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THE DAY OF YAHWEH: A STUDY OF THE CONCEPT
YOM YAHWEH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

Sister Mary Timothy McHatten, O.P.

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

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Sister Mary Timothy McHatten, Ottawa, Canada, 1979.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH AND CRITICISM	10
I. MYTHICAL SCHOOL	12
A. Hugo Gressmann	12
II. CULTIC SCHOOL	21
A. Sigmund Mowinckel	21
B. Julian Morgenstern	26
III. HISTORICAL SCHOOL	29
A. J. M. Powis Smith	29
B. Ladislav Cerny	34
C. Gerhard von Rad	41
D. F. Charles Fensham	46
IV. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER ONE	51
II. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF <u>YOM YAHWEH</u> TEXTS	52
I. AMOS 5:18-20	53
A. Historical Background	53
B. Textual Criticism	54

CHAPTER

II.	ZEPHANIAH 1:7, 14-16	68.
	A. Historical Background	68
	B. Textual Criticism	69
III.	EZEKIEL 13:1-16	93
	A. Historical Background	93
	B. Textual Criticism	95
IV.	ISAIAH 13:6-13	107
	A. Historical Background	107
	B. Textual Criticism	108
V.	MALACHI 3:22, 23-24	123
	A. Historical Background	123
	B. Textual Criticism	124
VI.	OBADIAH 15a, 16-21	135
	A. Historical Background	135
	B. Textual Criticism	137
VII.	JOEL 1:14-15; 2:1b-2a, 10-11	149
	A. Historical Background	149
	B. Textual Criticism	153
VIII.	JOEL 3:3-5; 4:14-17	164
	A. Historical Background	164
	B. Textual Criticism	167
IX.	CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER TWO	182
III.	THE PROPOSED ORIGIN AND DEFINITION: FURTHER EXPANSION AND DISCUSSION	187

CHAPTER

I. MINOR VARIATION TEXTS APPRAISED	189
A. Day of Doom	190
B. Yahweh's Day	195
C. Day of Judgment and Punishment	201
1. Israel as Enemy	201
2. The Nations as Enemy	207
D. Day of Curses	216
1. Covenant Curses on Israel	210
2. General Curses on the Nations	216
E. Day of Malediction/Benediction	219
II. MAJOR THEORIES RE-APPRAISED	223
A. Mythical School	223
B. Cultic School	230
C. Historical School	241
III. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER THREE	251
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	254
BIBLIOGRAPHY	262

INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the day of Yahweh has become a subject to which many modern scholars have paid close attention, and on which they have expressed differing views.¹ At the center of the controversy has been the question of the origin of the tradition. This suggests that the prophetic texts which speak of the day of Yahweh will come into focus when the sources of the tradition are properly understood. The literature reflecting upon these sources can be divided into three schools of thought: mythical, cultic and historical.

The mythical school visualizes the day of Yahweh as a projection of the creation story. As God brought order out of the primeval chaos, so he would also bring order out of the world chaos. Creation, in Israel's faith, consisted in the victory of the forces of good over the forces of evil. This same victory of good over evil would be brought about on the future day of Yahweh in history.²

¹One of the most recent works is, A. J. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 93, No. 3, 1974, p. 329-337. He has also written on the same subject, The Day of Yahweh as Historical Event: A Study of the Historical and Theological Purposes for the Employment of the Concept in the Classical Prophets of the Old Testament, doctoral thesis presented to the Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1969, 282p.

²H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12. Mit Beiträgen von H. Zimmern, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895, xiv-431 p. H. Gressmann, Der Ursprung der jüdisch-israelitischen Eschatologie, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905, viii-378 p.

The cultic school held two views. According to the first one, Israel recalled in her cult Yahweh's previous victories (Exodus, Conquest and Holy Wars) and looked forward to a victory par excellence when Yahweh would defeat her enemies and inaugurate an era of peace and prosperity giving to her sovereignty over the goyim.³ The second view, based on the ancient Near East's enthronement festival of its god during the new year, conceived of the day of Yahweh as a part of the Hebrew New Year celebration during which Yahweh was enthroned and acclaimed as king. The last New Year's Day would occur when a new era of peace and prosperity for Israel was inaugurated and Yahweh would sit enthroned in Zion watching over his chosen people and reigning over the nations.⁴

The third line of thought intimately connects the day of Yahweh with Israel's religious and historical tradition (Heilsgeschichte School). The scholars of this school, J. M. P. Smith, G. von Rad, L. Cerny and F. C. Fensham, see characteristics of the doctrine of the day of Yahweh which remain present in all its periods of development. These common characteristics are derived from elements already existing in Israelite tradition.

³S. Hooke, Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern on the Ancient East. With a foreword by D. C. Simpson, London, Oxford University Press, 1933, xix-204 p.

⁴S. Mowinckel, "Jahwes dag" in Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 59, No. 1, 1958, p. 1-56. and Psalmestudier II, Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie, Kristiania, J. Dybwad, 1922, p. 229-247. J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies I," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. II, 1936, p. 19-44; "Amos Studies II," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 12, 1937, p. 19-49; "Amos Studies III," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 15, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1-40, p. 59-304.

J. M. P. Smith presents the day of Yahweh as a sort of theophany which will happen on a specific day and will be accompanied by supernatural astral and meteorological phenomena; it will be a personal coming of Yahweh in battle to punish all his enemies, even those among his own chosen people, Israel.⁵ This Smith sees in the light of the Divine Warrior motif so prominent in Israel's early history.⁶

L. Černý links the Israelite tradition of the people's dependence upon Yahweh's will to a fateful day decreed by Yahweh during which He will reshape the destiny of his nation.⁷

G. von Rad has taken the battle motif one step further, by contending that the day of Yahweh would be understood from the perspective of the historical traditions of holy war.⁸ Using Formgeschichte and Überlieferungsgeschichte he argues that the day of Yahweh texts (he uses 16) reflect holy wars, not unlike those waged by Yahweh during the conquest of the Land under the Judges.⁹

F. C. Fensham sees the origin of the day of Yahweh embedded in the

⁵J. M. P. Smith, "The Day of Yahweh", in The American Journal of Theology, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1901, p. 505-533.

⁶F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult", in Biblical Motifs, A. Altmann, ed., Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 11-30. P. D. Miller, Holy War and Cosmic War in Early Israel, doctoral thesis presented to Harvard Divinity School, 1963, 130 p. By the same author, "God the Warrior", in Interpretation, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1965, p. 39-46.

⁷L. Černý, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, Prague, V. Praze, 1948, viii-122 p.

⁸G. von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh", in The Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1959, p. 97-108.

⁹Ibid., p. 104.

ancient Near Eastern curse concept. It is to be a day of visitation and execution of the curses on Israel for her unfaithfulness of Yahweh and to his covenant. The day will also bring curses upon the goyim as enemies of Yahweh and Israel, not because of a breach of the covenant on their part, but stemming from the common curse material against an enemy.¹⁰

A more detailed survey and criticism of these modern theories concerning the day of Yahweh will be presented in the first part of this paper.

Investigation into the concept of the day of the Lord must begin with Amos 5:18-20 the oldest text in the Old Testament which mentions expressis verbis the term Yôm Yahweh.

Woe to you who desire the day of
the Lord!
Why would you have the day of
the Lord?
It is darkness, and not light;
as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him;
or went into the house and leaned
with his hands against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.
Is not the day of the Lord darkness,
and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

Upon reading this text, one might assume that Amos is going against a popular notion of the day of Yahweh. The Day would not be one of light as his audience expected but one of darkness and gloom. Latching on to this clue, almost every scholar who has ever written on

¹⁰F. C. Fensham, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," in Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, "Papers read at the 9th meeting in Stellenbosch," Potchefstroom, Herald Beperk, 1966, p. 90-97.

the day of Yahweh has theorized about what this pre-prophetic notion must have been. The majority of writers see it as a day of great glory and prosperity for Israel and of the destruction for her enemies. It would be a day of salvation and light for God's chosen people. They go back into Israel's history and find that, from the time of Moses there always existed the certainty among the Israelites, that they were the chosen people of Yahweh. Yahweh had sealed a covenant with them at Sinai and promised to protect them from their neighboring enemies. Past historical events (Exodus, Conquest, Holy Wars) had shown that he was always ready to come to the aid of his people when a crisis arose. During the early years of the divided monarchy crisis after crisis flared with the surrounding nations, and the chosen people always seemed to be on the losing end. However, when things looked the bleakest, King Jeroboam II in the North and King Uzziah in the South managed to throw off the yoke of vassaldom and raise their kingdoms to a height of power and prosperity equalled only by that of Solomon. The hopes of the people rose to a new peak. Had the time for a complete overthrow of the enemy at last begun? Was Yahweh finally leading them into the promised era of superiority over the nations? Would Israel soon begin enjoying eternal peace, prosperity and power? At this point in history (8th century B.C.), the prophet Amos, a harbinger of doom, came onto the scene to warn the Israelites that their day of glory would not come because of their many sins against the covenant. His message fell on deaf ears. The people ignored him and continued to dream of that victorious day in the near future.

The preceding pre-prophetic theory, as well as all its fellows, can never be more than a postulation due to the lack of evidence in

Biblical literature. To understand the concept of the day of Yahweh one must chiefly study those texts which mention expressis verbis the Hebrew words yôm Yahweh. The phrase yôm Yahweh occurs sixteen times in prophetic literature: Is 13:6, 9; Ez 13:5; Jl 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14, Amos 5:18 (twice), 20; Ob 15; Zeph 1:7, 14 (twice) and Mal 3:23.

