, 12:3, 16:21
3. Judges 3:7, 6:25-30
4. I Kings 14:15
5. I Kings 14:23, 15:13
6. Finegan, op.cit., pp. 148-149

and cultural tradition.¹ The Phoenicians retained the name "Canaanites" throughout their Syrian existence. Augustine indicates that the colonists still retained the name in his time. Egyptian sources authenticate their existence back to the second millennium.² They were forced into their narrow strip of land by the Armenians coming south, the Philistines going north, and the Israelites pressing in from the east. They achieved their zenith under Hiram, who ruled in the capitol of Tyre. The Sidonians established colonies at that time in Cyprus, Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa. Philo of Byblus gives us the only native history, which prior to the Ugarit discovery was considered unreliable, but by that discovery has been validated.³

It is a difficult problem to get a clear picture of the Canaanite deities. They change their character with ease so that a description at one time is inadequate or incorrect at another time. Albright emphasizes the fact that the names for the gods are inexplicable, whereas in most religions they have a definite etymological

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1. This is developed in detail in studies in the History of Culture, Waldo Leland Volume, Mensha, 1942 pp.11-50 in an article entitled "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization."
2. W.F. Albright: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, p. 68
3. Ibid, p.69

meaning. This he would say seems to indicate a nearness to the source of the religion. From the Ugarit, which speaks of general gods, and does not relate to local deities, is obtained a picture of the Canaanite Pantheon. 'El' was the chief god. He was a remote and vague personality. He was called "the father of man", "the father of years", and also "father bull." He was the progenitor of gods and man. He was replaced by Baal though he retained a nominal position over the Pantheon. Philo¹ indicates that El had three wives, Astarte, and Asherah (Rhea), and Baaltis. Philo paints a brutal picture of El. One of the degrading stories taken from the Ugarit tablets is as follows:

"El seduces two women, whose names were not mentioned, and allows them to be driven into the desert after the birth of two children, 'Dawn' (Shahru) and 'Sunset' (Shalmu). The description of the act of seduction is one of the frankest and most sensuous in ancient Near-Eastern literature." 2

Melcarth, equivalent to Baal, is god of the underworld, and of the soil fertility. A "field of Baal" was a field³ of ample water supply.

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1. Albright, op.cit., p.73
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p.81
Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, article on "Baal"

Baal was also the great storm god. His name meant "lord", "husband", or "possessor" and he was described as the "Lord of the Earth." As such he was the god of fertility, the grain god, and the god of justice. There were three goddesses, Astarte, Anath, and Asherah. "Astarte (Ashtaroth) was the goddess of the evening star."¹ Asherah was normally goddess of the sea. All three were concerned with war and sex, and the latter being their primary concern. Albright says,

"Sacred prostitution was apparently an almost invariable concomitant of the Phoenician and Syrian goddess whatever her personal name as we know from Herodotus, Strabo, and Lucian... Images accentuate the female organs. The Phoenicians attributed to her two sons 'Sexual Desire' and 'Sexual Love'... At its best there can be no doubt that there was a certain amount of aesthetic charm about Canaanite literary and artistic portrayal of these goddesses ... at its worst, however, the erotic aspect of their cult must have sunk to extremely sordid depths of social degradation." ²

Josephus quotes Dios and Menander, who give a description of the Temple at Apheka adorned with gold and emerald pillars.³ Farrar describes it thus:

"It abounded in wealthy gifts, and its multitude of priests, women, and mutilated ministers - of whom Lucian counted three hundred

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1. Albright, op.cit., p.74
2. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
3. Josephus: Antiquities, VIII,5,3; Apion I,18
Herodotus ii,66

at one sacrifice - were clad in splendid vestments. Children were sacrificed by being put in a leathern bag and flung down from the top of the temple, with the shocking expression that 'they were calves, not children' . . . The Galli were maddened into a tumult of excitement by the uproar of drums, shrill pipes, and clanging cymbals, gashed themselves with knives and potsherds, and often ran through the city in women's dress." ¹

Asherah was called in the Ugaritic "she who walks on the Sea." She is mentioned as early as 1750 B.C. in a Sumerian inscription and she seems to have undergone a change down through history. At first she was the wife of El, then the consort of Baal. She was the sea goddess for the Phoenicians, but when she is found in Israel she appears to be a cult object of wood. Albright states that "the shift from 'sea goddess' to 'grove' is, however, as remarkable as any shift known in the history of religion." ²

The religion practiced sacrifice of people as well as animals, as is "attested by many Roman witnesses, that the Carthaginians, who migrated from Phoenicia in the ninth and eight centuries B.C., practiced human sacrifice on a large scale down to the fall of Carthage." ³

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1. F.W. Farrar: The First Book of Kings, pp.352,353 He quotes Dollinger, Judenth. und Heidenthum
2. Albright, op. cit., pp.78,79
3. Ibid, p.93

"Philo Byblius is said by Porphyry to have cited many ex-¹amples of human sacrifice in early Phoenician history."

This Phoenician religion is often compared with that of the Greek Dionysus or the Thracian Bacchus. Helidor testifies in describing the worship of Melkart (The Tyrian Baal): "They jumped sometimes in rapidly succeeding bounds, sometimes scurrying over the ground and whirling their whole bodies as though possessed."² Kittel refers to "Kedish women who sacrificed their chastity in the service of the god to increase the temple treasury."³ "It was the gospel of the freedom of unfettered, unrestricted living of one's own life."⁴

It may be concluded that this religion was sensuous, cruel, and polytheistic. There was no comparison between this pagan cult and the religion of Jehovah even in the adulterated form practised in the Northern Kingdom. No wonder Elijah was incensed at its entrance into the life of the people.

(2) Their Introduction into Israel

Omri, in his zeal to make a great power out of his

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1. Albright, op.cit., p. 93
2. Rudolf Kittel: Great Men and Movements in Israel, p.159
3. Ibid., p. 160
4. Ibid., p. 163

nation, was not so zealous in protecting her strength morally or religiously. He, like Solomon, saw no reason why he should not permit the invasion of the Phoenician religion, especially since the Phoenician king was a former priest of that religion. How could he do otherwise? Graetz¹ says that Omri found the religion of Jeroboam too tame for him. He introduced the cults of Baal and Astarte as the official religion. He erected a temple in Samaria, the new capitol, imported priests from Phoenicia, and ordered that sacrifices be offered to the new gods throughout the kingdom. He thought that by so closely aligning himself with Ethbaal, to increase the prestige and power of his kingdom. He prospered as a result and was convinced that his policy was wise, and he determined to make the people forget their God and their origin as a people "set apart," a people who had a tradition that prohibited idolatry. Omri died six years after building Samaria, and so was unable fully to bring about such an innovation, but he had set the wheels in motion.

(3) The Effects of the Importation

It is difficult to ~~assay~~ the immediate results of Omri's policy. Those who were interested from only a

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1. Graetz, op.cit., p.91

financial standpoint were quite willing to follow and perhaps even advised such a move. One may be reasonably sure that the military leaders were more or less indifferent as long as the nation was prospering. The politicians no doubt advised it as a good move. Some people thought that it might relieve their tax burden and be good for the economic structure of the country. There were on the other hand a few who objected, but not enough to catch the eye of the historian. Since the religion had already been adulterated, why not show the people of Phoenicia this token of esteem? W. Robertson Smith says that there was never a real threat to the worship of Jehovah. He calls it a "temporary vogue." He further indicates that Ahab had no intention of giving up the worship of Jehovah.¹ It will be quite evident from the text of the Bible that this matter cannot be treated so lightly. The persecution of the prophets is only one case in point.

C. The Character of Elijah

1. Origin and Development

Not much is known of the early life of the prophet Elijah, who was of the sojourners of Gilead and

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1. K. Kiel: The Book of Kings on I. Kings 17:1

"the Tishbite." No authoritative evidence has yet been presented as to the location of Tishbi if it is a location.

¹
The latter phrase is debatable as well. Kiel says that the preposition would definitely indicate that he was a sojourner in Gilead and not a native. He infers that it should have said "from" to be indicative of nativity.

²
Skinner rules a mistranslation, holding to the reading of the LXX "from Tishbe of Gilead." There are several other possibilities, namely, that he was an Israelite who had gone to Gilead earlier, among a group who had made this exodus. Also Gilead may refer to the city and not the country. For our purposes the matter is not a serious one and need not be settled. It is quite possible that Elijah escaped an early persecution and was accounted with a group which had fled into the hilly country. When Obadiah reminds him of the persecution ³ he is familiar with it. How did Elijah know Ahab as well as he did unless he had been rather closely related with Samaria? Regardless of whether he had been in Gilead, the city or country, he was in a rugged section of country aptly named, for the word "Gilead" means strong, hard, rocky,

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1. Kiel, op.cit. **Latter** phrase refers to "sojourner in Gilead".
2. Skinner: Kings, on I. Kings 17:1
3. I. Kings 18:13

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or rough, Elijah could not help gaining something of the character of the land. It does little good to speculate as to just what happened in the land of Gilead, but when he presents himself before Ahab he has a sense of standing before the living presence of the God of Israel: This incidentally is one of the key phrases which Elijah uses. Somewhere out in the ruggedness of Gilead Elijah had found the presence of God. Throughout our account God is a living reality with him. God provides for him. God complies with his petitionary prayers. God imparts to him power to deal with his time and situation. Tradition describes him as,

"a man of short stature, or rugged countenance. He was 'a lord of hair' -- the thick black locks of the Nazarite (for such he probably was) streamed over his shoulders like a lion's mane, giving him a fierce unkept aspect.." ²

The source of his character was derived from the out-of-doors in rugged country, and from God, whom he had found as few other men had discovered Him.

2. Nature

The name "Elijah" means "my God is Jehovah." As

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1. Cheyne: *Hallowing of Criticism*, p.9. See for further picture of the land.
2. F. W. Farrar: *The First Book of Kings*, p.360

one looks at the account one cannot help realizing that Elijah was quite properly named, as nowhere in the account is God absent. Elijah's character is religious through and through. An indomitable faith in God possesses him. As a result of such a faith he never questions what God wants him to do. Such a faith led him against overwhelming odds in the contest against false religion on the summit of Mount Carmel. God rewarded such faith and men trembled before Elijah. Later the king himself trembled before Elijah in the vineyard. His was not the pious religion of a lazy priest, nor the compromising indifference of so many in the kingdom. Rather with an unshakeable faith in God, alone and unafraid, with no help nor advice from men, he fights for Jehovah his God, and wins the victory. Not only does he prove unquestionably the supremacy of God in the nation but he continues to attempt to lead the nation and especially the king into a right relation with God.

One can see also a sympathetic side to his nature. In his relationship with the widow he is kind and compassionate. His relation with Elisha was anything but harsh and appears on the contrary to be one of helpfulness. A sense of humor can be claimed for Elijah when on Mount Carmel he makes fun of the prophets of Baal.

Through all his life God was with him. Even in his flight God provided for him. In his despair at Horeb God appeared in person to encourage him.

Is it any wonder that men say he was the "great-¹est prophetic hero of the kingdom of the ten tribes .." or "after Moses, Elijah was the greatest man in Israel's religious life?"²

D. Elijah's Influence on His Own Nation

1. In politics

It has been mentioned that an alliance was made with Phoenicia which was strengthened by the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel. It would seem that Ahab was desirous of being like Solomon as well as his father. He had more than one wife, was a builder, and strengthened the kingdom in much the same way. Elijah's first encounter with the king was very direct. He met Ahab face to face and delivered his message announcing a drought. The last thing that Ahab wanted was this. It would eliminate the trade with Phoenicia and would weaken both countries materially. Without the products from Israel, Phoenicia had less with which to trade and thus, the real basis of the alliance

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1. H. Ewald: The History of Israel, p.64

2. R. Kittel: Great Men and Movements in Israel, p.171

would be abrogated. One reads later that the famine extended over at least a part of Phoenicia, and should the blame ever be placed upon Ahab and his country a rift might well come between the two nations.

Elijah disappeared and when the drought had actually come, Ahab sought him. Obadiah testifies later,

"As Jehovah thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, he is not here he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not."¹

Ahab was desirous to end the drought and the logical person to contact was the annunciator of it. Just what Ahab intended to do with Elijah when he found him is another matter, but he was quite zealous in seeking him. One is justified in thinking that the only nearby nation not searched was Phoenicia, as that would reveal that Israel's God might be responsible, thus bringing to pass the rift between the two nations. Phoenicia would blame Israel and her God for the drought. When Elijah finally revealed himself, he did it through Obadiah and Elijah had Ahab come to him. **Elijah** wanted it known to Ahab that though he was king of Israel that he, Elijah, represented a far superior power. It is to be noted also that Elijah gave the orders. Ahab

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1. I Kings 18:10

has only time to ask a question as to the identity of Elijah and to call him "a troubler of Israel" before Elijah speaks, and that is the sum total of Ahab's conversation. One can see from the attitude of Ahab that the drought has affected the country severely and that he is interested in the restoration of the land to its fruitfulness so that he may once again reign over a prosperous country. It is with this in mind that he calls Elijah "a troubler of Israel."

Elijah now gives the reason for the drought,

"I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim. Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table." 1

Ahab did not know why this order was given.

There was no promise concerning the end of the drought. Jezebel did not even consider the event significant enough to attend. It was puzzling to find a convocation of the people called and all the prophets of Baal and Asherah from Phoenicia. Was Elijah going to unite with the prophets of Baal, the god of the soil, and fertility, in order to bring rain? There had been an altar to Baal

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1. I Kings 18: 17-19

on Carmel. Jezebel perhaps was at first indignant, and then she thought it humorous and told her prophets to go if they wanted to see just what this Elijah would do. Had they not besought Baal to aid them both in Israel and in Phoenicia for these three years, and would he not help them when he had the first opportunity? And so Jezebel stayed at home and the prophets went to see what it was all about.

Little did they expect the contest that was staged. Much less did they anticipate the result. Jehovah the God of Israel won the day. Ethbaal's god, Baal, lost. Jezebel, his daughter, was furious. She was angry not so much for the death of the prophets but for the defeat given her religion. Rain came from Jehovah, not Baal. Fire came from Jehovah. It is easy to see what resultant political repercussions were felt in the capitals at Samaria and at Tyre. One can be sure that Ahab lost prestige with the Priest-King as he not only was present but had permitted this to take place. It is no little factor in the reason for Ben Hadad of Damascus' attacking Samaria. It is an explanation as to why Ahaziah later sent to Ekron instead of Tyre for religious advice. As a result of the Carmel incident the political situation in Israel was radically changed.

2. In Religion

Elijah was recognized as the great champion of Jehovah. There were other prophets of Jehovah. Obadiah testifies,

"Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of Jehovah, how I hid a hundred of Jehovah's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?" ¹

Just what part these prophets took in the life of Israel must for a time have been a minor one. Four hundred prophets are present when Ahab and Jehoshaphat hold their council of war. There is no evidence that there was even an existent priesthood. Elijah performed rites himself on Carmel, and alone. It may be said that Elijah was the only active religious leader from the time of the Jezebel purge to the Carmel experience. Obadiah calls him "my lord," which is the same phrase that he uses in reference to Ahab, the king. ² Elijah considers himself alone.

Just before Elijah's appearance the condition of the religion of the nation was stated thus:

"And Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing

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1. I Kings 18:13. Also note I Kings 19:14
2. I Kings 18:7,10

for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made the Asherah; and Ahab did yet more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." 1

To this some would add the fact that a Bethelite attempted to challenge the prohibition against rebuilding Jericho, a prohibition given by Jehovah. This met with punitive results.

Elijah had inherited a tradition from a series of predecessors in the prophetic line. Ever since the time of Moses, men had contended with the rulers of lands for a pure religion and ethic. Moses before Pharoah, Samuel before Saul, Nathan before David, Ahijah before Jeroboam, were all men of this type. It is not necessary to trace the history of the prophetic line nor to show Elijah's qualifications to be assigned a place among them. 2

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1. I Kings 16:29-33
2. For discussion of Prophets and Prophecy see:
 - S. Davison: The Text of the Old Testament, Chapter XVII, p. 809f
 - W. J. Beecher: The Prophets and the Promise, Ch. I-IV
 - A. B. Bruce: Apologetics, pp. 226-228
 - C. H. Cornill: The Prophets of Israel, pp. 5-10
 - A. Kuenen: The Religion of Israel, Vol. I, Ch. III, p. 213f
 - and other standard works on Prophecy.

Elijah has thus been described,

"With all the passion at his command, he endeavored to abolish these evils; he rushed through the country like a whirlwind, preaching, stirring up the people, threatening and warning them and like a whirlwind vanished into the wilderness only to burst forth again unexpectedly to continue his wild mission. His slogan was characteristic both of the man and his idea: 'Serve the Lord thy God with all thy strength as the slave serveth his master.'" ¹

Obadiah further testifies to the idea that the Spirit of Jehovah sweeps Elijah away, and is fearful in telling Ahab that Elijah desires to see him lest this happen prior to the time of the appointed meeting. ²

Elijah's religious fervor has brought decided discomfort to both the Israelites and the Phoenicians. The drought has affected all. Certainly many in Israel know that it has been proclaimed by Elijah, the prophet of Jehovah. So with awe and expectation, together with some animosity, the eyes of the nation are on Elijah as he ascends Mount Carmel.

Elijah's plan is not a joint entreaty for rain. Instead there is to be a contest. Elijah faces his people with blazing eyes and says, "How long will ye go lame upon tottering knees?" ³ "If Jehovah be God follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the

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1. J. Kastein: History and Destiny of the Jews, p.41
2. I Kings 18:12
3. Ewald's translation found in The History of Israel, p. 69

people answered not a word."¹ Elijah makes them look back to the God of their past. He is a true reformer, as

"true reformers do not claim to be heard on the ground of the new things they proclaim, but rather because they alone give the weight to the old truths which the mass of their contemporaries cannot formally deny, but practically ignore."

He points out how much Jehovah is in the minority, with only one prophet as opposed to the four hundred and fifty of Baal. In spite of this, Elijah asks for a contest, he gives the priests of Baal the choice of bullocks, allows them to start first, and to consume most of the time. The priests of Baal have no choice but to accept the challenge. One may surmise that they do not expect either effort to avail in obtaining fire for the offerings.

Elijah, instead of preparing his altar and sacrifice, indulges in heaping ridicule upon the priests of Baal. This added to the feeling of the people that he had supreme confidence in Jehovah, and spurred the Baalistic priests to greater fervor.

After their demonstration Elijah rebuilds the altar of Jehovah before all the people, using the symbolic twelve stones, prevents any later problems of refu-

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1. I Kings 18:21

2. W. R. Smith: The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History, p.83

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tation by drenching his sacrifice and altar with water,
and having done this he prays,

"O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Issac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." 2

The answer comes and all is consumed. "When the people saw it they fell on their faces: and they said Jehovah, He is God: Jehovah, He is God." 3 The priests of Baal no doubt begin to steal away from the scene, but Elijah is quick to have them seized and slain, in his own fervor to rid Israel of this terrible religion. Keil defends him in the act saying, "Elijah acted right... because of the Divine right of the theocracy, which prohibited idolatry on pain of death, Deuteronomy xvii:2-4; xiii:13ff." 4 He also indicates that "these had persecuted the servants of the true God, and at their instigation Queen Jezebel has caused them to be put to death

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1. Kiel, Commentary on the Books of the Kings and F. W. Farrar: The First Book of Kings, p.393, footnote 3 gives the older types of fraud which were claimed. A modern claim of fraud is refuted by A.S. Peake: The Servant of Yaweh, p.125, Josephus has an interesting theory as to the source of the water, Antiquities VIII,xiii,5
2. I. Kings 18:36-7
3. I. Kings 18:39
4. Kiel, op.cit. p284 and notes, also Farrar,op.cit.p395-8

by hundreds on account of religion."¹ The event changes the whole life of the nation. Once again Jehovah is the God of Israel. The Phoenician Baal has had a crushing defeat.

With the defeat the drought ends. Elijah prays with Ahab on the summit, and a cloud appears. The Phoenicians later attribute this to Ethbaal. The record of Meander of Ephesus states,

"Under him (Ethbaal) there was a want of rain from the month of Hyperberetaeus till the month of Hyperetaeus of the year following; but when ² he made supplications there came great thunders."

The king and the people of Israel are convinced that the Phoenician Baal, who is supposed to be the god of rain, of the storm and of fertility, has failed. They leave Carmel pledged to follow Jehovah. Under the influence of Jezebel the religion lingers, but will soon cease to be a problem in Israel.

The defeat of her religion did not defeat the queen, Jezebel. When she heard the news she was furious and immediately sent Elijah a note that on the morrow

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1. Kiel, op.cit., p.284
2. Josephus: Antiquities, VIII, xiii,2

she would have him killed.¹ Elijah, elated at the victory of Jehovah, had not counted on the contingency that she would not accept defeat. It was yet necessary for the people to make known their new stand for Jehovah. It remained yet for the Phoenicians to become virtually hostile toward Israel. It remained yet for Jezebel to be in the minority as a power in Israel. She was to come to the place where one of her own retinue was to murder her. In the meantime Elijah departed, as he had come, after he announced the drought.

Elijah's departure was neither condemned nor commended by his nation. The results of his flight were significant. He went to the place where the great leader of Israel, Moses, had communed with God. He went to Horeb. Here in the midst of despair he found a cave and dwelt there. The word of Jehovah came and said, "What doest thou here?" Elijah answered in his distress. He was then called out to stand before God. As in the

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1. Much speculation arises as to why she did not carry out such a plan that very night. It may well be that there was too much sentiment to rush in on the national hero. It is natural to assume that he was surrounded by admirers. Segal in Elijah says that she gave him a chance to escape. Others say that he was disappearing as after the announcement of the drought. He could not duplicate the direction of flight as his presence in Zareptha would be readily discovered. Formerly it was Ahab seeking Elijah, now it is Jezebel.

time of Moses there was a display of natural forces, in this case, wind, earthquake, and fire. After this there was a still small voice. Elijah hid his face and a voice¹ again asked the same question. Elijah's answer was the same,

"I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I, only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." 2

God's answer commissions Elijah to further action that will vitally affect the nation of Israel:

"Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmenolah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." 3

Judgment was to be meted out upon Israel. A new dynasty in both Syria and Israel was to depose the old. When the judgment had been imposed, a remnant would emerge. How like the prophets of the later period! Here before Elijah Jehovah unrolls His future plan for Israel. Interestingly enough, like Moses, Elijah is not to be the active leader

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1. I Kings 19:1-14
2. I Kings 19:14
3. I Kings 19:15-16

in it. He, too, will be replaced. Elijah leaves the mountain a humbler man, with a vision of God's plan and the realization that he is not indispensable for its execution.

Warfare develops between Israel and Syria. It is significant that prophets are no longer persecuted. Instead they are heeded. In the first instance the advice of the prophet¹ delivers Samaria from siege. Next, he advises as to campaign strategy in the year to come. He, also, troubles the king by a prophecy of destruction. Thus the prophet is restored to his rightful place. He advises and admonishes the king of the land as God leads him.

Elijah is next found in an incident that is quite personal but has national ramifications. Jezebel in Ahab's name has had Naboth killed because Naboth thought he should retain land that Ahab desired because of the inheritance law of the Jews.² In Jezebel's action the law of the land had been disregarded and murder had been committed. Ahab went to possess the vineyard when

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1. There is some question as to whom the unidentified prophet is. Some say Micaiah. He is mentioned in I Kings 20:13,22,28, and verse 35 is thought to be the same man.
2. Kiel, op.cit., p.310. Leviticus 25:13-28, and Numbers 36:7f give the law by which Naboth was bound not to sell the land.

he was informed of the death of Naboth. Elijah met him in the vineyard and a conversation ensued:

"Ahab said to Elijah, 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?' and he answered, 'I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will utterly sweep thee away and will cut off from Ahab every man-child, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel; and I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and hast made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel, also spake Jehovah, saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel. Him that dieth in the field shall the birds of heaven eat.'" ¹

The author of Kings indicates the source of Ahab's degradation with the words "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Ahab as a result of this dreadful prophecy regarding him and his household **repented** and "went softly." The Lord, as a result, stayed the punishment for Ahab's lifetime. The incident of the vineyard "stirred the heart of the nation more deeply than the religious policy of the house of Omri." ² It would appear that they are inseparably connected. Ahab had permitted Jezebel to vaunt the laws of Jehovah until the nation had no safe basis of moral or spiritual action, although the worship

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1. I Kings 21: 20-24
2. W.R. Smith: Prophets of Israel, p.87

of Baal had been broken to some extent. Until then Jezebel was powerful and had a tremendous effect upon the nation.

When Ahab died in battle, his son Ahaziah reigned. He met with an accident falling through the lattice in his upper chamber. In the illness that followed, he sent for counsel from the nearest Philistine god of Ekron. He was a servant and worshipper of Baal and as has been indicated, hesitated to send to Phoenicia. The word of Jehovah came to Elijah and he intercepted the delegation.¹ He spoke to them,

"Is it because there is no God in Israel, that ye go up to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith Jehovah thou shalt not come down from the bed whither thou art gone up, but shall surely die." ²

The messengers returned to Ahaziah and reported the message. It is apparent that they did not recognize Elijah from which one may infer that Elijah was not so active in the kingdom as formerly. When questioned he is described to the king as a hairy man, and girt with a girt of leather about his loins. From the description the king recognized Elijah. The one who had predicted the death of his father so accurately was now predicting his death. Mistakenly, Ahaziah thought to take Elijah by force.

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1. II Kings 1: 2-4
2. II Kings 1: 3-4

Elijah relies on God's protection with the result that one hundred men are killed in the attempt. The third group was sent and the leader beseeched Elijah to come before Ahaziah. When he reached the king he gave the same message, though no doubt the king had hopes of alteration. ¹ Shortly afterward Ahaziah dies.

Ahaziah had reigned but only two years. During this time Elijah only appeared on this one occasion to have any religious leadership. He seems to have taken the position of an ancient mystic sitting on a hill, watching to see the plan of God unfold in Israel. There is no record that he was otherwise active after Carmel. ² In warfare Micaiah was the prophet who played a major part. From the evidence one may assume that Elijah devoted a large amount of his time to Elisha in training him as his successor. He was still a man to be reckoned with, and not one whom kings could order and mistreat.

When Elijah and Elisha were in Gilgal, Elijah says that Jehovah has sent him to Bethel and tells Elisha to wait at Gilgal. Elisha insists on following. When they reach Bethel it is common knowledge among the "sons of the prophets" that Elijah was to leave. Elijah tells

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1. II Kings 1: 5-18
2. I Kings 22

Elisha to remain in Bethel, that Jehovah has told him to go to Jericho, but Elisha persists in following. The "Sons of the Prophets" here inform Elisha that Jehovah is to take Elijah away on this day. Elisha indicates prior knowledge. Elijah then goes to the Jordan, with Elisha insistently following. Elijah smote the waters of the Jordan and they walked across. Elijah cannot but recognize that Elisha has knowledge of his departure so he inquires if there is anything he can do for Elisha before he leaves. Elisha requests a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah stated that if Elisha saw him when he was taken that it would be **granted**. They walked further and talked. The chariot and horse of fire appeared and Elijah went up in a whirlwind. Elisha saw it and exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"¹ Thus the great leader of Jehovah departed.

It may be seen from the foregoing that the impact of Elijah upon the religious life of his nation was enormous. His was the influence of a man who singlehandedly stemmed the rising tide of paganism. He made the nation acutely aware of his God by a drought, and then a contest face to face with the forces that were the enemies of God. It was a contest that not only secured the defeat of the pagan leaders but brought forth a decision on the part of the people to follow Jehovah. As Ewald says,

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1. II Kings 2:12

"It was he and he alone with no other instrument than the simple power of his spirit and his speech, who achieved no less a marvel than a complete revolution of the existing condition of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes." 1

It was through him that God revealed the future plans regarding Israel. The idea of the justice and judgment of God and His sovereignty emerges. It is here, too, that the idea of the remnant is predicted. All of these ideas are to be a major part of subsequent prophecy.

It was through him that the prophets were restored to an active part in the life of the nation. It was from the Carmel incident that public pressure allowed Micaiah, Elisha and the sons of the prophets to carry on for the cause of Jehovah. Once again prophets condemned and advised the kings of the land. The foreign invasion of religion had been repulsed. It had been accomplished by one servant of God alone - Elijah.

E. Elijah's Influence on Other Nations

1. Sidon

It has been already indicated that Elijah was the means of disrupting the cooperation between Phoenicia, or Sidon, and Israel by the defeat of the Phoe-

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1. H. Ewald: The History of Israel, p.63

nician religion on Mount Carmel.¹ (It was no doubt very difficult for the Phoenician to look up and see this mountain and be reminded that their religion was defeated there.)

During the drought, Elijah first went to the brook Cherith, there he was fed by the ravens. He stayed there until the brook dried up. The word of Jehovah then came to him sending him to Zarephath in Sidon (Phoenicia).² Jehovah had commanded a Phoenician widow to take care of him there. Elijah, when he reaches the gate, calls to the widow who is gathering sticks and asks for water and then bread. Elijah tries the faith of the woman as the drought has made her destitute with only enough for herself and her son. Upon Elijah's command she feeds him and they were sustained by Jehovah until the rain came.

She was again tried when her son became ill and died. When he was restored, she affirmed her faith in Elijah and Jehovah saying, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is

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1. Traditionally, Elijah is reputed to have stayed there in his later days. Writers would like to think that this is the hill on which he sat when called by Ahaziah. What thoughts he must have had.
2. Luke 4:26 infers she was not a Jewess.

truth." ¹ She was a true convert of the true worship of Jehovah.