In addition to the sixteen texts which contain the simple form yôm Yahweh there exist others with the minor variation yôm la'dōnāy Is 2:12; Ez 30:3 and Zech 14:1. There are also a number of related phrases: "day of the wrath of Yahweh" (beyôm 'ēbrat Yahweh, Ez 7:19; Zeph 1:18); "on the day of the wrath of Yahweh" (yôm 'ap Yahweh, Zeph 2:2, 3; Lam 2:22); "on the day of his fierce anger" (beyôm harōn 'appō, Lam 1:12); "in the day of his anger" (beyôm 'appō, Lam 2:1); "on the day of Yahweh's sacrifice" (beyôm zebah Yahweh, Zeph 1:8); "day of the Lord God of Hosts" (wēhayyôm hahū' la'dōnāy Yahweh sēbā'ōt, Jer 46:10); "a day of vengeance" (yôm nāqām laYahweh, Is 34:8); "the day of vengeance of our God" (yôm nāqām lē'lōhēnū, Is 61:2); "for the day of vengeance" (kî yôm nāqām, Is 63:4); and "the Lord of hosts has a day" (kî yôm . . . la'dōnāy Yahweh sēbā'ōt, Is 22:5).

Found also in the prophetic writings are references to specific days: "day of whirlwind" (beyôm sūpāh, Am 1:14); "the evil day" (beyôm rā', Am 6:3); "the day of trouble" (yôm sārāh, Is 37:3; Jer 51:2; Ez 7:7; Nahum 1:7); "the day of Jezreel" (yôm yizre'e'el, Hos 1:11 [in Hebrew text 2:2]); "the day of Egypt" (beyôm miṣrayim, Ez 30:9); "the day of visitation" (beyôm pequddāh, Is 10:3); "the day of Midian" (beyôm midyān,

Is 9:3); "day of battle" (beyôm milḥamâh, Am 1:14). The phrase "near is the day of Yahweh" (qārôb yôm Yahweh) is found eight times: (Is 13:6; Ezek 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14). There are many other general expressions related to the yôm Yahweh tradition: "in the latter days," "behold the days are coming," "in that day," "on that day," "at that time," etc. It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the etymology, origin or exegesis of each of these phrases which would take us far beyond the scope of this paper. The minor variation forms of yôm Yahweh will be dealt with in Chapter three to determine their interdependence with the sixteen classical texts and the concept of the day of the Lord.¹¹

Since its coining in the nineteenth century by German scholars, the word "eschatology" has been linked to many Biblical concepts--one of which is the day of Yahweh. The problem of the relation of eschatology to Scripture, especially to the Old Testament, is far from being solved. There is not even, as yet, a commonly agreed upon definition for the term "eschatology." The Greek word eschaton literally means "the end," but scholars have been using it in two distinct ways. E. Jenni defines them for us:¹²

"Eschatology" in the narrower sense means: the (dogmatically firmly established) doctrine of the (dramatically conceived) end of history and of the course of the universe and the beginning of the time of eternal salvation. Prerequisite for this is the abrupt cleavage between this world and the transcendental

¹¹E. Jenni, "Eschatology of the OT", in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 2, G.A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1962, p. 126.

¹²Loc. cit.

world of God, as it became more and more firmly established in the post-exilic period and especially in the apocalyptic period. "Eschatology" in the broader sense refers to a future in which the circumstances of history are changed to such an extent that one can speak of a new, entirely different, state of things, without, in so doing leaving the framework of history.

The "day of Yahweh" conceived of as an eschatological term in the strict sense belongs in the framework of Yahweh's final judgment of all mankind as well as of the universe at the end of history. In its broader sense, it denotes a day heralding the change of an historical era or period. It is possible that these "historical" days of Yahweh might foreshadow and lead into an "eschatological" day of Yahweh at the end of time. This would take us to the New Testament and to Jesus' Parousia, topics which are beyond the scope of this paper. In any case, those who insist that the concept of the day of Yahweh is purely eschatological fail to realize that one of the day of Yahweh texts refers to a past event (Ez 13:5) and does not, therefore, belong only to the realm of the eschatological future.

This investigation will first survey the history of the research already done on the concept of the day of Yahweh. Recent research on extra-Biblical legal texts indicates that the possible origin of the concept of the day of Yahweh might lie in the juridical language of the ancient Near East. An investigation along this line would therefore seem indicated. Chapter two will concentrate on the sixteen Old Testament texts in which the phrase yôm Yahweh specifically occurs. A classical exegesis of these texts, will indicate whether or not the origin of the yôm Yahweh concept is juridical in the prophetic context as found in the Old Testament.

The third and final chapter will expand this survey of the

concept of the day of the Lord to include those minor variant forms of the term yôm Yahweh (Is 2:12, Ez 30:3; Zech 14:1; Is 22:5; 34:8; Jer 46:10; Lam 2:22 and Ez 7:19) which are sometimes considered authentic yôm Yahweh texts by some authors. A study of their relationship to the exegesis of the sixteen classical yôm Yahweh texts will determine if the context, terminology, descriptions, and characteristics of the day of the Lord are identical in all these texts. Such a conclusion would indicate that the expression "day of the Lord," when spoken by the prophets in these texts had a common origin and definition. That origin we propose is juridical and that definition is related to a day of curses inflicted upon Yahweh's enemies.

The second part of the chapter will re-examine the major theories concerning the day of the Lord and re-evaluate them in light of the outcome of our study on the yôm Yahweh texts.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF RESEARCH AND CRITICISM

The main attempt to find the meaning of the day of Yahweh concept has been made, as stated in the introduction, by three schools of thought: mythical, cultic and historical. Recent scholars have criticized the first two as unsatisfactory.¹ The conclusions of the mythical school (advocates of Gréssmann and Gunkel) are considered unsatisfactory because 1) they see the origin of both eschatology and the day of Yahweh coming from Babylon, thus placing the concept outside of Israel's history and 2) they push the origin of eschatology too far back, way into pre-historic times. The cultic school (Mowinckel and Morgenstern) is found lacking because it is doubtful that Israel had an enthronement of Yahweh festival during the new year celebration. The critics tend to agree that the concept originates from, and finds its meaning in, the tradition of Israel's history.²

¹L. Černý, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, Prague, V. Praze, 1948, p. 32-51; A. Causse, "Le jour de Yahvé et la fête de l'Avènement de Yahvé", in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1923, p. 262-268; J. Héléwa, "Trois Solutions au Problème de l'Origine du Concept du Jour de Yahvé", in Ephemerides Carmeliticae, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1964, p. 3-9.

(²Héléwa, Op. Cit., p. 10.

Dans son expression biblique, le concept du Jour de Yahvé est un thème prophétique . . . Cette tendance (moderne) est caractérisée par un souci primordial de rattacher le prophétisme biblique - fonction et message - aux anciennes institutions et traditions historiques du Yahvisme, celles-ci étant l'origine de tout ce qui donne à la religion d'Israel son essence propre.

Notwithstanding, images, descriptions and references pertaining to the Day of Yahweh could have been borrowed from the ancient Near Eastern religions and customs and transformed into authentic Israelite traditions by the Biblical writer.³

Even if the ancient religion of Yahweh did not remain unchanged through the centuries, it still was powerful enough to prevail in most areas, transforming the borrowed Canaanite elements into something new, something that strikes us as being specifically Israelite.

The scholars belonging to the historical school all agree that the concept of the day of Yahweh is intrinsic to Israel's own historical traditions, but they differ when it comes to explaining from which tradition the concept evolved.

We will trace the historical development of the research, in chronological order explaining the theories of scholars who have contributed major insights into the question of the day of Yahweh concept. Since all the others who have written about the concept accept one of these theories in one way or another, they will also be mentioned as the study progresses. We shall retain as major divisions the three schools of thought mentioned above, which are still valid in research today.

³H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1966, p. 58; G. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, New York, Abingdon, 1972, p. 64, 103-105, 121, 122.

I. MYTHICAL SCHOOL

A. Hugo Gressmann - "A Day of World Catastrophe."

H. Gressmann was the first scholar who systematically and scientifically tried to resolve the problem of the origin of the day of Yahweh concept. This he did in his well known momentous work, Der Ursprung der jüdisch-israelitischen Eschatologie.⁴ Gressmann devotes fifteen pages of his book to the topic of the day of Yahweh, tying the concept to Biblical eschatology. So closely are these united, he contends, that they may have the same origin:⁵ Babylonian cosmic-mythological elements concerning a great world catastrophe (Weltkatastrophe) to come, in which the world would be destroyed and a new one appear.⁶ These two notions: a pan-Babylonian origin for Israelite eschatology, and the world at the end of the ages returning to chaos to be re-created, are not original to Gressmann but depend heavily on the theses of his predecessor, H. Gunkel.⁷

Gressmann's theory of eschatology can be summed up in three points:⁸

⁴H. Gressmann, Der Ursprung der jüdisch-israelitischen Eschatologie, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905, viii-378 p.

⁵Ibid., p. 141-158.

⁶Ibid., p. 146-147.

⁷Gunkel's two classical works on eschatology and world catastrophe are: H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen I und Ap Joh 12, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895, xiv-431 p. and Genesis: Übersetzt und erklärt, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902, 440 p.

⁸For a summary of Gressmann's theory see Černý, op. cit. p. 35-41 and Héléwa, op. cit., p. 4-6.

1. There were two incursions of eschatological ideas into Palestine from ancient oriental myths. The first one occurred before the time of the prophets; the second one after the exile.⁹

2. The old pre-prophetic eschatology had, even in early times, two contradictory aspects (originally connected into one whole): woe-eschatology (Unheilseschatologie) and weal eschatology (Heilseschatologie).¹⁰

3. This two-fold form of mythico-eschatology entered Canaan/Palestine in fragmentary form during pre-prophetic times. Because of this, the prophetic writing contains only eschatological fragments.¹¹

Gressmann applies these three theories of eschatology to the day of Yahweh. He uses "eschatology" and "day of Yahweh" almost interchangeably in the text.

His study assumes that the term "day of Yahweh" was a fixed formula, a terminus technicus, before Amos, since the prophet needed only to allude to it as "that day," and his audience knew to what he was referring.¹² If that is the case, says Gressmann, what was the meaning of the term before it froze into this commonplace expression? He rejects the idea that the term "day of Yahweh" was used to indicate another week day sacred to Yahweh, such as a "day of Venus," or a "day of Marduk," or a "day of Ishtar." This is possible, he says, but not

⁹Gressmann, op. cit., p. 157, 247 n. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 185-187.

¹¹Ibid., p. 191, 246.

¹²Ibid., p. 142.

probable.¹³ He equally excludes the notion that the Day could be described only as a day of battle. It is true that the prophets often picture the day of Yahweh in terms of battle, war and military destruction: yet, they also portrayed it as a day of storm, of earthquake, of darkness, of fear, etc.¹⁴

With such a variety of meanings in the prophets, Gressmann says, neither of the foregoing can be decisive explanations. To cover all of the different possibilities he settles on a very broad definition. The day of Yahweh, he says, is "der Tag, an dem Jahve sich irgendwie offenbart, an dem er irgendwie handelt, der durch ihn irgendwie charakterisiert wird."¹⁵

Since, according to Gressmann, eschatology evolves from pre-historic days until the time of the final world catastrophe, there is also a history of the evolution of the day of Yahweh. He divides this history into four stages (Stufen). Each stage demonstrates some aspect of his eschatological theory.

1. The first stage Gressmann calls mythical (Die mythische Stufe des Tages Jahves).¹⁶ He sees the prophet Zephaniah's description of the day of Yahweh as reflecting, in fragmentary form, the Babylonian cosmic-mythological element of a world catastrophe.

"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth," says the Lord. "I will sweep away man

¹³Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 144-148.

and beast; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. I will overthrow the wicked; I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth," says the Lord.

.....

In the fire of his jealous wrath, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full, yea, sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

(Zeph 1:2-3, 18.)

Such portrayal of such a total catastrophe in Zeph 1:14-16 suggests an echo and a recurrence of a cosmic world flood: "Day of wrath, of distress and anguish, of ruin and devastation, of darkness and gloom, of clouds and thick darkness." Gressman equally sees Is 22: 14 - 22 as pre-supposing a world flood. He stretches this idea of a world catastrophe to include Amos' oracles against the nations (1:3-2:3). The doom in these oracles, it is true, is to fall only on Israel's neighboring enemies, not because the prophet wishes to exclude the rest of the world, but because he centers upon those whom Israel wanted immediately destroyed.

Jer 4:23-28 sees the world coming to an end in complete desolation not unlike the primeval chaos at the beginning of creation. Even the prophet's choice of words; tohû and bohû, comes from the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis:

I looked on the earth, and lo, it was
waste and void;
and to the heavens, and they had no light.

(Jer 4:23)

Gressmann's thesis states that these prophets received their

ideas of a world catastrophe from very early mythical sources, originally in a unified pattern, about a world flood and the earth returning to chaos. By the time the myths reached Canaan/Palestine from Babylon, before the time of the prophets, they were already in fragmentary form. The prophets gathered these fragments and included them in those of their oracles of doom which contained the notion of a day of Yahweh. The one element of prophetic uniqueness in these oracles is the attachment of an ethical motivation to those against Israel and Judah.

Thus, in concluding this first stage of the history of the evolution of the day of Yahweh concept, Gressmann presents the primitive origin of the term which he claims dates back to pre-historic times. He weaves the origin of the day of Yahweh into his theory of the origin of eschatology. He finally concludes that the term "day of Yahweh" was eschatological right from the beginning.

2. The second Stufe is entitled the "popular stage" (Die volkstümliche Stufe des Tages Jahves).¹⁷ It presents the notion of the day of Yahweh held by the main body of the Israelite population. This second stage retains the former's nature-mythical character. However it is distinguished from it by two essential traits.

The first characteristic centers on the widely varied concept of the world catastrophe, which had been previously thought of as a single disaster--such as a flood. The doom oracles foretell an end which could come about not only through natural forces, but also through historical events, such as battles, defeats, deportation, etc., brought

¹⁷Ibid., p. 149-152.

about by historical enemies. Yahweh is still the main actor but he uses enemy nations as his instruments. Sometimes these two phenomena (nature catastrophies and historical catastrophies) are so jumbled by the prophets it is difficult to understand their real meaning. Very often too, they use nature catastrophies as poetic embellishments.

The second characteristic distinguishing this stage is the restriction of the disaster to the pagans, Israel retaining salvation for herself alone. Israel sees the splinter in the eye of her enemies but fails to see the beam in her own eye. Gressmann finds a hint of this popular notion in two prophetic texts about the day of Yahweh which oppose the notion more than they describe it. These texts are Is 28:15-22 and Amos 5:18-20. Isaiah rejects the idea by denying that destruction will spare Judah but destroy all others because they have not made a covenant with Yahweh. Amos also argues against it when he states that the Day will be not light (salvation) for Israel as she assumes, but darkness (destruction) instead. God's people will share the fate of the pagans.

Gressmann equates the popular notion of doom for Israel's enemies to the doom-eschatology (Unheilsschatologie) which goes back to early times. Thus he can say that eschatology was the forerunner of prophecy because it was so entwined with the popular belief of Israel.

3. The prophetic notion dominates the third Stufe (Die prophetische Stufe des Tages Jahves).¹⁸ Doom oracles, as in the popular notion, remain throughout this stage, but now Israel herself

¹⁸Ibid., p. 153-157.

is considered ripe for destruction. The prophets deepen the ethical dimension of doom eschatology. The chosen people are so deeply entangled in sin they have lost all moral and religious ideals. The very enemies upon whom Israel wishes annihilation are to be the agents of her destruction. Due to this great stress on doom-eschatology for Israel the universal character of eschatology recedes during this period, but emerges from time to time in the oracles against the nations. Even though the historical-agent element of destruction predominates, the prophets do retain a semblance of nature catastrophe.

Gressmann does not believe that the canonical prophets created the notion of doom for Israel. He says they received it from the nebi'im. The example he cites to support his statement is from 1 Kings 22:8-39; the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah forecasts defeat for King Ahab against the four hundred prophets who are giving him oracles of victory.

Gressmann still retains his theory of doom-eschatology as described in the former stages, but now he sees it from the viewpoint of Israel's destiny. The pendulum has swung from the notion of an end in which Yahweh destroys through natural forces, to one brought about by historical enemies.

4. The last Stufe bears the name apocalyptic (Die apokalyptische Stufe des Tages Jahves).¹⁹ This stage acquires no new characteristics but brings back features which had diminished or died during the prophetic period. Apocalyptic reflection awakened after the exile when the mission of the earlier prophets had been fulfilled and

¹⁹Ibid., p. 157-158.

there emerged a new threat from the enemy. It dealt exclusively with the end-time when the pagans would be destroyed and Israel would rise triumphantly from the holocaust. It was a revival of the earlier popular notion of a world catastrophe with Israel the lone survivor.

To describe this day the apocalyptists resurrect images from folklore, the mythical terror of Yahweh, universalism, salvation/doom eschatology and the use of nature as descriptions of the end. The ethical aspect of doom-eschatology which had become such an important element in the prophetic period disappears.

Gressmann concludes the apocalyptic section by comparing it with the former one, that is, with the prophetic. Both apocalyptists and prophets believed that the traditional material had been passed on to them, says Gressmann. The prophets received this tradition from the popular oral tradition and used it freely, while the apocalyptist acquired it from the written establishment, mainly from prophecy, and became a slave to its tradition. Another distinction Gressmann cites is the prophets' concentration on the present and their grounding of their authority in God, whereas the apocalyptists stressed the past and based their authority on ancient heroes.

Gressmann's theory had some success in its time. Its principal themes were applied by other scholars to other problems.²⁰ His opinions, however, met with severe criticism by some who especially

²⁰W. Eichrodt, Die Hoffnung des ewigen Friedens im Alten Israel: ein Beitrag zu der Frage nach der israelitischen Eschatologie, Gütersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 1920, 196 p.; T. Mann, Joseph and his Brothers, London, M. Secker, 1934, 701 p.; H. Schmidt, Die grossen Propheten: Übersetzt und erklärt, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1915, lxxii-483 p.

rejected his connection of the day of Yahweh (and eschatology) to Babylonian mythology.²¹ Their objections seem valid.

The sole aspect of the theory unique to Gressman is his formulation of the strong mythical systematic eschatology which he claims existed in prehistoric times and was the source of Israelite and prophetic eschatology. This is pure conjecture and only Gressmann's hypothesis explaining why the prophets received the eschatology in fragmentary form. Černy is probably correct in saying it was more than likely vice-versa, that is, the prophets would have received it in fragmentary form first and only later would the systematic eschatology have been created.²² The other ideas essential to Gressmann's theory are borrowed from Gunkel (as we saw above) or from R. H. Charles.²³

Gressmann is correct in saying that the day of Yahweh cannot be considered only as a day of battle, but must also be seen as a day of darkness, of storm etc., but he goes way beyond the realm of the concept in associating it with a day of world disaster at the Urzeit and the Endzeit. One must question his methodology for reaching these

²¹Černy, op. cit., p. 38-41; G. Hölscher, Die Ursprünge der jüdischen Eschatologie, Giessen, Alfred Töpelmann, 1925, p. 3; E. Sellin, Der alttestamentliche Prophetismus II - Alter, Wesen und Ursprung der alttestamentliche Eschatologie, Leipzig, Deichert, 1912, p. 191.

²²Černy, op. cit., p. 41.