We do not know how much Elijah's presence in Zarephath affected the Phoenician people. It was one of the leading cities of Phoenicia at that time. The important emphasis here is that Elijah aided the widow who lived in a city of the nation whose religion he opposed. Elijah may well have gained his hate of this cult while he stayed in Zarephath so that the Carmel event was the culmination of that experience. The faith of the widow was the beginning of a universalism that was later to effect the whole Jewish conception of religion. It is true that this is an isolated example but it is remarkable that Elijah should find a person and should strengthen her faith in the very country that was undermining the faith of Israel.

2. Syria

Elijah was not directly concerned with Syria. An unknown prophet and Micaiah had dealt directly with Ahab during the warfare between Israel and Syria.

After Elijah had seen God's plan in history, he was to anoint another to supplant Ben Hadad. This did

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1. I Kings 17: 8-24

not take place until Elisha's time, but Hazael did eventually supplant the king and brought destruction affecting the kingdom both of Israel and of Damascus.

3. Judah

It has been said that Elijah was not a writing prophet but he did send a letter to Jehoram, the king of Judah. It is similar to the message which he had given Ahab at the vineyard. It reads:

"Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, like as the house of Ahab did, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, who were better than thyself: behold Jehovah will smite with a great plague thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy substance; and thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day." 1

This was followed by an invasion of Philistines and south Arabians who looted the palace, and took his sons and wives. Only one son was left. He was seized by the disease indicated and died two years later.

This is indicative of the fact that Elijah had a knowledge and dealt with a religious problem in the Southern Kingdom as well as the Northern.

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1. II Chronicles 21:12-20

The respect shown by the prophets in the Southern Kingdom would indicate that his influence was felt strongly particularly in the later years of his life.

F. Summary

Israel was at this time a stronger nation than ever before in its history, with alliances with its neighbors, with one nation tributary to it. Of all the alliances the most important, in the minds of the people, was that with Phoenicia. With this alliance came an increase in trade and wealth.

Society was affected by the importation of merchants, the erection of a new capital, and the new wealth. It was a period of unrest and change.

Religion was not **unaffected**. The exclusive worship of Jehovah was sacrificed to the imported religion. Jezebel, the daughter of a Phoenician Baal priest-king, was the new queen of Israel. Not satisfied with practicing her religion in her own temple, she attempted to impose it upon the land. Upon meeting resistance, she resorted to persecution. Not only was the method despicable but the religion itself was demoralizing and deplorable in character.

A courageous man of God appeared on the scene to champion the cause of Jehovah. By stopping the rain

in heaven, by bringing fire from heaven, and sheer courageous action, he convinced the king and the people of Israel, and annihilated many of the prophets of Baal. To him was given the vision of the future judgment of God upon Israel. With him came into being the idea of the remnant and the sovereignty of God in the life of the nation. As a result of his victory prophets once again could unmolestedly proclaim the will of God.

The influence of this prophet was not confined to Israel for he brought God more deeply into the heart of a Phoenician widow, and no doubt influenced the town of Zarephath. He broke the alliance and defeated the religion of Phoenicia. His vision included Syria and a change of dynasty there. In Judah he was in touch with the king and warned him of judgment. He was well known in that kingdom. Ewald pays tribute to him saying,

"What prodigies may be achieved even by one single man, however feeble in himself, through the invisible power of the Infinite conferred upon him by God, and how he may be enabled by this means to offer a solitary resistance to the violent error of the whole age and to introduce in triumph a new era freed from its sway, - of all this, one of the loftiest examples is exhibited by Elijah, and it is the fact that just at that period he preserved his courage unshaken through all vicissitudes, which wins for him his peculiar place in Israel's history, and constitutes his eternal merit." 1

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1. Ewald, op.cit. p.67

CHAPTER II
THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH
IN THE LATER OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD

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A. Introduction

"So when a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men."

These words of Longfellow give validity for the writing of this chapter. Elijah did not cease to influence his nation and its people when he ascended into heaven. The remembrance of his example gave courage to men and to groups of men to carry on the battle against false religion. It was the continuation of this task that Elijah handed down to his successors. From the moment Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah the influence of Elijah began to be felt in subsequent generations.

This influence will be traced from his immediate successors, dealing first with Elisha and then Jehu. The two groups, the "Sons of the Prophets" and the Rechabites, will then be examined. The results of his impact upon subsequent national and international life will be discussed.

The chapter will conclude with a consideration of the influence of Elijah upon the life and writings of the later prophets. As in Elijah, the ideas of universalism, judgment, and a passion for righteousness can be found almost without exception in each of these men. Those that more nearly reflect the thought and action of Elijah will be studied. Though resemblance does not conclusively prove that Elijah influenced these men, it is a strong factor. This, coupled with the evidence which shall be presented, leads the writer to the conviction that Elijah was influential to a certain extent in the life of all subsequent prophets.

B. On His Immediate
Successors

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1. Elisha

One is struck with the immediate activity of this successor to the position left by Elijah. He returns, and with the question, "Where is Jehovah the God of Elijah?",² he smites the waters of the river Jordan and receives his answer by the water's parting, as they did for Elijah. The "Sons of the Prophets" recognize that the spirit of Elijah is upon Elisha and they bowed down before him. They accepted his leadership. He begins to authenticate

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1. II Kings 2:13-13:21
2. II Kings 2:14

his position by miracles as he returns to Samaria by the route by which he and Elijah had come.¹ He is not immediately recognized by King Joram. It is not until Mesha of Moab rebelled against the subjugation of Israel that Elisha is called before the king. A coalition of Israel, Judah and Edom go against Moab. After a week of arid marching Jehoshaphat inquires for a prophet of Jehovah. A servant suggests Elisha, stating that he is a servant of Elijah, which is sufficient recommendation for the king of Judah. The three kings go down to talk with Elisha. From this conversation a plan is devised which results in victory for the coalition against Moab.²

He then **proceeds** to perform a number of miracles, the oil for the widow of one of the "Sons of the Prophets," the birth and restoration of the son of the Shunammite woman, making the poisoned pottage safe, and the increase of the loaves and corn. There is a striking similarity between the first two miracles and Elijah's miracle for the widow of Zarephath.

Elisha's relation to Syria is one of interest. He is instrumental in healing Naaman, the captain of the host of the king of Syria. He informs the king of Israel of the location of the Syrian armies. This incites the

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1. Finegan, op.cit., would say that it was not a victory as Moab was not subjected., pp.157-8. See II Kings 3:27
2. Ibid.

king of Assyria to send a force to capture Elisha at Dothan, but Elisha leads them blinded by God to Samaria. In this same incident "chariots of fire" surround Elisha. Samaria is almost depleted by a **siege** of the Syrians but is miraculously saved by Elisha. Elisha journeys to Damascus, the capitol of Syria, when Benhadad is ill. It is then that he weeps for Hazael, who the next day kills Benhadad and becomes king. No suggestion is made in regard to whether Hazael was anointed by Elisha though this may well have been the purpose of the journey.

He may have felt compelled to make this journey by the evil reign of Jehoram of Judah, for "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife; and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah."¹ The Phoenician alliance was still bringing evil and this evil had spread to Judah.² This may well be the reason for Elisha's feeling of compulsion of God's command to Elijah be carried out. Jehoram's son, Ahaziah, was no better, for he too "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah as did the house of Ahab; for he was the son-in-law of the house

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1. II Kings 8:18

2. It is ~~to~~ be noted that Edom withdrew from the subjugation of Judah under this regime. The same reason may have been a factor in this revolt.

of Ahab." ¹ Hazael came against both of the kings at Ramoth-gilead, and Joram, the son of Ahab, was wounded.

It is then that Elisha acts. He sends one of the "Sons of the Prophets" to Jehu to anoint him king. Jehu immediately inaugurates his purge, which includes two kings, Joram and Ahaziah, Jezebel the mother of king Jeoram and the grandmother of King Ahaziah, all of Ahab's sons, seventy in number, the brothers of Ahaziah, forty-two in number, and those who were jealous for the worship of Baal.

It is evident that neither Elijah nor Elisha had any great desire to see Hazael or Jehu become king. Elijah, from all the evidence, never carried out the command at Horeb. Elisha was reluctant to anoint Hazael, if he actually did. He was reluctant to anoint Jehu, so much so that he sent someone else to do it.

The work of eliminating the Phoenician worship in Israel through the purge of Jehu was virtually consummated. The method was later brought in question but the work was done.

Only Judah was under the power of the house of Ahab. There it was being sustained by the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah. She destroyed all the royal seed except one that was hidden from her. Her purge was

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1. II Kings 8:27

as cruel as that of Jehu's and purely for selfish reasons. At the end of a seven years' reign, she and her religion were destroyed. A son of Zibiah and Ahaziah, Jehoash, was placed on the throne. He had been trained by the priest in the temple and as a result Judah again had a good ruler.

Many years later Elisha was dying. With deep respect the king of Israel, Joash, went down to him and wept for him and for the condition of his country, then under the ravages of Syria. Elisha gave to him the promises of three victories over Syria, and then died.

Elisha was influenced greatly by Elijah. He was the successor that took up the task of destroying the religion imported by Jezebel. Though he had no contest on Carmel, he carried out the instructions which Elijah had received at Sinai. Hazael became king of Syria and punished Israel by almost constant attacks. Jehu became king of Israel and destroyed the power of Baal and the house of Ahab.

"Elijah and Elisha threw themselves with unexampled ardor into the conflict and won a signal triumph. The menace of Melcarth was definitely exorcised, and with its elimination Yahwism triumphed at last over the direct onslaught of Baalism." 1

The universalism set in motion by Elijah was

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1. Albright, op.cit., p. 235

continued by Elisha. He was kind to one of the enemy, Naaman, the captain of the Syrian host. He was respected by the king of Syria, Benhadad, who sent a messenger to him when he came to Damascus. It is interesting to note that Jesus refers to the universal aspect of these two prophets in His sermon at Nazareth.

"There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah ... and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman, the Syrian." ¹

One can assume that the weeping of Elisha at Damascus was because he would now have no way of touching these people of Syria. He could foresee the warfare and destruction that Hazael would bring.

Elisha was influenced by Elijah in his relations with the rulers of the nations. He was not afraid to tell them what he felt to be the word of God. He was the advisor of the kings of Israel. Joram, after the deliverance of Samaria, was so intrigued by Elisha that he sent for Elisha's servant, Gehazi, saying, "Tell me, I pray² thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done." At Elisha's death King Joash was with him and sought his help. He was respected by Jehosaphat, and was such an

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1. Luke 4:26-27

2. II Kings 8:4

aid to Joram that Benhadad dispatched a force to capture him.

Elijah's use of the miraculous was duplicated by Elisha. Some of the acts were in the same type of situation and performed in the same manner. The power of Elijah was upon him.

2. Jehu

One cannot leave the period without calling attention to Jehu and the influence of Elijah upon him. It is quite evident that he was familiar with the prophet¹ and his sayings. One wonders if he knew of the instructions given on Sinai. The incident on Mount Carmel had had its effect upon him and he had placed it in his mind as a great event in the history of his country. When one of the "Sons of the Prophets" anointed him, he and his men immediately sprang into action; and while the armies of Israel were fighting the Syrians, they carried out their purge. The word which Jehovah spake to Elijah had been fulfilled in what happened. It is evident that the influence of Elijah caused this reform from the very words which Jehu utters.

It is to be noted that the nation was weakened as a result of the reform. Hazael, instead of watching the northern border against Assyria, was insistent on subjugating Israel and for a time was successful on a

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1. II Kings 9:36; 10:10

limited scale, even to the extent of making the Southern Kingdom fearful. But Assyria threatened from the north. On one of the later campaigns (841 B.C.) of Shalamaneser III of Assyria, Jehu paid tribute to him. Syria apparently was more interested in her selfish interests than in the days of the coalition. At the time of this Assyrian campaign she retreated to Damascus, leaving Israel with no alternative but to pay tribute.²

3. The "Sons of the Prophets"

In the time of Elijah the following were prophets:
³ Jehu, ⁴ Micaiah, ⁵ Jahaziel, ⁶ Eliezer, and an unnamed prophet.⁷
These were not the only prophets of the time. There is hardly a person who questions the fact that Elijah started the so-called "Sons of the Prophets."

The "schools of the prophets" in the time of Samuel are described thus¹ by Davis:

"The prophets gathered about God's representative and the chief spiritual force of the time in order to cultivate their own spiritual life in common worship, to praise God together as the Spirit gave them utterance (I Samuel xix:20, to engage in united prayer in behalf of the nation (xii:23; xv:11 with

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1. Finegan, op.cit., pp. 172-3
2. R.W. Rogers: History of Babylonia and Assyria, pp.232-3
3. I Kings 16:1,7,12; II Chronicles 19:6; 20:34
4. I Kings 22, II Chronicles 18
5. II Chronicles 20:14
6. II Chronicles 20:37
7. I Kings 20:13 These are all active at some time during his lifetime. At Mt. Carmel and Mt. Horeb he considers himself alone notwithstanding.

35; xvi:1), and to go forth in companies for the revival and instruction of the people (x:5,10). They sought on the one hand to benefit themselves by religious fellowship, hold prolonged communion with God amidst favorable surroundings, and thereby not only to satisfy their spiritual longings, but also to quicken their spiritual apprehension and qualify themselves for God's use of them as his spokesmen; and they sought on the other hand to afford a center of reformation in the midst of great apostasy." 1

It would be quite improbable to think that this movement lasted for the period of two hundred years until the time of Elijah. It would appear that some reference would have been made to such a group. A rather large number of prophets are found in Elijah's time.² It is upon the occasion of his departure that groups are found in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho.

On the departure of Elijah, Elisha immediately returned to the places where these groups were located. He was respected by them and many of their problems were brought to him. He performed miracles for their welfare. Elisha did not stay at any one place but travelled from place to place. Once when a group was dissatisfied with their location, they consulted him and he gave them permission to leave and settle at the Jordan.

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1. Davis, op.cit., article "Prophetic Associations" pp. 627-8
2. I Kings 18:4,13; II Kings 2:7,16,17. It is thought that the group was formulated after Elijah's return from Mt. Horeb.

Their purpose was to preserve theocracy, to provide a priesthood for the future, and to promote the worship of Jehovah. It may be said that the influence of Elijah brought converts to the cause. Men with a passion for righteousness gathered themselves around him and his successor, with the express purpose of carrying out his reform. The influence of this group was instrumental in the complete expulsion of false religion.

4. The Rechabites

After the time of Elijah there arose a group called the Rechabites to which a slight reference has already been made. Many authorities in recent years have connected them with the Kenites, who were the descendants¹ of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. The only evidence given is one verse in I Chronicles 2:55. It is odd that no previous reference is made to them, which leads one to conclude that either the group was very inactive or that it was unimportant.

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1. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, p. 341 and others. Ernest de Benson in "The Keys of St. Peter and the House of Rechab" goes back to Cain to trace the origin of the group. Much is made of the Kenite ancestry by Budde, Ewald, and others. Budde makes it fit in with his theory of "Yahweh of Sinai." The evidence is so meager that such a deduction is hardly valid. The sanest view is given by E. A. Perowne in his article "Rechabites" in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

It has been indicated that at the time of Elijah there was social unrest among the common people. There was a feeling of animosity between the nomadic group and the agrarian. This was strongly increased as the cities began to thrive and the shepherds felt little of the prosperity. It was further intensified by the importation of foreign worship. It was bad enough when the agrarians accommodated the Canaanite gods of the land, but this Phoenician worship was abominable.