²³R. H. Charles, "Eschatology", in Encyclopaedia Biblica Vol. II, T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, eds., Cols. 1348-1354, Par. 34-50. L. Černy, op. cit., p. 38, has summarized them as follows: A pre-prophetic age of eschatology, popular hopes and expectations connected with a pre-Amos concept of the Day of the Lord, a systematic development of eschatology and the day of the Lord as the starting point of eschatology.

conclusions. In his attempt to fit the day of Yahweh into a neat pattern of systematic eschatology, he interprets prophetic texts expedient to his purpose but without always considering the prophets' own interpretation of them. Progress in methods of Biblical exegesis has entailed a non-endorsement not only of his day of Yahweh conclusions but also of his overall eschatological system as having tenuous foundations.

II. CULTIC SCHOOL

A. Sigmund Mowinckel - "Day of the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh"

Another scholar who tries to systematically resolve the problem of the day of Yahweh is the Norwegian exegete, Sigmund Mowinckel. His name is always coupled with the theory of the Israelite enthronement festival of Yahweh. Mowinckel bases the origin of Israelite eschatology in general, and of the day of Yahweh concept in particular, on this theory. He develops his ideas in the well-known Psalmenstudien II, as well as in subsequent works.²⁴ Throughout these studies, he consistently maintains the existence of an enthronement festival in Israel. In the first part of his Psalmenstudien II,²⁵ he does an exegesis of the psalms which he believes contain elements of the

²⁴S. Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II: Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie, Kristiania, J. Dybwad, 1922, p. 229-247, He that Cometh, Oxford, Blackwell, 1956, xvi-528 p.; The Psalms in Israel's Worship, New York: Abingdon, 1967, p. 116 n. 35; and "Jahwes dag", in Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 59, No. 1, p. 1-56.

²⁵Op. cit., p. 1-209.

festival day of the enthronement of Yahweh.²⁶ In the second part of the book, Mowinckel applies the results he obtained in the first part to Israelite eschatology and its origin²⁷ which, he concludes, lies in the ideology and cult of the festival of the enthronement of Yahweh.

Mowinckel's theory of eschatology and its connection with the day of Yahweh was pieced out of a cluster of heterogeneous ideas from previous scholars. The theory of an enthronement of Yahweh feast came from Gressmann,²⁸ and was combined with the knowledge of a Babylonian New Year festival which consisted in a dual celebration: the ascension of the Babylonian king to the throne and the enthronement of the chief god, Marduk.²⁹ Duhm's exegesis of Psalm 47 as a real New Year Psalm³⁰ and Mowinckel's own exegesis of Psalm 24 as a cult psalm for the procession were next incorporated. From all of this, Mowinckel developed the idea that in Israel there was an annual festival celebration of Yahweh's enthronement on New Year's Day. He later added Grönbech's concept of the cult as drama to his growing design.³¹ In the introduction to his book, Mowinckel clearly spells out the evolution of his ideas.³²

²⁶Pss. 47, 93, 95-100.

²⁷Op. cit., p. 211-324.

²⁸Gressmann, op. cit., p. 294-301.

²⁹Cerny, op. cit., p. 43.

³⁰B. Duhm, Die Psalmen in Kurzer Handkommentar zum alten Testament, Vol. 14, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1922, p. 133-134.

³¹Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. xii.

³²Ibid., p. xi.

The Norwegian scholar distinguishes two different days of Yahweh.

1. There is a "cult" day of Yahweh during which Yahweh's festival day of enthronement was celebrated annually on New Year's Day. This cult drama allowed the whole audience to experience the representation of Yahweh's enthronement. Hence the processions, psalms, music and prayers by which everyone participated in the ceremony. Echoes of this festival, says Mowinckel, can be found in Mic 4; Zech 14: 8-10, 12-14; Is 24:23; Zeph 3:14 and Is 23.

2. There is also an "eschatological" day of Yahweh which will be the final and supreme day of Yahweh in the future. Eschatology, Mowinckel declares, was born in Israel when "the people began to hope for the realization of the ideal kingship, particularly when reality fell furthest short of it, so, from a quite early period, whenever they were in distress and oppressed by misfortune, they hoped for and expected a glorious day of Yahweh."³³

Like Gressmann, Mowinckel believes in the fragmentary character of Hebrew eschatology. All of the prophetic references which he thinks contain elements of Yahweh's enthronement in eschatological time³⁴ are not perhaps a unanimous assertion of the ascension to the throne ceremony, but rather "single and only loose features juxtaposed by their

³³Mowinckel. He that Cometh, op. cit., p. 145.

³⁴Mi 4:6-8; Zeph 3:14; Is 24:23; 33:17, 22; 41:22; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7; Jer 10:10; 48:15; Zach 14:8-10; Ob 21; Mi 2:12; 4:2; Pss 15:1; 24:3; 132:7.

unifying point was scarcely known to the prophets."³⁵ The cult ritual of the enthronement is also difficult to find in fragmented eschatological references but it can be reconstructed with the aid of the cult psalms.

Although Mowinckel considers Hebrew eschatology unique among ancient Near Eastern religions and finds its origin in the Hebrew religion, he admits that there was some influence from the Babylonian religion. He bases this assumption on the resemblance he finds between the Babylonian penitential psalms and the Babylonian festival, and the pattern of the New Year's festival.

Mowinckel's theories were not universally accepted by his colleagues or by other scholars in the Biblical world. Everyone did not agree with his conclusion that an enthronement akitu festival of Yahweh in Israel was the root of Hebrew eschatology and the origin of the day of Yahweh.

1. The festival upon which Mowinckel bases his whole theory, the enthronement of Yahweh as king during the New Year celebration, R. de Vaux,³⁶ among others, is hesitant to accept as having really existed in the Hebrew tradition.

2. Paul-Émile Langevin finds the formula Yahweh mālāk not a cry of enthronement of Yahweh, but simply a cry to acclaim Yahweh

³⁵ Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. 230-231.

³⁶ R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions, Vol II, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1965, p. 502-506; Causse, op. cit., p. 267; K. Bernhardt, Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament, in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 8, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1961.

king.³⁷ This author is one of the more critical opponents of the existence of a New Year's enthronement festival of Yahweh in Israel.

3. If one agrees with de Vaux, and if in fact the enthronement festival never existed, Mowinckel no longer has an authentic Israelite tradition upon which to base the origin of Israelite eschatology and his day of the Lord.

4. Mowinckel's eschatological day of Yahweh resembles Gressmann's circular mythical pattern of Urgeschichte and Endgeschichte when he claims, "Es ist als Schöpfer, dass Jahwä auch in der Endzeit seinen Thron besteigt. - Ebenso wird hier Jerusalem als der Gotterberg vorgestellt; auch das erklärt sich ^{aus} demselben Zusammenhang."³⁸

5. When Mowinckel applies a prophetic text to his theory and finds it wanting he blames it on the fragmentary form of the tradition which the prophets received. He then refers the reader to the "Enthronement Psalms" which will, he says, be able to complete the picture.

6. Even if one disagrees with Mowinckel that the origin of the day of Yahweh was an enthronement festival honoring Yahweh as king, one must respect his theory that possibly such a festival in Israel could have existed.

When the monarchy was introduced in Israel at the time of Saul (1030-1010 B.C.), its rationale, laws and ceremonies were based on those of the neighboring countries, especially Egypt and Babylon

³⁷P.-É. Langevin, "Sur l'origine du 'Jour de Yahve'," in Sciences Ecclésiastiques, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1966, p. 359-370.

³⁸Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. 231.

which were familiar to them. If Israel adapted the enthronement festival of these countries to honor Yahweh as her king, Scripture does not give any precise liturgical directives as one finds for example for the ceremonies of the feasts of Booths or Passover. Therefore, there is a possibility, as Mowinckel maintains, that echoes of the liturgy for a solemn day of Yahweh's enthronement could be found when one reads psalms 24, 47, 95, etc. The same psalms were probably sung also during the coronation ceremony of a king in Israel when he ascended the throne as Yahweh's representative on earth. But there was never a question of deification of the king as there was in Egypt and Babylon.

In summary then, Mowinckel's theory connecting the origin of the day of Yahweh to an Israelite ceremony of the enthronement of Yahweh, lacks a sound foundation. One must, therefore, look for another origin of the day which is based on Israel's historical tradition and embedded in a religious institution which is uniquely Israelite.

Julian Morgenstern - "Day of Triumph of Good over Evil"

The starting point of Morgenstern's concept of the day of Yahweh is also the Israelite autumnal New Year Festival and Yahweh's enthronement. His views are a modified version of the ideas of Mowinckel. In a series of articles in the Hebrew Union College Annual, he theorizes that the day of Yahweh had a mythical origin, was celebrated in an annual historical cultic observance and reached its climax in an eschatological judgement.³⁹

For Morgenstern the first New Year's Day took place at the very

³⁹ J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies I," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 11, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1936, p. 19-44; "Amos Studies II," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 12, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1937, p. 1-53; "Amos Studies III," in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 15, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1940, p. 59-304.

beginning of existence, and involved the struggle and victory of light over darkness, of good over evil. This notion was a "general mythological and religious concept, belief and practice of early Semitic peoples."⁴⁰ In Babylon it was Marduk's victory over Tiamat; in Phoenicia Al'eyan Ba'al defeated Mot; while in Israel it was Yahweh who conquered tohû and bohû at the very early stages of creation.

Each year on the day of the Fall equinox, the people of Jerusalem would gather at dawn in Solomon's Temple for the historic New Year celebration. The rays of the rising sun would shine from the open eastern gate into the debir at the western end of the sanctuary, and the people interpreted this as the entrance of the radiant Yahweh into his Temple, taking his place upon the throne as divine king to pronounce judgment upon, and shape the destiny and fortune of his people during the new year just beginning.⁴¹ The people were equally convinced that Yahweh's judgment would be in favor of Israel. They welcomed promises of prosperity, glory and victory. The new year, they felt, would bring an adequate harvest and food supply for the coming year, material abundance, commercial progress and economic growth.