There arose a prominent man, Jonadab, the son of Recab. He drew around him a protestant group, activated by the influence of Elijah. He is described by Graetz in the following manner:

"Jonadab, the son of Rechab, who doubtless was one of the followers of Elijah, was the first to establish these rules for himself and his household. He impressed on his descendants the necessity of abstaining from wine, from building residences, from sowing seed, and especially from planting vineyards. In this way Elijah not only aroused and inspired a band of defenders of the ancient law from his own time, but opened a path for a new future. He set simplicity and self-restraint against degeneracy and love of pleasure."¹

It was generally supposed that the men who gathered themselves around him were not just those connected with his own family. Ferowne says,

"Elijah and Elisha were known, each of them at this time as the 'Chariot of Israel' (Rechab) and the

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1. Graetz, *op.cit.* Vol. I, p.199

prophets that followed them were known as the "sons of the chariot." 1

John of Jerusalem says that Jonadab was a disciple of Elisha. This would lead one to believe that the group, the "Sons of the prophets" discussed in the previous section, were later identified as "Rechabites." Whether there was a connection between the two, whether they were separate, or whether one and the same group, the Rechabites did have their place in the life of Israel.

When Jehu was carrying out the word of Elijah in reference to the house of Ahab, he stopped and took Jonadab, the son of Rechab, up with him.² Together they caused the extermination of the worshippers of Baal. The Rechabites were prominent enough to have their leader accompany the king as he purged the land of false worship. Josephus describes Jehu's meeting of Jonadab in this manner, " .. there met him a good and righteous man, whose name was Jonadab, and who had been his friend of old."³ The king was closely related to this Jonadab. He must have known of Jonadab's desire for reform. Together they stamped out the plague brought in by Jezebel.

It is difficult to trace the history of this group. They took upon them vows equivalent to the

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1. Smith, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 2679
2. II Kings 10:15
3. Josephus, Antiquities, IX, vi, 6

Nazarites, and may well have been the Nazarites of their day. In fact, no one has tried to distinguish between the two, nor, on the other hand, has anyone made an attempt to bring them together. R. Jonathan¹ interprets Jeremiah 35:19 to mean that the Rechabites were to become scribes and members of the Sanhedrin. There is some evidence that this was fulfilled.

By the time of Jeremiah the Rechabites had come from the destruction of Israel into Judah and were dwelling there. They were the most conspicuous examples of the Nazarite life in the prophet's time, and the object of his admiration.² The Scriptures tell of the experience Jeremiah had with them. The Rechabites showed in this experience that they were at least a passive influence in the Southern Kingdom and were regarded highly enough to be allowed to go into the Holy Temple at Jerusalem.³ Thus it is seen that the influence of Elijah was quite effective in the Northern Kingdom through this group and that this influence extended to the Southern Kingdom and was felt to some extent there.

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1. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, p.341
2. Smith, op.cit., Vol.III, p. 2680
3. Jeremiah 35:19

C. On His Nation's Life

Peters indicates,

"Elijah did not succeed in his immediate purpose of expelling the cult of the Tyrian Baal; on the other hand he won a real and substantial victory, as later generations recognized, in setting in motion those forces which finally not merely expelled the cult of the Tyrian Baal but also purged Israel from that native Canaanite baal cult which had been combined with the worship of Yahweh." ¹

Even the first king following Elijah, Joram, was affected by the prophet. The account says that "he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, but not like his father and his mother; for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made." ² There is no evidence of persecution of those who worshipped Jehovah. Elijah was able to win a place as a councilor to the king. Groups arose supporting the worship of Jehovah. Religious difficulties were still to prevail. The sin of Jereboam was to remain. Later prophets were to bring into question the formalism that descended upon the worshipper. The worst was over, however; religion would not again have to go underground in the life of Israel.

Commercially, the nation was not again to reach the heights that it had achieved under Ahab and his father, Omri. Not only was the trade with Phoenicia slackened but

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1. J.P. Peters: The Religion of the Hebrews, p.177
2. II Kings 3:2

Syria was to be a thorn in the flesh, while Assyria was to exact tribute from time to time until her final complete conquest of the nation. With the destruction of the house of Ahab, the alliance with Judah disintegrated until in the time of Joash civil war again occurred.¹ In other words, the alliances with all neighboring countries had been broken. In addition, Moab had rebelled. Instead of obtaining tribute Israel was paying it to Assyria.

Politically, the same thing was taking place. The strong military organization established in the time of Ahab was weakened by the attacks of her neighbors until she was a ready prey for any real power.

Elijah in his zeal to defeat the Phoenician religion started this disintegration. The breaking of the alliance with Phoenicia decreased the power of Israel both financially and militarily and paved the way for this condition. One is not to surmise that Elijah was at fault in what he did. Rather it was the failure on the part of Omri and Ahab to realize the importance of religion in the life of their nation. David had attained strength and had used the help of Phoenicia but without sacrificing the worship of Jehovah. Solomon had tried the way of the dynasty of Ahab. History had repeated itself.

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1. II Kings 13:12

It is regrettable that Israel was never to have a king who fully obeyed the God of her people. There may well have been the feeling that to eliminate the false worship of Jeroboam would drive Israel to unity with Judah, which continued anathema to the leaders of Israel.

D. On International Life

The breakdown of the alliances weakened the nations in this area making it easy for Assyria to come and demand tribute. Had they been able to forget their differences the course of history might well have been changed. No two nations were together. All were at odds with each other. The message of Elijah to change kings in Israel and Syria aided in this lack of cooperation. These changes were the punishment for the evil practices of Israel and not a reflection upon Elijah's own character. God was using these forces in an attempt to make Israel repent. Later in the period there was some attempt on the part of the nations to cooperate with each other, but by that time it was too late to stop Assyria.

E. On the Later Prophets

Bruce in his ¹chapter on Prophetism gives some suggestive characteristics of the prophets. He lists

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1. A. B. Bruce: Apologetics, Chapter V, pp.226-245

the following:

- "1. A passion for righteousness
2. Faith in an objective moral order
3. Places morality above religious ritual
4. Spirit of compassion
5. Vindication of faith by suffering
6. Witness to the reality of a divine revelation."

Using these as a measure it can quickly be seen that Elijah would rate very high as a prophet. It will be shown how, in some measure, this great prophet influenced those who were to follow in many of the qualities listed by Bruce. Had Elijah been the first prophet it would be easy to see how this took place. There were men like Samuel and Nathan who were in their way also courageous men of God. It is Elijah, however, who sets the stage for those who will in a little over a half century introduce what we commonly call the period of the "writing prophets." Stanley says of Elijah,

".. Elijah came to prepare the way for the close succession of Prophets who, for the next hundred years, sustained both Israel and Judah by hopes and promises before unknown." 1

It is unfortunate that some authorities fail to recognize the worth of the "vocal" prophets and begin their treatises with Amos.

In Elijah is found the idea of the remnant. There will be a group left that have not served the Phoenician

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1. A. P. Stanley: The History of the Jewish Church, p.245

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Baal. His universalism has already been mentioned. His passion for righteousness is unquestioned. All three of these will be seen in the later prophets.

1. Amos

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Peters thinks that Amos resembles Elijah. In his courage and sudden appearance this is readily seen. The results of the change in the economic picture under Ahab are seen in the time of Amos. With the kingdom failing in importance the rich are attempting to get all they can out of the poor. The ivory beds of Ahab ³ in his palace are the desire of others in the kingdom. Amos proclaims a famine and a drought, not of water, but of the word of Jehovah. ⁴ Not even the caves of Mount Carmel are a place of safety from the judgment of Jehovah. ⁵ Destruction will come but there is the idea of the remnant. Amos is fighting something that is near at hand. He has little time. The people must come into the right relation with God. He condemns the worship at Bethel. The people have fallen into the sin of formalism in worship and into greed in their daily living. Amos is fighting an internal trouble while Elijah was fighting an ex-

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1. I Kings 19:18
2. Peters, op.cit., p. 210
3. Amos 3:15, 6:4
4. Amos 8:11-12
5. Amos 1:2, 9:3

ternal one, but both fought in the same manner. Both were assured by God of a remnant after the punishment.

2. Hosea

Hosea calls into question the "blood of Jezreel"¹ and indicates punishment on the house of Jehu for it. He describes vividly the condition of the nation, saying that they have forgotten God and built images. He also says, "Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces .."² It is his testimony that the more the prophets called to Israel the more they went from them.³ The people of Israel are condemned for their economic practices and for the worship of calves. Hosea offers them salvation and predicts a remnant. He is prophesying at the time when Israel is at its worst and about ready to fall.

3. Isaiah

Isaiah gives us the final picture from the eyes of a prophet. He sees Israel in her final days as invaded, in the throes of defeat, living in anarchy and finally led into captivity.⁴ Yet he, too, proclaims the

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1. Hosea 1:4
2. Hosea 8:14
3. Hosea 11:2, II Kings 17:13
4. Isaiah 9:8f

idea of a remnant of Israel.¹ Many of the elements displayed by Elijah are to be found in Isaiah though they prophesied in different kingdoms.

4. Micah

Micah prophesies the destruction of Israel saying, "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels .."² Certainly the false worship did not return but rather the evils, instigated in the life of the people, did prevail. He, too, stresses the economic injustice perpetrated upon the poor of the land. Justice will be meted out to Israel in the form of destruction. A remnant will survive.

5. Zechariah

This book has an interesting verse:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth; neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive." ³

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1. Isaiah 10:20
2. Micah 6:16 Note also his reference to the ones "... which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel..." Micah 7:14. This could refer to the "sons of the prophets" who traditionally stayed on Carmel with Elijah and Elisha.
3. Zechariah 13:4

It is quite evident from this that many had taken over the garb of Elijah to add authenticity to their message. Zechariah further predicts that no rain will fall upon those who do not come up to worship God.¹ This can well be a reminder of the days when Elijah withheld rain for failure to worship God.

6. Malachi (messenger)

Malachi gives us the last reference to Elijah in the Old Testament. It is very significant in the light of the next chapter of the thesis.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." 2

The Old Testament closes with these verses. Elijah is³ expected to return.

F. Summary

The influence of Elijah was felt for centuries. It was reflected in his immediate successors by a zeal

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1. Zechariah 14:17
2. Malachi 4: 5-6
3. Malachi 3:1 Reference will be made to this verse as well: "Behold, I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me."

for the continuation of his attack on the forces that opposed the worship of Jehovah. Elisha clearly followed the example of Elijah in his activity. Jehu, as he wrests the throne from the House of Omri, considers that he has fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah. The "Sons of the Prophets" and the Rechabites rose to prominence in their attempt to preserve theocracy, and to eliminate all vestiges of the foreign cult.

The influence of Elijah acting through these reforms affected the life of his nation. Alliances were abrogated, and the power and prestige of Israel, as well as the other nations, was weakened, thus paving the way for the Assyrian conquest of the land. Ahab's poor judgment, and God's plan of punishment were very important factors that lead to the downfall.

The later prophets continued the battle for Jehovah and confronted the people with the possibility of judgment. They were possessed with a passion for righteousness. They improved on the idea of a remnant from the judgment of God. Many of them condemned the House of Ahab and its resultant moral and economic practices for the plight in their own day. Malachi concluded the Old Testament with the prophecy of the return of the prophet Elijah.

CHAPTER III
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A. Introduction

As time passes the great men of any nation are exalted in the minds and hearts of their people. Elijah was no exception. Through a period of very difficult days, they found great comfort in the narratives of Elijah. Here was one who fascinated with his miracles, who gave strength with his victory, and who possessed mystery as to his origin and ascension. From this admiration legends began to develop. They began to embellish the narrative ~~itself~~. Claims began to be made by the old men who dreamed dreams. No great book on Elijah emerged in this period, but scattered through a multitude of the writings of the Jews the influence of Elijah may be found. Much of it is fanciful without any factual basis. Singly, much of it is unimportant but, taken as a whole, it presents a rather complete picture of Elijah's place in Jewish thought. Sachar pictures this development in Jewish thought concerning Elijah when he says,

"The stern, austere figure, who never knew the meaning of peace, whose every word was a challenge, was transformed through the centuries into a kindly, gentle saint of Jewish life." 1

It will be the purpose of this chapter to examine the ideas held concerning this man during the inter-Testament period and gain thereby the influence he had upon that period.

In order to present properly this material the following procedure will be taken. The period will be examined as to its history and literature. References to Elijah in the literature will then be presented. Toward the end of the period with the rise of certain groups an examination will be made of Elijah's influence upon them.

B. Examination of the Period

1. Its History

In the entire period the Jews were never secure as a nation. For hundreds of years they were governed by a foreign power. Part of this time was spent in exile. People were dwelling in insecurity. The only thing of which they were sure was their belief in their God. There emerged from the experience an unshakeable resolution to

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1. A.L. Sachar: "How Elijah Became the Jewish Patron Saint.", B'nai B'rith Magazine, December, 1926
Volume 41, Number 1, pp.110-112.

worship Him in spite of all else. Their first concern upon returning to Palestine was to rebuild the walls of the Holy City and to restore the Temple. A new profession arose, that of the Rabbis. A new mode of worship was developed, the synagogue with its services and schools. The Law was revived, enforced and expanded. The Rabbis not only conducted services but wrote expositions and interpretations of the Law. In the whole period only at the time of the Maccabees was there national freedom and it soon flickered and went out.

2. Its Literature

During this period there arose the "Midrash", or the oral explanations of the Torah. As the Rabbis expounded and interpreted, their views became a part of the thought of the people. They became known as "oral tradition". Some years later in Babylon this material was reduced to writing. The Midrash is important to the understanding of the Jewish religion as the Pharisees held the tradition as valid as the Torah itself and in some instances more so. This rabbinic literature has been difficult for the most accomplished scholar to date accurately. Only those views known to be held in this period or works found to be historically accurate have been used.

Closely connected with the Midrash was the Apocrypha. It is not difficult to understand how an

oppressed people would resort to allegory and an apocalyptic form of writing which would be fully understood by them alone. Visions of the restored kingdom, a resurrection life, and the return of the Messiah were held before the people, giving hope in the time of trial of a better day. Because the canon of the Apocrypha is virtually established it will be examined separately though both contain a comparable type of writing.

C. Elijah in the Literature of the Period

1. As found in Rabbinic literature

Montefiore says concerning the development of Elijah in the minds of the people,

"The role played by Elijah in Jewish legend is of extreme importance. From the last two verses of Malachi he takes his place as the harbinger of the Messiah, and he is constantly depicted as a messenger of hope and as a deliverer."¹

To the people of Israel Elijah never died. He is a reality² who is sinless and will live forever.³ He makes frequent visits to the Rabbis both individually⁴ and in their academies.⁵ He seems to be at home both on earth and in heaven. There are numerous stories of his appearances to pious men,⁶ boys,⁷ righteous people,⁸ and

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1. C. G. Montefiore: A Rabbinic Anthology, p. 256
2. Samuel Segal: Elijah, p. 56 (Moed Katan 26a)
3. Ibid. pp. 22, 30. To some he will live until the coming of the Messiah see p. 161
4. Ibid. pp. 67-70, 82-86, 97, 102, 104 and 110.
5. Ibid. p. 21. Note additional references on that page.
6. Ibid. pp. 103, 110-111, 117
7. Ibid. pp. 85, 122
8. Ibid. p. 94

one appearance to a bridegroom.¹ Montefiore says,

"Elijah is always wandering on earth, and his journeys bear a marked resemblance, in some ways, to those associated with the 'Wandering Jew.' He appears both to Tannaim and to Amoraim. Even as late as the fourteenth century, persons claimed to have had interviews with him." 2

The belief arose that if one had such an inter-³
view that person would be assured of the world to come.

Others held that his appearances were to be confined to three. He would not again appear until the advent of the Messiah. The third appearance would be with Gog and

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Magog. His ancestry is brought into the discussions and many views are given. Some said that he came from one of the angels; others that he was Phinehas who had re-appeared. Montefiore says,

"Gradually he becomes a synonym of progress: he is Phinehas, i.e. the phoenix, the arabic al-Hidr ever-verdant, for he stands for confidence in the future, the Jewish equivalent to 'a good time coming.'" 5

Concerning his identity with Phinehas Edersheim adds,

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1. Segal, op.cit. p. 122
2. C. G. Montefiore: A Rabbinic Anthology, p.257
3. Segal, op.cit. p. 98, Also Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, Vol. VI, p. 341, note 119
4. Ibid. p. 58. The extreme opposite of this is held in the second century when he is said to have frequented the academy of the Rabbis daily. p.68
5. Montefiore, op.cit. p. 256. See also Ginzberg, op.cit. Vol. VI, p.317

"Another curious tradition identifies Elijah with Phinehas (Targum Pseudo-Jon on Ex. 6:18). The same expression as in the Targum ('Phinehas -- that is Elijah') occurs in the great storehouse of Rabbinic traditions, Yalkut (vol.1, p.245b last two lines, and col. c). From the pointed manner in which reference is made to the parallelism between the zeal of Phinehas and that of Elijah, and between their work in reconciling God and Israel, and bringing the latter to repentance, we may gather alike the origin of this tradition and its deeper meaning. It is one of the principles frequently expressed by the ancient synagogue, in its deeper perception of the unity and import of the Old Testament, that the miraculous events and divine interpositions of Israel's earlier history would be re-enacted, only with wider applications, in Messianic days." 1

This implies that much of the same character of Phinehas would be Elijah's in the days of the Messiah.

When Elijah appeared to the Rabbis, he answered² their questions on the interpretation of the scriptures in addition to questions regarding who would go to heaven, and what was going on in heaven. He gave them his ancestry.³ Since he had entrance to Paradise⁴ or Heaven,⁵ he was well informed on all matters. He told them what God⁶ was doing on occasions. He mentioned the heavenly academy of Rabbis, and one time permitted one person to

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1. A. Edersheim: The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume II, p.706
See Greenstone: The Messiah's Idea in Jewish History p. 333
2. Segal, op.cit., pp.82-84
3. Ibid. p.21
4. Ibid. p.56
5. Ibid. p.57 Three accounts are given.
6. Ibid. pp.67, 81-83

see one of its members.¹ On one occasion he pointed out a prison guard and two other men who made people happy and stopped their fighting as worthy of the world to come.² He interceded for the Jewish people both as individuals and as a group. This was true in the time of Esther, in which he was able to help in securing their deliverance.³ In spite of his knowledge of heaven he admitted that he did not know when the Messiah would come,⁴ but in the first century he denied that Ben Kuzibo was the Messiah.⁵ Not only did he appear to the academy of Rabbis but one was even named for him.⁶ They used him and his raising of the son of the widow as proof of the resurrection.⁷ One of the beautiful apocalyptic pictures is the revelation which was given by the archangel to Elijah of the secret of the end of the exile of Israel. The latter part of this vision closely resembles the descent of the Holy

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1. Segal, op.cit., p.68
2. Ibid., p.70
3. Ibid., pp. 72-73, Also L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, Vol. IV, p. 416
4. Ibid., pp. 76-77; J.H. Greenstone: The Messiah Idea in Jewish History, p.104, quotes San. 97b "The prophet Elijah, who is made responsible for much speculation, as a result of the belief in his frequent revelations to the Rabbis, divulged to one of the Amoraim, that the son of David would come after the 85th jubilee (4250 years).
5. Ibid., p.77
6. Ibid. pp. 21,30
7. Ibid. pp. 21,30

City in the Book of Revelation.¹

He interceded for the people when God wished to destroy the world by a storm.² He brought about the repentance of Israel on Mount Gilead.³ He is pictured as an angel. To comply with the law he flies at a certain height. He is pictured as flying through the air like a bird.⁴ He is allowed to ride on God's horse, the tempest and storm wind.⁵ One can tell if he is present if the dogs play instead of fight.⁶

One of his heavenly duties is to record the deeds of all generations.⁷ This was assigned to him because of his zeal in seeing that people carry out the covenant of God. He together with the Messiah have this task.⁸ For the same reason he is always assigned a seat at the ordinance of circumcision. God is reputed to have said, "I swear by your life that Israel will have no circumcision unless you witness it with your own eyes."⁹ Again, "God said to Elijah 'Because you have accused the

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1. Segal, op.cit.,p.24 Ezekiel's vision is referred to in the passage.
2. Ibid., p.22
3. Ibid., p.22
4. Ibid., pp. 162-163
5. Ibid., p.52
6. Ibid., p. 163
7. Ibid., p. 58; Edersheim, op.cit.,Vol.II, p.707
8. Ibid., pp. 163-164
9. Ibid., p. 45 See also Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.VI, p.338

people of forsaking my covenant, you will have to be present at each circumcision, and then report to me, how my people observe the covenant.'"¹

Elijah is promised as a consoler of the people in the future.² He also helped many people during this period. He is reputed to have given a formula for happiness.³ He also tells them not to get angry or drunk, and to get permission from the creator when they go on a journey.⁴ He once had occasion to teach a rich man to say "Please God" prior to conducting his business affairs.⁵ He is credited with killing a man because he did not face the synagogue when he prayed.⁶ From that severity he goes to the other extreme of healing a toothache.⁷ He was particularly helpful to the poor. Elijah let one poor man sell him into slavery and then Elijah helped the master who bought him, thus helping both.⁸ He gave a trial period of seven years' prosperity to a needy couple, who appealed on the basis of their worthiness, and they were allowed to continue to prosper.⁹

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1. Segal, op.cit. p.50 Further reference to the Chair is found on p.162. This tradition is still in effect.
2. Ibid., p.53
3. Ibid., pp. 96-97
4. Ibid., p. 102
5. Ibid., pp. 100-102
6. Ibid., p. 103
7. Ibid., p. 109
8. Ibid., pp. 119-122
9. Ibid., pp. 124-126

He enriched the family of Rab Abraham and then because R. Abraham forgot God Elijah took the riches away from him. Abraham promised not to forget God again so the riches¹ were restored. He assisted three men, one who had been rich, but was then poor, one a scholar who was poor, and one with a shrewish wife. The first two after his help forsook God but the last remained faithful. He rewarded² the last and returned the first two to their former state.

Concerning his activity Edersheim states:

"Not only was he the only ambassador to whom God had delegated His three special 'keys': of birth, of the rainfall, and of waking the dead (Yakut, vol.ii,32c), but his working was almost Divine (Tanch. Bereshith 7; ed. Warsh. p.6b, last line, and 7a).³

In spite of this routine activity there was a special return of Elijah which was expected. Ginzberg quotes God as saying to Moses, "I said not that I would send thee to Israel at the end of days -- Elijah will appear to them before the great and terrible day."⁴ Yet one finds elsewhere that the two are brought together with God saying to Moses, "... And when he shall have come I will bring both of you together..⁵" This is further sub-

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1. Segal, op.cit., pp. 126-128. A similar story follows in pp. 129-130
2. Ibid., pp. 130-139
3. Edersheim, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 707
4. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol. I, p.325
5. Ibid, Vol.III, p.141. Also see Edersheim, op.cit. Vol. II, p. 167. It is mentioned in Segal p. 157.

stantiated in Debar. R. which states, "God promised Moses to send him, together with Elijah, at the end of the days." ¹ In Mahzor Vitry 164 it is said that Moses will be the cupbearer at the Messianic banquet. ² Concerning Elijah, Moses says,

"Elijah is my disciple and colleague. He will also be a successor to Aaron, for when in the future I stammer, as I did in the past, Elijah will be my interpreter and explain all doubtful matters." ³

In this period he is also associated with Enoch. These are mentioned in connection with the Antichrist. Bousset notes that,

"**this** assumption that Elias and Enoch are two witnesses is so prevalent in patristic traditional lore that scarcely any other names are mentioned. How is the firm belief in this tradition to be explained? In support of his theory, Hippolytus in one place actually quotes as an inspired authority a document absolutely unknown to us (Chap. XV): 'And another prophet says: he (the Antichrist will gather all his power...'" ⁴

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1. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.VI, p.167
Emil Schurer: A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Vol. II, p.158 ties this in with Deuteronomy 18:15
2. Ibid., Vol.VI, p.167
3. Ibid., Vol.IV, pp.233-235, Also Segal, op.cit.,p.147
4. W. Bousset: The Antichrist Legend, pp.27,58 and Chapt. XIV, p.203f. This is an early Christian tradition and though no evidence is found in Jewish literature it is thought by some to stem from a Jewish idea. Mention is made by Schurer, op.cit., Vol.II, p.158

Elijah is also associated with Jeremiah.¹
Zerubbabel, too, is mentioned. Ginzberg in referring to this says, " .. together with Elijah, Zerubbabel, in the time to come will explain all the obscure passages of the Torah, and reveal its mysteries..²" And again, "Messiah will ascend the Mount of Olives with Elijah and Zerubbabel, whereupon Elijah at the bidding of the Messiah, will blow the trumpet."³

Greenstone refers to Malachi and says that it identifies Elijah with "the angel of the covenant who shall announce the approach of the great day of the Lord, and reconcile the fathers and their children."⁴

Prior to the coming of the Messiah, Elijah is pictured in the fifth chamber of the garden of Eden, where sit Messiah, the son of David, Elijah, and Messiah, the son of Ephraim. The picture is given: "Messiah ben David sits under a decorated canopy while Elijah comforts him saying, 'Bear your suffering for the sin of Israel until

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1. Edersheim, op.cit., Vol.II, p.707, note 2, His references should be noted. Also Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.VI, p. 386, note 13.
2. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol. VI, p.438
3. Ibid., loc. cit.
4. Julius H. Greenstone: The Messiah Idea in Jewish History, p. 55

the coming of the redemption.'"¹ He is mentioned as one of the four craftsmen, together with Messiah, the son of David,² and Messiah, the son of Joseph, and the Kohen Zedek.³

Elijah is referred to as the Lord's Instrument who will awaken Israel prior to the coming of the Messiah.³ He is referred to as redeeming Israel.⁴ This redemption will not come all at once, for one verse reads:

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1. Segal, op.cit., pp.165-166. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.V. p.32, says: "With him is Elijah. He takes the head of Messiah, and places it in his bosom and says to him, 'Be quiet, for the end draweth nigh.'" Vol. I, pp.22-23. Concerning the confusions as to the various Messiahs, Segal says, "Realizing the slow and tedious road of righteousness, Israel gave its God an extension of time. It permitted Him to send the harbinger of the real Messiah, the Messiah ben Joseph, who would proclaim the coming of Messiah ben David, and then they gave God a further extension of time and made Elijah the precursor of Messiah ben Joseph." If this be true these ideas were conceived quite early. Edersheim does not hold to that view. It is rather evident from the age of tradition that Elijah was to be the harbinger prior to the thought of more than one Messiah. New Testament thought would further bear this out. If such ideas were in existence they were not developed into tradition until much later. Ginzberg refers to The Talmud (Sukkah, loc.cit.) as knowing four distinguished personages as Messiahs. These are Messiah the son of David; Messiah the son of Joseph; Elijah; and the prince of justice (Melchizedek). "Legends" Vol. v, p.131.
2. Ibid., p. 158
3. Segal, op.cit., p. 159
4. Ibid., p.60, also Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.II, p.144

"'Hark, my beloved, behold he cometh,' teaches that when the voice of the Shofar will be heard, ten earthquakes will take place, ten places will be destroyed, and ten will be burned. This teaches that the door of redemption will not be open for all at one time, but rather that Elijah will come to one city while he disappears from another. He will speak to one man while he vanishes from another." 1

Elijah's coming as the harbinger of the Messiah² is mentioned frequently. There are varying accounts of the coming and the activity of Elijah and the Messiah. One of these is:

"In the struggle of the nations of the north Gog and Magog - after attacking Jerusalem for twelve months, it is said they will suffer a crushing defeat. In this struggle, the Messiah son of Joseph, that obscure figure in the Talmudic Haggadah will be killed, but he will be restored to life again by Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, who will play an important part in the Messianic age." 3

Another reads:

"According to another interpretation, the verse 'Hark, my beloved, behold he cometh', refers to the days of Gog and Magog, when Israel will be hidden in caves and underground places. When the rulers of the north will have heard that Amon and Moab are destroyed they will all gather and establish their rule in Damascus. So also the rulers of the south and the west will gather and hold council at Median. Israel will be distressed, for it will be impossible to leave the sages in Median, or to leave their brothers in Jer-

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1. Segal, op.cit. p.167
2. Ibid., pp. 155-157 and numerous other places.
Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.V, p.276
3. J. H. Greenstone: The Messiah Idea in Jewish History, pp. 95-96 and footnotes

usalem. God will then open a door for Elijah, who will leave the sages in Jerusalem and come to Median. On the way in the desert, full of rocks and wild beasts, God will perform miracles for Elijah. The prophet will come and stand before the Messiah in Median. The Messiah will go, but Elijah will remain standing. At that hour Elijah will take out the book of Yashar, of which the Torah is only one song. Then the earth will open and burn all the enemies of Israel, and become a large grave for them." 1

A third account reads:

"Three days before the coming of the Messiah, Elijah will stand on the mountains of Israel and say: 'Mountains of Israel, how long will you remain waste and desolate?' And this query will be heard from one end of the world to the other. The Elijah will announce that peace has come upon the world, as it is said, 'Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that announceth peace.'

When the wicked hear this tidings they will all rejoice, and say one to another, 'Peace has come to us.' On the second day Elijah will come and from the mountains announce that happiness has come to the world, as the verse says: 'The harbinger of good tidings' On the third day Elijah will announce that salvation has come to the world, as the verse says: 'Who announceth salvation' when Elijah sees that the wicked speak to one another, that salvation has come to them, he will proclaim that salvation will come only to Zion, and her sons, as it says: '.. that sayeth unto Zion, thy God reigneth.'