With the expansion of the Israelite borders during the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II, notions of world power and of a world god gradually awakened among the people. At this time, if we are to believe Morgenstern, the concept of the day of Yahweh took on a univer-

⁴⁰Morgenstern, "Amos Studies III", op. cit., p. 231.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 285.

sal implication. It was to be a day on which Yahweh triumphed over all the nations of the world and their gods, ushering in an era of undisputed supremacy for Israel. Each year the people expectantly, hoping that the following New Year's Day would be the longed-for day of light when Yahweh's radiance would fill the Temple, bring judgment on their enemies, and conquer them. It is in this context, Morgenstern says, that we are to see Amos arriving in Bethel to proclaim not a day of light but a day of darkness.

Morgenstern's explanation of the day of Yahweh does not give the whole picture of the prophets' concept of the term. The only yôm Yahweh text he uses that in any way might validate its connection to the New Year's celebration, is Amos 5:18-20. The factor uniting the two boils down to one word, "light." The other texts he cites⁴² all describe an earthquake which will be "one of the incidents of the day of Yahweh, manifesting the great day of judgment coming beyond all doubt upon the New Year's Day."⁴³

I believe Černý is right in saying that with Morgenstern we are lost in "general Semitic mythological and religious concepts, belief and practice."⁴⁴ Morgenstern's theory is more rooted in ancient Near Eastern myths than in the historical tradition of Israel.

⁴²Zech 14:4-5; Is 28:21; 13:13; 24:18; Jer 4:24; Ez 38:18-23; Jl 2:10ff.

⁴³Morgenstern, "Amos Studies I", op. cit., p. 8-19.

⁴⁴Černý, op. cit., p. 48.

III. HISTORICAL SCHOOL

A. J. M. Powis Smith - "A Day of Theophany"

John Merlin Powis Smith furthers the explanation of the day of Yahweh by reconstructing an evolution of the concept from the pre-prophetic notion right through to a post-exilic apocalyptic idea.⁴⁵ The concept gradually develops from Israel's own historical and religious growth. Smith cites three influences on this development of the day of Yahweh.⁴⁶

1. The great evolution of Israel's idea of God;
2. Israel's change with reference to her conception of her destiny as the people of God;
3. The gradual awakening of Israel to the realization that her greatness depends on her religious and moral pre-eminence rather than on political supremacy.

In spite of the development of the concept the author recognizes in it seven common elements which remain constant throughout the whole period, although they are expanded and deepened in the process. But first let us see how Smith perceives the growth of the concept of the day of Yahweh before we go into the stable elements which he describes.

With his predecessors, Smith believes that:

... the origin of the idea of the day of Yahweh must be sought in the pre-prophetic stage of Israel's history.

⁴⁵J. M. P. Smith, "The Day of Yahweh", in The American Journal of Theology, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1901, p. 505-533.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 533.

The idea which Amos found already existing and occupying a large place in the thought of the people was apparently a conception of the day as a time when a period of great glory and prosperity was to be inaugurated for Israel.⁴⁷

This ideology developed out of the combination of several elements.

1. The first element was Israel's conception of her divine mission, a concept she developed early. Israel was to have a unique position among the nations as Yahweh's representative in the world. This expectation entered the national consciousness of Israel through five channels:
 - a. the tradition;
 - b. the general Semitic conception of a God-given commission to enlarge the sphere of divine authority;
 - c. the conquest of Canaan;
 - d. the golden ages of the Davidic and Solomonic kingdoms;
 - e. the preaching of the professional prophets.⁴⁸
2. A second very important element was Israel's rather polytheistic conception of Yahweh, especially of Yahweh as a war-god.
3. The last element was Israel's political relationship with neighboring nations. Since her entrance into Canaan she had had to struggle for existence. But eventually she entered a period of conciliation and accepted strangers

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 505.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 505-508.

into her ranks.⁴⁹

From these elements was born the popular notion of the day of Yahweh, "a great day of battle on which Yahweh would place himself at the head of the armies of Israel and lead them on to overwhelming victory over all their enemies."⁵⁰

With Amos this concept underwent a transformation, although the prophet did retain some of the elements of the popular notion: judgment, a specific day, a day of battle and wonderful phenomena to accompany the day. There was occurring a development in the religious and moral life of the people, and Amos warned them they must be righteous as Yahweh was righteous if they wished to live up to their calling and fulfill their divine mission. Otherwise nothing short of destruction would satisfy Yahweh's demand for justice.

The successors of Amos adopted his view without essentially changing it. Many of them: Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah did not give the express term "day of Yahweh" a prominent place in their teaching perhaps out of fear of propagating the false conception of the idea.

When Jerusalem fell and Israel felt the oppression of the exile, the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel brought hope for a new covenant of love and a promise of future restoration.

A restored Israel met disappointment and discouragement when she saw that her life was no better than before. No great wonders had been wrought nor had the nations been subdued. She began to doubt

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 505-508.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 512.

Yahweh and to question her fidelity to him. This led to a worldly spirit and a decline in her people's devotion to God. The prophet Malachi addressed his words to the Israelites of those days. He preached a day of destruction before which Yahweh would send his messenger (Elijah) to warn Israel of impending disaster, and thus to save from his wrath, those who had been purified.

The last prophets to speak of the day of Yahweh, Joel and Trito-Zechariah, described it in apocalyptic fashion. They pictured the Day in an aurore of other-worldliness bringing annihilation to Israel's enemies. After this destruction a time of blessing would open up for Israel. Jerusalem would once more be Yahweh's dwelling place where the Nations would gather to worship the God of Israel.⁵¹

Despite the diversity of emphasis about the day of Yahweh during this whole prophetic period, Smith points out seven elements which remain stable concerning the concept.

1. The nation felt incapable of working out its own destiny, and trusted in Yahweh to complete the task;
2. The present age was only temporary and would give way to a better, more glorious one which would abide forever;
3. Yahweh himself would come to earth in person to inaugurate the new order of things;
4. Connected with this coming of Yahweh were great catastrophes, horrors and wonders;.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 521-531. This is his detailed development of the prophetic concept of the day of the Lord. ■

5. This coming was also thought of as a time of punishment, both for Yahweh's enemies and for his chosen people, Israel;
6. The time of the coming was always left indefinite;
7. The day of Yahweh was always represented as inaugurating a new political state.⁵²

In summary: J. M. P. Smith presents the day of Yahweh as a fluid concept that the people and the prophets could enlarge and enrich with the historical experience through which the nation was compelled to pass. Although its date was unknown, the day was thought of as a time when Yahweh would come to earth amid catastrophes, horrors, and wonders to punish injustices and to bring forth a new order of things in a better and more glorious age.

J. M. P. Smith is correct in recognizing that the notion of the day of Yahweh grew out of Israel's own historical and religious tradition. But does he satisfactorily solve the problem of the prophetic meaning of the concept? One can strongly question Smith's conclusion that the day of Yahweh was always represented as creating a new political state. In the minds of the people, this was perhaps so, but the prophets were much more concerned with the ethical and moral implications of the concept. And this false political interpretation is precisely what they were trying to rectify.

Smith's second erroneous conclusion is that the prophets proclaimed, as an integral part of their preaching, the notion of a present age of punishment giving way to a better and more glorious one

⁵²Ibid., p. 531-533.

which would abide forever. None of the sixteen texts in the prophetic literature which speak of the day of Yahweh refers to a glorious age; the oracles are filled with doom, destruction and punishment. Hope of a glorious age was indeed part of the prophetic preaching, but always seems to have been stressed when the period of punishment (day of Yahweh) had started (Jeremiah and Ezekiel), or when it was about over (Deutero-Isaiah). It was never part of the day of Yahweh proclamations per se.

B. Ladislav Černý - "A Fateful Day Decreed by Yahweh"

A study which brings still another interpretation of the day of Yahweh into perspective is L. Černý's monograph, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems.⁵³

Černý first examines the Hebrew conception of time; the use of the word "day" in Hebrew, Assyrian and Babylonian texts; and previous studies of the day of Yahweh concept. The conclusions he draws from these investigations influence the constructive arguments he puts forth in the third chapter of his monograph. Černý believes the Hebrew conception of time to be "closely associated with the idea of space and of activity in it . . . the time or day of the man or the people is therefore identical with his or its activity and fate."⁵⁴ The closest comparison to the Hebrew "day," he finds, is the Assyrian hemerology, "a day of the year which is generally characterized as 'lucky' or

⁵³Černý, op. cit., vii-112 p.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 4.

'unlucky'."⁵⁵ Yet, he says, there exists nothing comparable to the phrase "day of Yahweh" outside Israel. From these two investigations Černý formulates a definition of the day of Yahweh: "... a decreed, dark, dreadful, destructive and dangerous day."⁵⁶

Černý uses elements from seven previous studies on the concept to clarify his own position. Gunkel's idea of a world catastrophe provides the destructive character of the day of Yahweh; from Mowinckel and Morgenstern he borrows the notion that eschatology is derived from the cult yet secondary to it; the Myth and Ritual Schools convince him that the material from the description of the day of Yahweh came from a general ancient Near Eastern culture pattern; and he agrees with Charles that the concept is embedded in Israelite history.⁵⁷

Černý then divides the problem of the day of Yahweh into five sections:

1. In the first one, he probes the sources and content of the day of Yahweh.⁵⁸ He is the first scholar to isolate the prophetic texts in which the phrase is "plain and clear and incontestable."⁵⁹ Besides the sixteen authentic texts of yôm Yahweh Černý lists in Appendix I of his monograph twenty-six genuine descriptions of the day of Yahweh, all having as their prominent feature a destructive

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 12

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 26

⁵⁷His theories and criticisms are explained on p. 27-52.