At that hour God will show his glory and his kingdom to all mortals. He will redeem Israel and lead them, as it is said: 'The breaker is gone before them, and the Lord is at the head of them.'" 2

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1. Segal, op.cit., pp.167-168
2. Ibid., pp. 158-159 note also p. 143.
This is also found in Ginsburg, op.cit., Vol.IV,
pp. 233-235

After this Michael is to blow his trumpet and Elijah will make his appearance to introduce the Messiah.¹ Some thought that "Elijah with the rest of the righteous will flee into the desert, whence they will return after a stay of forty-five days, led by the Messiah who will begin his work of redemption."²

Elijah, when he returns, will clear up all doubtful matters. Some of the matters are the innermost secrets of domesticated animals and the Leviathan,³ the status of unclean and clean,⁴ matters of vow money,⁵ untimely births,⁶ the explanation of the forty-fourth and forty-fifth chapters of Ezekiel,⁷ matters of financial dispute,⁸ the disposition of gold and silver vessels that have been found,⁹ the disposition of promissory notes on which the payment is uncertain,¹⁰ disposal of surplus burial money, disposition of unknown documents, and the settlement of a questionable slave or freeman

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1. Ginsburg, op.cit., Vol.IV, pp.233-235
2. Ibid., Vol. IV, p.259; Vol. VI, p.340
3. Segal, op.cit., p. 148
4. Ibid., pp. 149-150
5. Ibid., p. 151
6. Ibid., p. 150
7. Ibid., p. 151
8. Herbert Dandy: The Mishnah, Baba Metzia, 3:4,5
9. Segal, op.cit.,p. 152; Dandy, op.cit., says vessels of gold and glass (B.M.)
10. Ibid., p. 152

status.¹ His chief activity will consist in the restoration of the purity of the family.² He will solve all legal problems that have accumulated.³ He will decide all questions of ritual.⁴ He will punish a husband for an unwise marriage, and will kiss the husband of a wise marriage.⁵ The recurrent phrase is found "until Elijah comes" for many of the problems which are difficult to solve. Elijah will continue to expound the law after the reign of peace comes.⁶ On his coming he is to "make the people as fruitful as an orchard of pomegranates."⁷

Perhaps the most important of Elijah's activities are summed up in the seven miracles which he will perform. They are:

1. He will bring before the Israelites Moses and the generation of the wilderness.
2. He will revive Korah and his followers.
3. He will revive Messiah, son of Joseph.
4. He will restore the three mysteriously lost objects of the sacred utensils of the Temple, namely, the ark, the vessel of manna, and the vessel of sacred oil. (Note: some would add the Aaronic rod).
5. He will display the sceptre given him by God.
6. He will crush mountains like straw.
7. He will reveal the great mystery. 8

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1. Segal, op.cit., p. 152
2. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.IV, p.235
3. Ginzberg, loc. cit.
4. Ginzberg, loc. cit.
5. Segal, op.cit., p. 166
6. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol.IV, p.235
7. Segal, op. cit., p. 146.
8. Greenstone, op.cit., p.96. Note footnote

One of the tests for Elijah will be his ability to resurrect the dead,

For Elijah will come and say to Israel, 'I am Elijah.' The people will then say, 'If you are Elijah, resurrect the dead for us, not only the dead whom we do not remember, but also the dead whom we do remember.'" 1

Schurer quotes Sota 9:15:

"The resurrection of the dead comes through the prophet Elijah. The expectation is founded on the fact that Elijah figures in the Old Testament as a raiser of the dead." 2

He is to bring repentance with his coming,

"And Israel will not make great repentance till Elijah -- his memory for a blessing -- comes as it is written in Malachi iv. 6"³. Ginzberg says, "His first task will be to induce Israel to repent when the Messiah is about to come. Sanhedrin 97b."⁴ Greenstone says,

"He will be especially instrumental in bringing Israel to a genuine repentance and in establishing peace among all classes, and turning the hearts of fathers and children to each other (Pirke R. Eliezer XLIII, end, XLVII.) Then a world sick of sin and misery, at last devoted to God in truth, will hear the trumpet of the archangel Michael announce the advent of the Messiah." 5

There is some question about the idea that Elijah is to anoint the Messiah. Edersheim says,

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1. Segal, op.cit., p.168, Also in Ginzberg, Legends, Vol.IV, p.259
2. Schurer, op.cit., 2nd Division, Vol.II, p.158
3. Edersheim, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 143
4. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.233
5. Greenstone, op.cit., p. 96

"He is described as the great High Priest of Messianic days. This is expressly stated in the Targum Pseudo-Jon. on Ex. xl. 10, where it also seems implied that he was to anoint the Messiah with sacred oil, the composition of which was ... to be restored by Elijah." 1

Elijah and Jeremiah will hasten to the Holy Land, seize it and give it to Israel for a possession. 2
Then Elijah will blow the trumpet.

"The Messiah will have Elijah blow the trumpet, and, at the first sound the primal light, which shone before the week of creation, will reappear; at the second sound the dead will arise, and with the swiftness of the wind assemble around the Messiah from all corners of the earth; at the third sound, the Shekinah will become visible to all; the mountains will be razed at the fourth sound, and the temple will stand in complete perfection as Ezekiel described it." 3

During the reign of peace Elijah will be in the cabinet of the Messiah together with Samuel, Saul,

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1. Edersheim, op.cit., p.706 Justin Martyr's Dialogue 49 gives as Jewish tradition during his age the belief in the anointing. It reads, with Trypho replying to Justin as follows, "But Christ --if He has indeed been born, and exists anywhere -- is unknown, and does not even know Himself, and has no power until Elias come to anoint Him and make Him manifest to all. And you having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for His sake are inconsiderately perishing." Ginzberg says that the old rabbinic tradition knows nothing of the anointing by Elijah. See Legends, Vol.IV, p. 259
2. Ginzberg, op.cit., Vol. VI, p. 386, note 13. He refers here to Matthew 16:14
3. Ibid., Vol. IV, pp.233-235 and notes.

Jesse, Amos, Zephaniah and Hezekiah. Elijah will show the children how to plead for their sinful parents. His argument is that if the children died for the sins of the parents that that absolved the parents. He is¹ said to have won the argument.

The last act of the brilliant career of Elijah will be the execution of God's command to slay Samuel, and thus banish evil forever.²

2. As found in the Apocrypha

There are seven references³ to Elijah in the Apocrypha. The majority of them mention Elijah in brief historical accounts of Israel. The longest of these accounts is found in Sir. 48:1-12. The condition of the land is described, "They sold themselves to (do) all manner of evil." Verse four is characteristic of the passage, "How terrible wast thou, Elijah and he who is like thee shall be glorified who didst raise up a dead man from death.." His return is taken for granted,

"Who art ready for the time, as it is written,
to still wrath before the fierce anger of God,
to turn wrath before the fierce anger of God,
to turn the heart of the fathers unto the⁴
children, and to restore the tribes of Israel."

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1. Ginzberg, op.cit. p. 235
2. Ibid., This is also inferred in Segal, op.cit.,p.156
this refers to Satan.
3. Sir. 48:1-12; I Macc.2:58, I Enoch 89:52, 93:8,
II Bar. 77:24, and IV Ezra 7:109
4. Sir. 48:10

Fourth Ezra says that he prayed for rain and¹
"for the dead that he might live."

Thus it is seen that the memory of Elijah was alive. His deeds were in the thought of the people. They expected his return. They thought of him as a great leader of the past and in him was the hope of life after death.

D. Elijah's Influence on the
Religious and the Political
Parties of the Period

1. The Chasidim

Near the second century before Christ the Hellenising party in Israel grew until it became the ruling power in the land. Its strength was further increased by the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164). Joshua (or Jason) bribed his way into the high priesthood. He built a gymnasium and attracted the youth away from the habits of their ancestors. He introduced Grecian education. His successor, Menelaus, intensified² this policy with the use of sacrilege and murder.

This party was opposed by the Chasidim (also

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1. IV Ezra 7:109

2. J. Feather: The Last of the Prophets, pp. 12-13.

known as Hasideans or Assideans)¹. They had been in existence prior to this time but with the Maccabees they now arose from their normally peaceful state to fight against this attack upon their religion. They are described as martyrs to their faith, long suffering and unselfish. Normally, they were strongly religious ascetics who held strictly to the law and loved quiet and peace. They, no doubt, inherited their zeal of the law from Ezra. Graetz says that they developed from the Nazarenes and later were to be found in the Essenes. Others say that the zeal they displayed was to be found in the three later groups, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes.² Schurer describes the result of the endeavor of this group together with the Maccabees as, " So far as information reaches, this is the only example of an Oriental religion completely emancipating itself from the influence of Hellenism."³

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1. For a good treatment of the group see Jewish Encyclopedia, article "Hasideans"; Graetz, History of the Jews, Schurer, A History of the Jewish People. Mention is made in I. Mac. 2:41,7:12f, and II Mac. 14:6
2. Feather, op.cit., p.18; Lightfoot, the Epistles of St. Paul, Colossians and Philemon, Dis.II, pp.353,377, and Schurer, op.cit., Div. II,ii,21f. only state that the later two may have come from the older group.
3. Schurer, op.cit., Div. I, Vol.I, p.199 The historical background is found on pp.193-218, or in Josephus, Antiquities XII,v.

A striking parallel is found here with that of the days of Elijah. A religion is imported and forced upon the people by false prophets. Failure to comply results in a bloody persecution. A group of men jealous for the Law rises up and meets it and defeats it. Mattathias, in his last address to his sons, recalls Elijah to their minds, he says that Elijah was found faithful and, "For being zealous and fervent for the law was taken up into heaven.¹ The group definitely recalled Elijah and remembered his zeal for the Law. He inspired them in breaking the power of foreign religion.

2. The Essenes

The Carmelites hold that the Essenes are the direct descendants of Elijah and the "Sons of the Prophets." Though they have not produced any real evidence for this belief, it has much in its favor.² The

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1. Circumcision was prohibited by law. Schurer says that there was enough contempt for the Jewish custom that many sought to eliminate traces of circumcision. With the zeal for this rite on the part of Mattathias (I Mac. 2:46) one may surmise that the idea of the chair of Elijah originated as a result of this experience. Unfortunately, the dating of this legend awaits confirmation.
2. The major portion of the material which they present are pronouncements of Popes and other dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church. No evidence even of Onasidim is produced. "Carmel", compiled by the Discalced Carmelites, pp.5-7, is typical of their evidence. See also C.W. Currier: Carmel in America, p.9f and P.R. McCaffrey: The White Friars, p.14f.

refutation of the Carmelites' claim has been concerned with the actual origin of their order rather than this theory.

There is distinct resemblance between the Essenes and the "Sons of the Prophets". This coupled with the fact that Elijah was influential in the Maccabean period would lead one to claim such an inheritance.

The Essenes were in existence from about 150 B.C. until the Fall of Jerusalem. The major part of the information concerning them is found in Josephus, and Philo.¹ In their simple dress, ascetic life, celibacy, and zeal for righteousness there was a distinct similarity to the "Sons of the Prophets."

The other elements of the order could not be so associated, as living in community houses, co-operate ownership, agriculture pursuits, lack of slaves, abstinence from the use of oil, secrecy, prayers to the sun, prohibition of sacrifice, and limitation on oaths. Neither could the beliefs on strict observance of the Sabbath nor the determinism held by them be assigned

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1. Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II,viii, Antiquities, XVIII, i,5; XV,x,4-5; XIII,v,9.
C.D. Younge: The Works of Philo Judaeus, Vol.III, pp.523-526, Vol.IV, 219-222 (on the virtuous being also free)

strictly to the influence of Elijah. Their belief in the immortality of the soul could have come from this source. ~~This is~~ equally true of their greatest contribution, which was their zeal for righteousness. One of the requirements for membership according to Josephus was,

"that he will always hate the wicked, and be assistant to the righteous ..."(1) They consulted the prophets, as he says, "...being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets; and it is but seldom that they miss their predictions." 1

It follows that they would have known Elijah and those who were influenced by his example.

Though certainly not greatly influenced by Elijah, it may be held that the Essenes inherited the Maccabean zeal for righteousness and their recognition of Elijah. It must be admitted that there is no actual quotation which validates the influence of Elijah upon this group - very little is actually known of them in the Scriptures or Rabbinical literature.²

3. Sadducees

If the three groups, the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, came from the Chasidim, as some assert,

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1. Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II, viii, 7-12
2. One of the best discussions of the group will be found in the Dissertations of Lightfoot in "Colossians" J. Klausner: Jesus of Nazareth, p. 245 speaks of the Essenes being the successors of the Rechabites.

and the Chasidim were influenced by Elijah, then it would follow that these three groups were to a certain extent influenced by him. Of the three groups the Sadducees were the least affected by such influence. Thompson,¹ on the contrary, insists that the Chasidim were the opponents of the Sadducees from the beginning. He describes them as originally a party that upheld the cause of righteousness. They were a priestly party. Schurer holds that they were a political party who catered to the party in power, and disappeared from history with the fall of the Jewish state.²

If Thompson's³ statement that both I Maccabees and Ecclesiasticus were written by Sadducees is correct, then Elijah, since he is found in the contents of both books, had to be in the thought of the Sadducees. The effect could not have been very great as the group did not conform to the characteristics of Elijah.

They held that only the written Torah was binding.⁴ They refused to believe in the resurrection of the body, and retribution in a future life. They denied the existence of angels, and spirits. They held to the freedom

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1. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, article "Sadducees" by J.E.H. Thompson.
2. Schurer, op. cit., Div. II vol. II, 44f.
3. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on the "Sadducees"
4. Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, x, 6. See also: XIII, v, 9 X, vi, 2, XIII, i, 4-5; Wars of the Jews II, viii, 14, for his treatment of this group.

of man to choose good and evil.

It would be difficult to suppose that they believed in the miraculous element in Elijah. They certainly would not believe in his raising the widow's son from the dead, even though it was written. They also would not believe in the continued existence of Elijah and the various spiritualistic deeds assigned to him at that time.

It is necessary to conclude that Elijah had little influence on the Sadducees except as a historical character in their heritage.

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4. The Scribes and Pharisees

The Pharisees are placed between the Essenes and the Sadducees in doctrine and activity. They held that man was responsible for his actions and that God was governor of the universe. Elijah held to the sovereignty of God in the life of the nation. He certainly felt that man was responsible for his actions.

The Pharisees held to the resurrection of the body. Here, too, one can see the relation between Elijah and this group. Elijah raised from the dead.

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1. The information on this group may be found in R.T. Herford: The Pharisees; I. Abraham: Studies in Pharisaism, and Finkelstein: the Pharisees. Thompson's article in ISBE is quite helpful. Schurer, op.cit. Div.II, Vol.2, pp.1-44 is helpful.

The history of the Pharisees is rather obscure as are records of all the groups of this period. They emerge from the Chasidim and become the Pharisees, which is a change from the "pious" to the "separatists". They became possessed with diligence for the law. They included all the tradition as well as the written law and bound upon the people their interpretation of the law. Schurer calls them "the rigidly legal."¹ A recognizable difficulty in this system would be that law would become more and more burdensome as time constantly added more and more regulations. What started out as a zeal for the law and righteousness became a very burdensome performance of duty. They eventually placed the precepts of the scribes over that of the Torah itself.²

The scribes were originally the ones who copied the Law. They later became interpreters of the Law and as such were the lawyers of the land and their opinions were relied upon in any dispute.

The Pharisees were the outstanding group of the time of Christ. They had the public support of the

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1. Schurer, op.cit., Div. II, Vol.2, pp. 1-12

2. Ibid., Div. II, Vol.2, p.12

In holding tradition binding the Pharisees held all Elijah stories to be valid. This bound the ideas of the people, making it difficult for new conceptions. John the Baptist, Jesus, and later preachers met with this difficulty.

country. Schurer says, "The decisive influence upon¹ public affairs was in the hands ... of the Pharisees."

One of the important phases of their influence was that they maintained the messianic expectation. In spite of the Roman oppression they taught and hoped for the coming of the Messiah. It is evident in their inquiry of John the Baptist and Jesus that they expected the return of Elijah. It was the teaching of the Scribes and the Pharisees that Elijah should come. The difficulty as will be seen is that they had made the regulations concerning their coming and, because John and Christ did not fit the pattern of their expectations, they did not accept them. Instead, they accepted another in years to come,² only to be disappointed. It was unfortunate that the shackles of legalism prevented the ones who were looking most for the Messiah and Elijah from finding them.

E. Summary

During the inter-Testament period the Jewish nation, except for a very brief period, was under the rule of some foreign power. The Jews were first in captivity and then returned to Palestine. They were oppressed and persecuted. During this period the Jews

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1. Schurer, oplocit., Div.II, Vol.2, p.28
2. Thompson in ISBE article "Pharisees" Reference is made here to a later false messiah.

looked back upon their past with great longing. They looked to the future with the hope of better days. The story of Elijah was magnified in this process. Attempts were made to improve upon the Biblical account. Elijah was made an angel who continued to visit Israel. He was made a vital part of the ritual and of the eschatology of the Jew. He was to introduce the Messiah. He was to solve all the difficult problems. He became the saint of the Jews.

His influence was reflected in the group called the Chasidim. Their zeal for righteousness combined with the valor of the Maccabees brought an end for a time to foreign oppression. The Chasidim were succeeded by three groups, the Sadducees, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the Essenes. All these reflect the influence of Elijah. It is found least in the Sadducees, somewhat in the Essenes, but strongly in the Scribes and Pharisees. It was the latter group that held tradition to be binding. They were the ones who kept the messianic hope alive. They were the strongest in the belief that Elijah would return.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF ELIJAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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A. Introduction

Elijah's name is mentioned twenty-nine times in the New Testament. Several other passages are thought to refer to him. It will be the purpose of this chapter to examine the references around four main ideas; first, the re-appearance of Elijah; second, the appearance of Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration; third, the appraisal of the Elijah^{of} history; and fourth, the persistence of the belief of Elijah's return.

B. The Reappearance of Elijah

1. Scriptural testimony.

There had been built up in the minds and the hearts of the people the idea of an earthly return of the Messiah which would be announced by Elijah. This belief had been fanned to a white heat by the oppression of the Romans just after a brief independence in the Maccabean period. It was commonly felt that at this time certainly the Messiah must come. There had arisen false messiahs^f and the people had at that time become upset and did not know just what to expect.

Into this environment John the Baptist was born. Even before his birth reference is made to Elijah concerning him. Hear the words of the angel of the Lord as he speaks to Zacharias,

"... and many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him."¹

Two facts are found here: one, that he is likened to Elijah; and two, that he will do the work prophesied concerning Elijah. This also fitted in with the tradition concerning the task of Elijah. Burton pictures the task as follows:

"He shall be the herald, making ready a people prepared for the Lord, running before the Royal chariot, proclaiming the coming one, and preparing His way, then leaving his own little footprints to disappear, thrown up in the chariot dust of Him who was greater and mightier than he."²

John himself was either not aware of his likeness to the prophet or else he wished to deny that he was the historical Elijah. He drew people unto him, called them to repentance and baptized them. When the religious leaders of Jerusalem heard of this, they came down from the capital and inquired of John at the Jordan as to his identity. They first asked if he were the Christ, to which he replied

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1. Luke 1:16-18. Cf. Mal. 4:5-6. Some commentators note that "Malachi" means "messenger."
2. H. Burton: The Gospel According to Luke, p. 25

that he was not. "Art thou Elijah? And he saith, 'I am not.'¹ Not only were they priests and Levites but they were from the Pharisees. They then ask, "Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ neither Elijah, neither the prophet? John answered saying, 'I baptize with water . . .'² Then John proclaimed the presence of Christ who is greater than he. This proves that the religious leaders of that day expected not only the Christ but the return of Elijah. John must have sensed that they expected the historical Elijah and so he said "I am not" to their question. Westcott says,

"In a spiritual sense John was Elias, yet not so as the Jews literally understood the promise. Thus the denial is directed to the Jewish expectation of the bodily return of Elijah."³

It should be noted that John claims for himself the fulfillment of the messenger in Isaiah 40:3.

Jesus states that John the Baptist is Elijah. John is in prison and sends disciples to ask about Jesus. Jesus, upon giving His answer, turns to the group and asks their view of John the Baptist. He quotes Mal. 3:1 as applying to John the Baptist and then concludes by saying, "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah that is to come."⁴ It was difficult for the people to believe that a

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1. John 1:21
2. John 1:26
3. Westcott, ad. loc.
4. Matt. 11:14

man in prison was the Elijah for whom they had looked for centuries.

In addition this testimony is given;

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."¹

The disciples are confused. They have seen Elijah in the transfiguration. They want to know about the scribal tradition concerning Elijah's coming first. Here again Jesus speaks to them, and tells them that Elijah is come already. The people failed to recognize him and did what they would to him. In other words, he had been beheaded. The disciples are certain that Jesus meant that John the Baptist was Elijah who should come. It was difficult to believe that this one who was beheaded should be the one. Jesus' answer to the disciples was not simple, but it solved the Elijah problem for the Christian.

By the authority of Christ John the Baptist was Elijah. The Angel of God said that he would have the spirit of Elijah. John himself admits that he fulfills the reference in Isaiah. Any person will realize that John the Baptist was not the Elijah of the Old Testament. Rather he was like him. He even carried out the tradition concerning

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1. Matt. 17:10-13. Cf. Mark 9:11-13.

Elijah, though the Jews failed to recognize him. One is reminded of how well he fulfilled the Jewish ideas of Elijah's return.

2. A Comparison of Elijah and John the Baptist

a. Similarities

Both men were individualistic. They lived alone across the Jordan. They ate only what they obtained from nature. They had difficulty with the King and Queen of the nation. They both brought the people to a decision concerning God. They were both human and at times asked questions. They wore similar garments. It is almost universally thought that they both were Nazarites. Both were celibates. They both were filled with a zeal for righteousness, and had a following of disciples. Both gave messages of judgment. Little is known of either one's life prior to his active ministry. They both appeared suddenly. They both met strong opposition from the Queen, and were condoned by the King. Both foresaw a new order.

b. Differences

There was a difference which might well be accounted for in the difference of the two periods. Elijah performed miracles, John performed none. Elijah was a messenger of fire, John of baptism with water. Elijah trained his successor, John announced him. Elijah was zealous for the covenant, John for the repentant heart. Elijah ascended into heaven, John was beheaded. John was imprisoned and

Elijah wasn't. Even in the differences there is an element of likeness.

C. The Transfigured Elijah

1. The event

The account in the three gospels is very meager. Christ was transfigured and then two men appeared with Him. Luke says,

"And behold, there talked with Him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."¹

2. Its meaning

It is not easy to explain what the Transfiguration means. Certainly Creed² is not helpful as he refers to the psychological explanation. The question is 'Why Elijah?' If the traditional view is to be taken that Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets and that Christ represents the new dispensation which will replace these, then it must be concluded that the position of Elijah in the estimate of God Himself was a very high one.

The conversation concerns the coming death of Christ. Elijah knew then the event that would transform the world. Brenz comments,

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1. Luke 9:30-31

2. Creed, The Gospel According to Luke, ad. loc.

"No synod on earth was ever more gloriously attended than this, no assembly was ever more illustrious. Here is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Here are Moses and Elias, the chief of the prophets. Here are Peter, James and John, the chief of the apostles."¹

In such a group was Elijah.

Strong evidence of the belief that the two, Moses and Elijah, would come together to proclaim the Messiah has been given.² The Transfiguration was evidence that this belief had actually been fulfilled. They had both come together. Here they talk of the vital last days of Christ's earthly ministry. Jesus is proclaimed Messiah by Moses, Elijah and God Himself.

D. The Historical Elijah

The New Testament has only a few references to the Elijah of history but they verify the evidence gained thus far in the thesis.

1. The universality of Elijah

Jesus on the occasion of his sermon at His home in Nazareth uses Elijah as an illustration to show that a prophet is not accepted in his own country. He says,

"But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of

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1. Lindsay, The Gospel of St. Mark, ad. loc.
2. Ante, pp. 87, 88.

them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow."¹

Not only does it show that Elijah was probably not appreciated as he should have been in Israel, but that he went out with his message and healing powers to the enemy, even as Jesus' message would have to find appreciation elsewhere than Nazareth. The work of neither was bound by nationality.

2. The method of Elijah

As Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem, He sent messengers before Him into a Samaritan village to prepare for His coming. The village refused to receive Him. When the disciples, James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them (even as Elijah did)?"² The two disciples, impressed by the association of Jesus with Elijah in the Transfiguration, thought of a punishment for his rejection in the village and naturally were reminded of the great event in the life of Elijah when he used fire to vindicate his cause. It may well be that they thought of the groups of fifty which Elijah disposed of in this manner. These so-called 'sons of thunder' were thus living up to their name in wishing

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1. Luke 4:25-26

2. Luke 9:54. Several Alex. omit this section in brackets. The claim is that it is a gloss by some one influenced by Marcion doctrine. Lenski in The Interpretation of Luke, ad. loc. offers a good commentary on the verse. The following omit the phrase: Aleph, B, L, Z, 2 Mnn, It. Syr. The context in which Elijah has appeared on the Mount would assist in validating the phrase.

dramatic punishment to be dealt those who failed to receive Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus "turned and rebuked them (and said Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of)"¹ (For the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them)."² Jesus does not condemn Elijah and his method. He merely says that that is not His method. The spirit of the two disciples was not against an erring people but a people who had not yet heard. This was a different situation from Elijah's. Elijah was placed in a situation where only desperate measures could be used. In the case where the fifty men came to capture him, the fire was used as a protection and not against innocent people. One can say only that Jesus neither condemns nor approves Elijah's method, but that His interest is in condemning the spirit of the disciples.

3. Elijah and the remnant

Paul in the Epistle to the Romans verifies the idea of the remnant found in the story of Elijah. He writes,

"Or know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? How he pleadeth with God against Israel: Lord they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith

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1. Luke 9:55. This phrase is omitted by Aleph, A, B, C, E, G, H, L, S, V, Delta, Z and 64 Mnn. It is found in D, Fw, K, M, U, Gamma, Lambda, Pi and majority of Mnn. Syr. It.
2. This is found in Fw, K, M, U, Gamma, Lambda, Pi and almost all the Mnn. Syr. It. It is omitted in the other 14 Mjj. 65 Mnn. It. (aliq.).

the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."¹

God leaves for a remnant those who worship Him. The idea born on Mount Horeb is still applicable when Paul writes to the Romans. For an illustration he looks back to Elijah and the experience he had with God at that time.

4. The humanity of Elijah

James attempts to nullify the idea that had grown up concerning Elijah that he was more than human.² The Jewish tradition would bear this out. James writes to Christians in general,

"... The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit."³

The context indicates that James is interested in convincing Christians of the effectiveness in the prayer life of a man, and that he uses Elijah as an example.

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1. Romans 11:2-5
2. Knowling says that this passage indicates that tradition had grown so that Elijah was almost above man. The Epistle of St. James, ad. loc. Moffatt comes even closer when he says it is a "protest against exaggerated Jewish reverence for Elijah as almost superman." The General Epistles, ad. loc. Plumptree calls attention to the contemporary event in Josephus, Ant. XVIII, viii, 6, in which Petronius receives rain from God. The General Epistle of St. James. ad. loc. See Edras 7:39.
3. James 5:17

Elijah is not any better than the Christian and God answered his prayers; so then He will answer the Christian's. Both the human element and the prayer element is verified in this account by James.

E. The Persistent Belief in the Return of Elijah

1. In the time of Christ

It has been shown that the religious leaders thought that John the Baptist was important enough to be the Messiah, Elijah, or a prophet. The expectation of Elijah was not confined to the religious **groups** but to the common people as well. There are several places where this is clearly indicated in the New Testament. In the first account the attention of the nation is brought to focus upon Christ and His work. Herod hears of it and thinks that he may be John the Baptist risen again. Mark says, "Others said, that it is Elijah."¹ Luke reiterates the same saying, "and by some, that Elijah had appeared; . . ."² The people, seeing the miracles and the popularity of Jesus, mistook Him for the one proclaimed by Malachi and the Jewish tradition. They wanted Elijah to return.

Sometime later Jesus turns to the disciples to inquire as to what the people say about him. The opinion is much

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1. Mark 6:15
2. Luke 9:8

as before. They say that Jesus is John the Baptist, but some say Elijah. Matthew simply says, ". . some, Elijah; . ." ¹ Mark says, ". , and others, Elijah. ." ² Luke reads, ". . but others say, Elijah; . ." ³ This simply verifies the fact that the people still looked for Elijah. It is noteworthy that the transfiguration occurred in each account just after this inquiry. It cleared up the matter of John the Baptist and Elijah, and proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God.

The people did not stop looking for Elijah. On Calvary with life ebbing from His body, Jesus cries, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" ⁴ Matthew records the reaction of the

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1. Matt. 16:14
2. Mark 8:28
3. Luke 9:19
4. Matt. 27:46. The American Standard version gives Eloi, Eloi in Mk. 15:34. Opinion is divided as to whether the people understood the cry of Jesus. Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae*, holds that they did misunderstand, p. 351. McNeile, *ad. loc.* draws no conclusion. Allen gives a good critical treatment but fails to draw a conclusion. Branscombe gives an illuminating discussion but avoids the issue, *ad. loc.* Lindsay says, "If the people spoke in mockery," the irony is graver than in the earlier sneers. The darkness had awed all men; the coming of Elijah was expected; . . . he . . . was the prophet of the Old Testament to which our Lord had constantly appealed. It was as if they said, 'He still appeals to the Old Testament, let us see whether it will yet save Him,' " *ad. loc.* Lenski is even more dramatic as he says, ". . these Jews make a joke of this cry of Jesus, and went on to say: 'Lo, he is calling Elijah! The point in this silly joke was the Jewish belief that Elijah would not only precede the Messiah and introduce him to the Jews, but would also live again beside the Messiah attesting him as such. So the mockery was this: 'Now that this fellow is about at his end, he is frantically calling for Elijah to rescue him and to proclaim him as the Messiah.' This was the reply men made to the Savior in the terrible hour when he drank the bitter cup of agony for the sin

people to the cry:

"And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said This man calleth Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him."¹

Mark's account is only slightly different:

"And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah. And one ran and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down."²

Regardless as to whether the people understood the words of Christ or not, the fact remains that up until the crucifixion some of the people still held to the belief that Elijah would come. To that belief was attached two things. The first of these was that Elijah would come before the Messiah and announce Him. The people on Calvary may have thought that Jesus was making one last effort to have Elijah come and announce Him as the Messiah. Some of the Jewish tradition held that the first Messiah would die and be

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and guilt of the world. This too he had to endure as part of his suffering." Lenski, Mark, ad. loc. The fact that Jesus cried in a loud voice would substantiate this view. It is difficult from the description of events to believe that they could be so heartless when from the same events the centurion was led to say "This was the Son of God." A period of three hours of darkness preceded this moment in which there is no recorded conversation. It was the last moments of His life and the utterance though loud may not have been distinct.