⁵⁸Černý, op. cit., p. 53-67.

⁵⁹There are sixteen texts which Černý considers authentic yôm Yahweh texts: Is 13:6,9; Ez 13:5; Jl 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4 (2:31); 4:14 (3:14); Am 5:18-20; Ob 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 4:5(3:2). Ibid., p. 18.

characteristic. He believes the ideological source of this destructive character to be Israel's concept of Yahweh as "a furious demonic deity which reappears often throughout Hebrew native tradition" especially in the theophanies of Yahweh and in the battles of Israel. The Israelites borrowed this conception from Babylonian, Assyrian, Phoenician and Egyptian culture patterns.

2. The second section is concerned with the original form of the day of Yahweh.⁶⁰ Černý rejects the ideas of a day of battle, a world catastrophe, or a day of Yahweh's enthronement and kingship as the original forms. He describes it as a fateful day decreed by Yahweh and based on the genuine Yahwistic tradition that every individual's fate is directly dependent upon Yahweh's will. Eventually, he says, this form developed into a single idea and was attached to the future.

3. Černý devotes the third section to the question of when the concept first attained its eschatological meaning.⁶¹ He is convinced that "the conception of the day of Yahweh included the kernel of the whole of eschatology and that by the time of Amos it had its full eschatological meaning."⁶² The concept of the day of Yahweh slowly developed out of the previous historical ages. It had no connection whatsoever with eschatology, nor with such sources as old Hebrew literature and foreign myths. At one time in history when Israel's national survival--the future of the nation--was at stake, eschatology was born. The exact date cannot be known, but once eschatology came into light

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 67-80.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 80-84.

⁶²Ibid., p. 80.

the history of the day of Yahweh developed in five stages:

- a. Popular conception - a day decreed by Yahweh in which the future of the people would be newly shaped and their survival assured;
- b. Amos - the terrors of the Day would be directed against Israel for her unrighteousness and unfaithfulness toward Yahweh;
- c. End of the pre-exilic period - An enlargement of the meaning of the concept from a narrow nationalistic one to a general universalistic one. All nations would be judged and punished;
- d. Exile - With Jeremiah and Ezekiel the doctrine of the day of Yahweh evolved from the notion of collective retribution into that of individual responsibility.
- e. Post-exilic - The day of Yahweh had attained cosmic and eternal characteristics. The old world would be destroyed and a new and better one would take its place.

4. Having stated that eschatology was born out of Israel's own historical experiences, Černý now seeks in his fourth section the historical and social causes for its emergence.⁶³ He perceives that "only [. . .] three components of historical reality we may consider as the last, true and irreducible base upon which the doctrine of the day of Yahweh, and with it the whole of eschatology, are dependent indeed."⁶⁴ These three components are:

- a. the impact of the city culture in Canaan upon the Hebrew nomadic clans, and the change of their pastoral life into an

⁶³Ibid., p. 85-93.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 87.

agricultural one with social re-organization and re-grouping as a consequence of this change;

b. the exposed geographical position of the two Hebrew states thus created and the permanent danger to their independence;

c. the native ideology of the nation, including her religion and her special conception of social relations.

The social cause of Hebrew eschatology was a corruption of the social and religious order within Israel's own borders.

As a result of these historical and social realities, there arose the popular notion that Yahweh would interfere and shape anew the fate of his people. Černý believes that "this conception became a kernel . . . which gave birth to the whole of eschatology."⁶⁵

5. The ethnological origin of the conception of the day of Yahweh is Černý's concern in the last section of his constructive arguments.⁶⁶ He denies that the ethnic origin came from Babylon/Assyria (Gunkel and Gressmann), from Egypt (J. M. P. Smith)⁶⁷ or from Canaan/Ugarit (R. Dussaud),⁶⁸ and strongly affirms that Hebrew eschatology was unique in the world of that day. He finds its uniqueness in those features which the popular and prophetic conceptions of the day of the

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 93.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 93-98.

⁶⁷J. M. P. Smith, "Southern Influences upon Hebrew Prophecy", in American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature, Vol. 35, No. 1, 1918, p. 1-19. He finds this influence particularly in the realm of the conception of righteousness and social problems.

⁶⁸R. Dussaud, Les Origines cananéennes du sacrifice israélite, Paris, Leroux, 1921, 334 p. The discoveries from Ugarit-Ras Shamra support his theory.

Lord had in common. These are:

- a. The native traditions of the promises of God;
- b. the inadequacy of the contemporary state of things to satisfy Israelite ideals, which led to a desire for change projected into the future;
- c. the knowledge that the existing world-order did not provide the means of survival for Israel, and therefore that the world must give way to a better one.

In conclusion, Černý says that it is this idea of necessity of change in the existing world which makes the conception of the day of Yahweh unique among the Hebrews.

The destructive character of the day of Yahweh is, without a doubt, one of the most important features of Černý's concept. All of the sixteen yôm Yahweh texts do speak of punishment in terms of cosmic, divine or enemy destruction. Yet, can we say with Černý that the prophets derived this description from Israel's concept of Yahweh as a "furious demonic deity?" If so, Yahweh was no different from the gods of the other nations,⁶⁹ and the concept was not truly Israelite as Černý contends so strongly. Yet Yahweh was different from the other gods because he had made a covenant with Israel. Thus, we must look for another origin to help describe the Day of Yahweh, one unique to Israel.

Pursuing his belief of the destructive quality of the day of Yahweh, Černý presents Yahweh as a "fatalistic" God, one who determines the fate of each individual Israelite. He claims: "therefore the day of

⁶⁹J. Bottéro, La religion babylonienne, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1952, p. 51.

Yahweh can only mean that Yahweh determines or 'decrees' 'hard luck' or 'end' or even 'death' to somebody or something; it is the fate decreed by Yahweh."⁷⁰ And he calls this a genuine Yahwistic tradition! The other nations also believed that their gods decreed the fate of their worshippers.⁷¹ All Cerny had to do was to take their tradition and change the name from Marduk or Baal or Chemosh to Yahweh. It is true that Israel did depend on Yahweh, not because of his fatalistic will, but because of his covenant promises. The 'fate' of Israel depended upon her faithfulness to that covenant.

Cerny's comment that the conception of the day of Yahweh includes the kernel of the whole of eschatology is dubious. This notion he borrows from Gressmann, changing only its origin from Gressmann's world catastrophe to an historical time period in which Yahweh intervenes and shapes the fate of his people.

The conception of the day of Yahweh is definitely unique in Israel and originates from her own religious history. But to agree with Cerny that its uniqueness consists only in the idea that change is necessary in the existing world, is to minimize the importance of the conception. This is a very general and vague uniqueness!

Cerny's study concentrates too heavily on the question of the close relationship between the day of Yahweh and eschatology and the

⁷⁰Cerny, op. cit., p. 77.

⁷¹In Mesopotamia see A. L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization, Chicago, University Press, 1964, p. 202, 204-206. In Egypt see J. A. Wilson, "The Values of Life" in Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Man by H. and H. A. Frankfort, J. A. Wilson and T. Jacobsen, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1971, p. 127.

origin of these concepts, and not enough on the prophetic understanding of the term yôm Yahweh. He isolates the texts, yet, he never really works with them except to identify them along with their destructive characteristics.

C. Gerhard von Rad - "A Day of Holy War"

A major change in the methodological study of the day of Yahweh concept was brought about by the investigations of the great German Gerhard von Rad.⁷² von Rad's criticism of the methodology of his predecessors is two-fold: 1) "They adopted too broad a basis for the foundation of its investigation and included too many ideas and concepts whose connection with the day of Yahweh still remains to be proved,"⁷³ and 2) they often separated the concept of the day of Yahweh from the literary context in which it was found.

To remedy the second failing, von Rad suggests studying the concept from the point of view of Formgeschichte and Überlieferungsgeschichte to see whether the concept might not be connected with a special literary genre (Gattung). He narrows his material to twenty prophetic passages which he feels mention the concept of the day of Yahweh expressis verbis.⁷⁴ Unlike most scholars, he does not attribute

⁷²These works include, G. von Rad, "Der Tag Jahwes", in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Vol. II, G. Kittel und G. Friedrich, eds, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1954, p. 945-949; "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh", in Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1959, p. 97-108; Old Testament Theology II, New York, Harper, 1965, p. 119-125.

⁷³von Rad, "The Origin", op. cit., p. 97.

⁷⁴These are: Is 2:12; 13:6,9; 22:5; 34:8; Jer 46:10; Ez 7:19; 13:5; 30:3; Jl 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14; Am 5:18-20; Ob 15; Zeph 1:7, 8, 14-18 and Zech 14:1. Loc. cit.

to Amos 5:18-20 the locus classicus. He feels that, as it "is not sufficiently unequivocal to be used as a suitable starting point for the examination, it is advisable to begin with texts which convey a more unequivocal, and at the same time a broader, conception of the day of Yahweh."⁷⁵ He begins his investigation with the texts of Is 13 and 34; Ez 7 and Jl 2. Each of these passages, he says, describes the day of Yahweh as an event of war according to a fixed pattern:

1) call of the warrior to arms; 2) sanctification of the army; 3) panic of the enemy; 4) cosmic relationships; and 5) total destruction of the city. He finds the same pattern in Ex 30:1-19 and Zeph 1. There is a strong resemblance, he maintains, between the war descriptions of these passages and those of the holy wars which were fought at the time of the Judges and the Conquest (Landnahme).⁷⁶ In both Yahweh goes against his enemies, enters into the combat and is victorious. His conclusions: the day of Yahweh encompasses solely an event of war, a day of holy war; and the material which surrounds the concept of the day of Yahweh is of old Israelite origin, from the tradition of the holy wars of Yahweh.

Denying that Amos 5:18-20 is the locus classicus, von Rad must, however, include it in the yôm Yahweh texts. He sees in it only one aspect of the holy war, namely, darkness. Amos agrees with his contemporaries that Yahweh will rise against Israel's enemies, but he brings something new: the war on the day of Yahweh will turn against

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 98.

⁷⁶von Rad's description of the holy war is expressed in his monograph, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel, Zürich, Zwingli Verlag, 1954, 84p.

Israel. von Rad believes that this notion of the battle against Israel, introduced by Amos, was only an interlude in the history of the concept. Originally, he said, the concept of the day of Yahweh was connected with salvation, and the later prophets returned to the idea that Yahweh's day of war would again mean salvation for Israel.⁷⁷

Other conclusions from von Rad's study are:

1. The day of Yahweh was not originally considered as eschatological by the prophets because they sometimes describe the day as a past event.⁷⁸

2. Mythical elements of the concept are present from the very beginning because they existed in the traditional descriptions of the theophanic wars of Yahweh. They are, however, to be understood simply as literary and imaginative motifs--even when the day of Yahweh is described eschatologically.

3. The phrase "the day of Yahweh is at hand" is possibly "an old stereotyped call with which the troops were summoned to take the field in the holy wars, or a cry with which they went into battle with Yahweh."⁷⁹

von Rad's theory of the day of Yahweh as a day of holy war⁸⁰

⁷⁷von Rad, "The Origin", op. cit., p. 105.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 106.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 108.

⁸⁰M. Delcor, "Jour de Yahvé", in Catholicisme: hier, aujourd'hui, demain, Vol. 25, No. 6, 1965, p. 1058; E. Galbiati, "Il Giorno di Jahvé", in Vita e Pensiero, Vol. 53, No. 6, 1970, p. 31; J. Héléwa, "Trois Solutions au Probleme de l'Origine du Concept du Jour de Yahweh", in Ephemerides Carmeliticae, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1964, p. 23; R. W. Klein, "The Day of the Lord", in Concordia, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 517-525; Langevin, op. cit., p. 365-368; and K-D Schunck, "Strukturlinien in der Entwicklung der Vorstellung vom 'Tag Jahwes'", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1964, p. 320-321.

has received a greater acceptance than those of his predecessors, yet, it has also been seen with a critical eye.⁸¹ Although one must laud von Rad's methodology, his conclusions have been tried and found wanting. If we closely examine the twenty passages which he calls "Day of Yahweh" expressis verbis, we find that a good two-fifths of them are much broader than the phrase yōm Yahweh itself. These are: Is 2:12 ("Lord of hosts has a day"); 22:5 ("Lord of hosts has a day"); 34:8 ("Lord has a day of vengeance"); Jer 46:10 ("Day of the Lord God of Hosts"); Ez 7:19 ("Day of Wrath of the Lord"); 30:3 ("the Day to the Lord"); Zeph 1:8 ("Day of the Lord's sacrifice"); Zach 14:1 ("a day to the Lord"). von Rad does not include Mal 3:23(4:5) in his list although it is one of the authentic yōm Yahweh texts. Nor does he, as Weiss has suggested, include the two oldest prophecies of the Day of Yahweh (Am 5:18-20 and Is 2:12) in his considerations.⁸² Can we not, therefore, accuse von Rad of tampering with the evidence, that is, of adding or of disregarding texts as they correspond or not to his theory of the holy war?

The most striking objection to von Rad's theory is that not all of the yōm Yahweh texts which he has chosen contain elements of a war, much less of a holy war! The only description of the day of Yahweh we have in Amos 5:18-20 is darkness, set not in a context of

⁸¹E. Haag, "Der Tag Jahwes im alten Testament," in Bibel und Leben, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 238-248; M. Weiss, "The Origin of the 'Day of the Lord' - Reconsidered," in Hebrew Union College Annual Vol. 37, Cincinnati, Union College Press, 1961, p. 29-60; F. C. Fensham, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," in Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, "Papers read at the 9th meeting in Stellenbosch," Potchefstroom, Herald Beperk, 1966, p. 90-97.

⁸²Weiss, op. cit., p. 39.

war, but in a context of warning that Israel would not escape this day of darkness (punishment) which she thought would be light (salvation). Is 2:12 portrays Yahweh's coming on that day as a storm which will level all that Israel has raised to the heights of glory. Joel 1 and 2 depict a locust plague which will devour all that Israel possesses: land, crops and homes.⁸³

von Rad basis his whole theory of the day of Yahweh on the institution of the holy war and tribal confederation as experienced in Israel's history. Yet, there are scholars who are dubious about the very existence of such an institution in Israel.⁸⁴ Theirs is a small weak voice, to be sure, among a mighty chorus of approval, but the doubt exists nevertheless. If through further study this voice of doubt swells, von Rad's theory will follow the way of Gressmann's and Mowinckel's, for it will then be based, like theirs, on a non-existent Israelite tradition.

At the very end of his article in the Journal of Semitic Studies, von Rad concludes as plausible, that the formula "The Day of Yahweh is at hand!" might be an old stereotyped call which mustered the troops for battle.⁸⁵ His evidence is shaky, based only on the assumption that "the formula is only accidentally missing from the ancient accounts

⁸³An excellent description of an actual locust plague in Jerusalem was written by J. D. Whiting, "Jerusalem Locust Plague", in National Geographic, Vol 28, No. 6, 1915, p. 511-550.

⁸⁴G. Fohrer, "Prophetie und Geschichte", in Theologische Literaturzeitung, Vol 89, July 1964, p. 482-499; R. Smend, Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation, New York, Abingdon Press, 1970, p. 28-32.

⁸⁵von Rad, "The Origin", op. cit., p. 108.

or poetry. . . ." In his monograph, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel, von Rad goes to lengths, citing twenty passages, to prove that the formula "Yahweh has given them over into your hand" was the leader's war cry to muster the troops for battle.⁸⁶ Not once does he mention "The Day of Yahweh is at hand!" as a possible option. Is he saying, eight years later, that there were two war cries with which the army went to battle? Again, is von Rad not forcing an association of the day of Yahweh with the holy war by placing the formula "The Day of Yahweh is at hand!" within a holy war context? Might not rather this formula be seen as a truly prophetic one warning Israel that her day of punishment is coming soon, whatever that punishment? This perhaps better explains the presence of this expression in the prophetic books.

We can conclude the study and criticism of von Rad by stating that the concept of the day of Yahweh has a wider meaning and context than those of the holy war.

D. F. C. Fensham - "A Day of Covenant Curses"

F. Charles Fensham, working out of the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, has written articles in a variety of journals dealing with the Israelite covenant and its relationship to ancient

⁸⁶ von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg, op. cit., p. 7-8.

Near Eastern treaties and other legal material.⁸⁷ He analyzes this relationship with respect to the curses and blessings found in these documents and traditions. Other scholars have also studied this question;⁸⁸ but Fensham has applied the curse/benediction elements to the problem of the concept of the day of Yahweh. He writes up his findings in a short article entitled, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord."⁸⁹

Fensham first observes that there is always a "devastating force" to the day, directed either against unfaithful Israel or foreign enemies. For both it is a day determined by Yahweh who will come in wrath to punish the guilty and hostile forces. The terminology used by the prophets to describe this "devastating day", Fensham divides

⁸⁷F. C. Fensham, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament, in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1963, p. 133-143; "Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible," in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1967, p. 305-322; "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru Inscriptions compared with the Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 75, No. 2, 1963, p. 155-175; "Father and Son Terminology for Treaty and Covenant", in Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright, H. Goedicke, ed., Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 121-135; "Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1962, p. 1-9; "Possibility of the Presence of Casuistic Legal Material at the Making of the Covenant at Sinai", in Palestine Exploration Quarterly, Vol. 93, No. 2, 1961, p. 143-146.

⁸⁸S. Gevirtz, "West-Semitic Curses and the Problem of the Origins of Hebrew Law", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol 11, No. 2, 1961, p. 137-158; J. H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel", in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 87, No. 1, p. 81-92; D. R. Hillers, Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964, xix-101p.

⁸⁹Fensham, "Possible Origin", op. cit., p. 90-97.

into two categories: 1) those expressions that show the effect of the day on nature: changes of the sun, moon and stars, dark clouds and darkness; and 2) those that show the effect of the day on living beings: dread and confusion. He admits that any of these ideas could properly be applied to a holy war context as von Rad so aptly does, but states that they are not ipsa facto part and parcel of the terminology of the holy war. This terminology, he adds, is a fusion of one or more strands of the tradition, such as that of Sinai, or that of theophany. The holy war, he says, is only one such strand.

From a study of Hittite and Assyrian vassal treaties, Fensham learns that when a minor partner broke a treaty, the major partner could punish the aggressor by executing the curses which were incorporated into the treaty. The punishment for a breach of contract was usually carried out by an invasion of war, or as a final stage of rib-case (courtroom summons) where the transgressor was found guilty of violating the treaty.⁹⁰

An investigation into the prophetic writings shows that Israel's breach of the covenant was not unlike the rupture of treaties

⁹⁰J. Blenkinsopp, "The Prophetic Reproach", in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 90, No. 2, 1971, p. 267-278; J. Harvey, "Le Rib-Pattern", Réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'Alliance; in Biblica, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1962, p. 172-196; H. B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets", in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 78, No. 2, 1959, p. 285-295. J. Harvey, Le Plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'Alliance: Étude d'une Formule littéraire de l'Ancien Testament, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1967, 186 p.

on the international scene.⁹¹ The punishment was similar: it took the form of curses. Curses were a built-in portion of both international treaties and the Israelite covenant and served as deterrents to unfaithfulness. A breach of the treaty/covenant automatically triggered off the execution of these curses, which usually took the form of a military invasion of the guilty partner, although other curses such as darkness, drought, cosmic disturbances, etc., were possible.