1. Matt. 27: 47-49
2. Mark 15:35-36

restored to life by Elijah. It was commonly held that Elijah could restore people to health. Traditionally, he had performed miracles up until this very day. Here was Christ calling to him that he do likewise for Him.

Even if it is taken that the people understood Him perfectly, these elements are still present. People in that day and time still believed in the coming of the forerunner, Elijah.

2. After the time of Christ

Even after the death and resurrection of Christ the belief persisted. One of the classic passages used to continue this belief is in the last book of the New Testament. In Revelation it reads, "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days clothed in sackcloth."¹

This passage was linked with the coming in Malachi "before the great and terrible day of Jehovah."² Thus it is seen that even Christians continued to hold to the escha-

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1. Rev. 11:3. The continuing verses 3-11 refer to the work of the two prophets. Plummer, Allen, Moffatt, Rawlinson refer to the relation of this to the Transfiguration. It is the appearance of Moses and Elijah as interpreted by the majority of commentators. To some it is Enoch and Elijah.
2. Mal. 4:5. There is no reason why the 'great and terrible day' was not the day of crucifixion. It was the greatest day in the life of men and of God and yet it was terrible in that it was the death of the very son of God. This interpretation still leaves the passage in Revelation as evidence of a future appearance.

tological return of Elijah. Schurer traces this to a certain extent.¹ It was quite strong in the early centuries, when the consummation of the world was expected momentarily. The passage gives to the two the power to withhold rain from the people and to turn the water to blood, and smite the earth with plagues. This would certainly imply that Elijah and Moses are the ones considered.

F. Summary

Actually there are four ideas of Elijah presented in the New Testament. The first is the idea that John the Baptist is Elijah. From the testimony and the comparison of the two men, it must be said that John the Baptist fulfilled the conditions of the return of Elijah. He was not the same historical figure but he was the forerunner for the Messiah. The second is the transfigured Elijah, he is found on the mountain talking with Jesus. He represents the prophets on this great occasion. The third is the consideration of the historical Elijah. Jesus calls attention to his universality. His method is mentioned in reference to the use of fire. The doctrine of the remnant is verified by Paul. His

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1. E. Schurer, A History of the Jewish People. Div. II, Vol. III, p. 129, Vol. II, p. 156-8. Lightfoot, Horae Hebraicae on Matt. 11:14 says, that the belief "shows obstinance on part of the people even today." Westcott, John, p. 18 says, "And at the same time the mission of the Baptist did not exhaust the promise of the coming of Elijah; beyond that coming there was yet another."

humanity and effective prayer life is set before Christians by James. The last idea was the continual persistence in the belief of the return of Elijah even after the death of John the Baptist. This was held not by Jews alone but by
¹
Christians as well.

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1. This was held by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans.
See Stanley, The Jewish Church, p. 244-247.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

A. Compendium

Before concluding the study of the prophet Elijah it is well to summarize what this study has brought to light. A very careful study was made of the events leading up to the time of Elijah which brought the life of Israel into a most crucial period. The very moral and religious life of the nation was at stake. Upon such a stage this godly prophet emerged to play his superb part. Singlehanded he changed the course of his nation from that of following a degrading foreign religion to that of again following Jehovah. Indirectly this action contributed to the abrogation of Israel's political policy of foreign alliances. Elijah withstood the kings of the land in his zeal for righteousness. Because of the disintegration of Israel's foreign alliances, he was an influence on these foreign nations. His reputation was recognized by the King of Judah. In Phoenicia he performed miracles for a widow.

His influence was the strongest in his successor Elisha. It was he that instigated the change of regime recommended by God. With this change Israel was sheared of her glory and power. She was unable to maintain even

friendly relations with her sister nation, Judah. Jenu, king of the new dynasty of Israel, carried out a bloody purge against the remains of Phoenician influence which he considered to be in compliance with Elijah's command. The "Sons of the Prophets" and the Rechabites maintained Elijah's aims of righteousness and devotion to Jehovah as a vital force in the life of the nation. The later prophets refer to the time of Ahab, Elijah and Jenu's purge. They take the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, judgment, the remnant, and universality and enlarge and improve upon them for their own day. Like Elijah, they have a zeal for righteousness and try to stay the certain judgment that awaits continuance of the nation's evil policy. By the time of Malachi Elijah's influence was strong enough for this prophet to proclaim the future return of Elijah.

The collapse of Israel accompanied by the privations and severities of captivity caused by the religious leaders to look to this great prophet as a tower of strength. In their retrospection they began to enlarge upon his historical activity. They added the belief of contemporary activity, making of him a guardian angel for the distressed and an advisor to the Rabbis. All this was climaxed by their building an eschatological framework around him which predicted his return as a forerunner to the Messiah. As the years of uncertainty followed in which they were ruled by nation after nation, these ideas grew. Elijah was assigned a place foremost in their ritual. He became the Jewish saint.

For a brief period under the Maccabeans, joined by the Chasidim, the Jews achieved freedom for their nation. The Chasidim party was strict and zealous and like the Maccabeans reflected the zeal of Elijah against foreign infiltration into the religion and the life of the nation. From this party emanated three zealous groups, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Pharisees. The latter group was strongly instrumental in cultivating the fever of the messianic hope found in the New Testament. They with the scribes had so subjected these ideas to solidification that they were not elastic enough to admit John the Baptist nor Jesus.

Oppressed by the Romans and taught by the Pharisees and scribes, the people looked expectantly for the coming of the Messiah. For a time John the Baptist was thought to be Elijah. He denied it and later was put to death. Jesus testified that John the Baptist was Elijah. John the Baptist met the qualifications. At the transfiguration Elijah assisted in the confirmation of Jesus as the Messiah. The New Testament validates certain teachings of Elijah that were current. They are his universality, his method, his doctrine of the remnant, and his humanity and prayer life. In spite of Jesus' testimony concerning John the Baptist being Elijah, there persisted in the minds of the people, both Christian and Jew, that the historical Elijah will return in the last days.

B. Conclusions Reached by the Study

The conclusions derived from this study are now presented.

1. In the historical Elijah can be seen what God can do with a man devoted to Him. A single man need never say that he can do nothing when the cause of God is in jeopardy about him. If his zeal approaches Elijah's for the cause of God, he can perform miracles that can change life for centuries to come.

2. God can and does find a man or men in the period when His cause is in greatest danger, whether the threat be from Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans or others. He uses these men to defend His cause and to win a victory.

3. The influence of Elijah upon the Hebrew tradition was not confined to that of his own lifetime. His influence increased in the inter-Testament period. Instead of being forgotten gradually as is the normal procedure, there ~~were~~ built around him such legends and traditions that he arose to be one of the most important characters of the Hebrew heritage. As these ideals developed in the hands of the Rabbis, they were claimed to be binding by the Pharisees. The solidification of tradition greatly influenced the attitude of many of the Jews in their rejection of John the Baptist as Elijah. John the Baptist did not come as Elijah must come. Jesus was not the Messiah because He did not

come as the Messiah must come. Also, Jesus was not the Messiah as Elijah had not come to announce Him. Thus from that time to this the Jews still look for the coming of Elijah to announce the Messiah.

4. The influence of Elijah upon the Christian tradition has been the same as that mentioned above except that to the Christian Jewish tradition was never binding. The great cleavage came with John the Baptist. Jesus Christ testified that John was the Elijah who was to come. The Christians believed in him as the forerunner of Christ, but the Jews did not. The Christians accepted Christ, but the Jews did not. The Christians also held to the real historical Elijah validating Jesus at the transfiguration. Some of them held to the further return of Elijah in the last days, but there was not a strong emphasis placed on this belief.

5. The ideas of universality, judgment, the remnant and the sovereignty of God were all present and derived their impetus from Elijah. Groups copied his ascetic life, his zeal for righteousness, and his devotion to God. Individuals claimed his power and admired his character.

6. For a real appreciation of the thought pattern of the New Testament a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament and the period between the testaments is essential. Christians who fail to study the history and literature of these periods fail to obtain the very basic ideas from which the

problems confronting Christ and the early church emanated. The New Testament is not merely an elevated disconnected product of heavenly inspiration. It is rooted in its environment. The Christian movement was essentially Jewish at least up until the time of Paul. The first Christians were Jews. The movement originated with Jews. One cannot understand the New Testament nor the early church without an understanding of the background of the Jewish people.

7. It is only fair in closing to quote the estimate of a modern Jewish scholar concerning Elijah, who says, "Seen in the light of social conditions of his day, Elijah emerges as one of the supreme geniuses of western history."¹

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1. Louis Finklestein, The Pharisees, p. 398.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ELIJAH IN JEWISH LITURGY

Elijah is found in the benedictions recited after the reading of the "Haftarah." God, the one "who sayeth and doeth, who speaketh and fulfillleth, whose words are all truth and righteousness," is evoked to have pity on Zion "the home of our life" and gladden us with the arrival of Elijah the prophet and the kingdom of the house of David.

"May he soon come and rejoice our hearts. Let no stranger sit upon his throne, nor let others any longer inherit his glory; for by the holy name thou didst swear unto him, that his light should not be quenched forever."¹

On Saturday night special hymns are sung concerning Elijah as the forerunner of the Messiah. These are sung prior to the reading of the Haddalah prayer. Tradition says that he will not come on Fridays nor on the days preceding holidays. This gave rise to the idea that he would come on Saturday night. This gave rise to the hymns. "These poems contain prayers for a blessed week, for a comfortable livelihood, for health for oneself and family." The main prayer is that "the coming week may bring in its wake a national regeneration through the appearance of the Messiah and Elijah the prophet."² The Sefardic ritual includes

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1. Greenstone, The Messiah Idea, p. 294-5

2. Loc. cit.

Michael and Gabriel as accompanying Elijah and the Messiah.

¹
Greenstone describes the Seder service. He says that this service is recited at home during the first two evenings of the Passover. The cup of Elijah, a cup of wine placed on the table for Elijah and not touched until the end of the service shows the intensity of the Jewish hope for the prophet's return. It is their belief that Elijah will come on the evening of the celebration of the first redemption of Israel, to announce the final redemption. The very first section of the service, recited while the master of the house raises the plate containing the Mazzoth, invites all strangers to partake of the meal, and concludes with the words expressing the assured hope, that while "this year we are here, the coming year we shall be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves,
²
the coming year we shall be free."

Sachar, concerning Elijah as the patron saint of the Jews, says:

"Today after three thousand years, Elijah has so endeared himself to Jewish life that he is part and parcel of the most significant social and religious functions. During the Seder, the door is opened for him and he enters to join in the gladness of the holiday. A cup of wine awaits him on every Jewish table. Many beautiful legends have associated themselves with the cup of Elijah. At every circumcision, too, Elijah is present. A special chair--the chair of Elijah is prepared for him as part of the ceremony. He is included in the prayers. For he is the guardian of the child and blesses it as it is welcomed into the brotherhood of Israel. Vigilant guardian in Heaven, blessed guardian

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Greenstone, The Messiah Idea, p.296

on earth--what people would not cherish his memory with affection and love."¹

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1. Sachar, Elijah, the Patron Saint of the Jews. Article in B'nai B'rith, Dec., 1926.

APPENDIX B

THE APOCALYPSE OF ELIJAH

There are two of these documents. One is from Coptic fragments which was edited by Steindroff in 1899. It was probably Jewish in origin, but has been worked over by Christian hands. It is supposed to date not later than the fifth century and is supposed to be a third or fourth century document.

The other is the Hebrew document. It appeared first in Salonica in 1743. It was reprinted by Jellinek. It was later reprinted by Moses Bittenwieser. The original is assigned to the year 261 A.D.¹ There are Christian claims of an earlier document.² Origen and others say that Paul quoted it in I Cor. 2:9. Epiphanius claims that Eph. 5:14 was taken from it.

The Jewish description of the contents indicates that Elijah had a revelation from Michael on Mt. Carmel. He is conducted through the heavenly regions, and revelations regarding the last days are given to him. The last king of Phoenicia will march against Rome and take three military leaders prisoner. The "little horn" will then rule on the

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1. Jewish Encyclopedia, articles "Apocalyptic Literature" and "Apocalypse of Elijah," Vol. I, p. 674, 681-2
2. Schurer, A History of the Jewish People, Second Div., Vol. II, p. 129-130, Jewish Ency., loc. cit.

earth. He will instigate three wars, and will also attack Israel. Then the Messiah will come and annihilate those waging war. He will also vanquish all the remaining heathen. Then Israel will enjoy the Messianic kingdom for forty years, after which Gog and Magog will muster the heathen to war against Jerusalem. They will be destroyed and there will follow a day of doom lasting for forty days. Subsequent to this the dead will be awakened and brought to judgment. The wicked will be assigned to hell, and the righteous will be given the tree of life. For them the glorious Jerusalem will descend and they shall reign in peace and knowledge of the law.

APPENDIX C

ELIJAH IN MOHAMMEDAN LITERATURE

Elijah is mentioned several times in the Koran,¹ Surah xxxvii, 123 and Surah vi, 85. The **latter** says that Zachariah, and John and Jesus and "Ilyas" all are righteous ones. Al-Baizawi comments on Elijah's **ancestry**.

²
Peters compares Elijah's confrontation of Ahad with that of the Mohammedan caliphs.

Stanley adds this information,

"Not unnaturally have the Mussulman traditions confounded him with the mysterious being, 'The Immortal One (El Khudr), the Eternal Wanderer, who appears, ever and anon, to set the wrongs of earth, and repeat the experience of ages past.'"³

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1. See Hughes, Thomas Patrick, A Dictionary of Islam under "Elijah." Very interesting parallel stories are found to the Jewish among the commentators of the Koran. See Houtsma, The Encyclopedia of Islam and "Ilyas." He is descended as half mortal and half heavenly. He is associated with Al-Khadir and also with Enoch-Idris.
2. J. P. Peters, The Religion of the Hebrews, p. 176.
3. A. P. Stanley, Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church, Pt. II, p. 246-7

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