The real background of the day of Yahweh concept, Fensham believes, proposes a "day of visitation and execution of curses."⁹² The concept becomes complicated, he adds, when one realizes that Yahweh inflicts the same curses on both unfaithful Israel and the foreign nations. Fensham makes two distinctions:

1. The curses directed against Israel are caused by her unfaithfulness to the covenant, whereas, those directed against the enemy "are to be regarded as part and parcel of common curse material which can be used against any adversary or transgressor as in the case of violation of graves or important inscriptions."⁹³ The foreign nations were not covenant partners with Yahweh, thus the curses could not be regarded as punishing a breach of promise to Yahweh.

⁹¹v. Korošec, Hethitische Staatsverträge; ein Beitrag zu ihrer juristischen Wertung, Leipzig, T. Weicher, 1931, viii-118 p.; G. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East, Pittsburg, The Biblical Colloquium, 1955, 50 p.; K. Baltzer, The Covenant Formulary: in Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings, Oxford, Blackwell, 1971, xiii-221 p.

⁹²Fensham, "Possible Origin", op. cit., p. 96.

⁹³Ibid., p. 95-96.

2. The foreign enemy receives only punishment in the form of executed curses but unfaithful Israel first receives judgment as a result of the covenant breach and then punishment in the form of executed curses.⁹⁴

Much of Fensham's article is a polemic against von Rad's theory that all descriptions of the day of Yahweh are descriptions of holy war battle. As a counter solution, Fensham suggests that a possible origin of the day of Yahweh concept lies in the ancient Near Eastern curse patterns which all prophetic descriptions of the day include, and which are directed against both Israel and the hostile nations.

On the surface, Fensham's understanding of the origin of the day of Yahweh seems the most plausible of the ideas hitherto put forth. He has rooted the concept in an authentic and uniquely Israelite tradition: the Covenant. Unlike the enthronement feast or the holy war there are no doubts whatsoever that the Israel/Yahweh covenant existed. And this covenant contained curses which would be carried out against Israel by Yahweh if she were unfaithful to its stipulations. Fensham has shown that the prophetic descriptions of the day of Yahweh for Israel can be traced to these covenantal curses to punish Israel's unfaithfulness.

The covenantal curses are based on the general ancient Near Eastern patterns of curses to be inflicted on enemies or on those who break international treaties, boundary promises, or other legal relationships. The curses pronounced by the prophets against

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 95

the hostile nations figure in the general curse patterns against enemies. The close relationship between the general curses and the covenantal curses explains why the prophets could describe the day of Yahweh in the same way for both Israel and her enemies.

IV. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER ONE

The theory of the origin of the concept of the day of Yahweh at which Fensham hints in this all too brief article is the starting point of the present study, which will show that there exists a marked similarity between the language of the yôm Yahweh texts and the legal terminology of the ancient Near Eastern juridical texts, both of which can be related to the idea of a judgment based on infidelity to the covenant by Israel and of hostility towards Yahweh by the enemy. The punishment resulting from the judgment, on a day of Yahweh, would be the curses carried out by Yahweh for such infidelity and injustice.

This study will closely examine the yôm Yahweh passages, placing them side-by-side with extra-Biblical texts, and those Biblical texts pertaining to the covenant to ascertain whether one can truly say that the origin of the day of Yahweh is juridical and whether the day can be considered as one during which the curses of the covenant fall upon unfaithful Israel and upon the nations for their hostility toward Yahweh and his chosen people.

CHAPTER II

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF YÔM YAHWEH TEXTS

It has been substantiated through research that the oldest text which mentions expressis verbis the term yôm Yahweh comes from the eighth century prophet Amos. Since consequent mention of the term is limited to the literary prophets yôm Yahweh can accurately be referred to as a prophetic expression. That there existed a pre-prophetic concept of the day of Yahweh cannot be doubted. Amos hinted of it when he rebuked the unfaithful Yahwists of the Northern Kingdom: "It is darkness and not light . . . Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light?" (Am 5:18,20). According to the prophet, his listeners presupposed this day to be a "day of light." Our concern however, is not with the pre-prophetic concept because there is no Biblical text on which we could base our assumptions. Any study of the concept yôm Yahweh in the Old Testament must begin with the prophetic texts in which this term is found; otherwise the research starts on false premises, travels a path of diversion and reaches erroneous conclusions. It can only be through a careful analysis of these sixteen prophetic texts which mention expressis verbis the term yôm Yahweh¹ that we can

¹Am 5:18(2), 20; Zeph 1:7, 14(2); Is 13:6, 9; Ez 13:5; Ob 15; Mal 3:24; Jl 1:15, 2:11; 3:4; 4:14.

hope to arrive at a more meaningful understanding of what the prophets meant when they pronounced oracles about the day of Yahweh. This chapter will attempt to analyse these texts. Once, perhaps, a reasonable conclusion has been reached about the prophetic meaning of the day of Yahweh, it will be possible to trace from it the pre-prophetic or popular concept of the notion.

I. AMOS 5:18-20

A. Historical Background.

The logical place to start this research on the concept of yôm Yahweh in the Old Testament is with the earliest text in which we find the term: Amos 5:18-20.

Amos, a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees (Am 7:1) from Tekoa (Am 1:1), was called by God to preach to the Northern Kingdom during the prosperous reign of King Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.) in the year 760 B.C.² This was an era of peace and security that had not been seen since the glorious reigns of David and Solomon at the time of the united monarchy. The wealth, prosperity and power enjoyed only by the ruling minority gave them a feeling of invincible security which led them to abuse their responsibilities. The effects of these abuses fell upon the innocent and the powerless - the 'am hā'āreṣ.

The control of the wealth by a few inaugurated and perpetuated the growth of social classes in Israel. The poor majority had to depend upon the wealthy minority. Social injustice went unchecked and

²J. L. Mays, Amos: A Commentary, in Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1969, p. 1-2, 20.

cries of oppression were stifled by extra taxes and heavier burdens.

Agricultural and industrial prosperity were interpreted by the leaders as benevolent signs of Yahweh's delight in their offerings, sacrifices and festival liturgies (cf. Lv 26:3-5). In reality, their religious observances were hypocritical and meaningless. Yahweh's name was invoked but it was Baal worship that was being practiced.

Political power balanced in favor of Israel. She had overcome her pagan enemies and was at peace with her sister state to the South, Judah. Her political thought at the time was: "We are pleasing to Yahweh so he has helped us defeat our enemy. No harm can come to us with Yahweh on our side."

These three outward manifestations of Israel's glory, wealth, prosperity and power contributed to her seemingly inviolable sense of security.

It was in the middle of this optimism that Amos appeared at Bethel to cut away with his searing words the tripartite shield of superficiality, hypocrisy and greed and to lay bare the encrusted sins of social injustice, foreign alliances and moral decay.

In what way did Amos apply the phrase "day of Yahweh" to the sins and punishment of Israel? Only an analysis of the text can answer this question.

B. Textual Criticism

Woe to you who desire the day of
the Lord!
Why would you have the day of
the Lord?
It is darkness, and not light;
as if a man fled from a lion,

and a bear met him;
 or went into the house and leaned
 with his hand against the wall,
 and a serpent bit him.
 Is not the day of the Lord darkness,
 and not light,
 and gloom with no brightness in it?

(Am 5:18-20)

This yôm Yahweh text is a segment of the many doom oracles (2:6-9:10) pronounced by Amos against Israel during his short ministry in the North. To see what connection there might be between the doom oracles of the prophets and a day of the Lord text we will start with an analysis of the vocabulary.

The oracle of Am 5:18-20 is introduced by the interjection hōy found fifty times in the Old Testament, all in the prophetic writings, except 1 Kings 13:30. Translators have given it a variety of meanings: alas, woe, trouble, ho, etc., but the classical translation is "woe." Despite the prominence of the word in the prophets, it originated before them says R. J. Clifford who traces it back to the funerary lament.³ Examples of this early use can be found in I Kings 13:30, "He laid the corpse in his own tomb, and they raised the mourning cry for him, 'Alas (hōy), my brother!'" ; Amos 5:16, "In every public square there will be lamentation, in every street wails of 'Alas! Alas!' (hōy)"; Jeremiah 22:18, "Doom for that man! Raise no dirge for him, Mourn (hōy) for my brother! Mourn (hōy) for my sister!"; Jeremiah 34:5, ". . . so they will also burn spices for you and raise this dirge for you: Mourn (hōy) for his highness!" Writing independently of Clifford, a Canadian

³R. J. Clifford, "The Use of hōy in the Prophets", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1966, p. 459.

scholar, W. Janzen, recognized a transition from the funeral lament to a curse in which the mourners curse the guilty for the death of the beloved.⁴ The prophets borrow the cry, says Janzen, to describe the impending doom that will break on Yahweh's enemies, including Israel and Judah, when God's vengeance descends upon them for their wrongdoings.⁵ It will be a time of mourning and wailing because they will be no more. Claus Westermann, writing earlier, associates the origin of the cry with the series of covenant curses found in Dt. 27.⁶ E. Gerstenberger connects the genesis of the woe formula to the wise man's reflections about the conditions of the world.⁷ Funeral lamentation was a ceremony practiced by all nations of the ancient Near East, Israel included. This would indicate that Clifford is correct in his conclusion that the cry hōy has its origin in the funeral lament, and that its association with the covenant curses and wisdom sayings appears to be a prophetic adaptation of its original use to fit the description of the coming punishment of the Lord against Israel.

R. J. Clifford's research found three uses of the word in the Old Testament. They are: 1) . . . to describe actual funeral laments as in I Kings 13:30; 2) cries to get attention as in Is 55:1; Zech 2:10, 11 and 3) expressions particular to the prophets introducing

⁴W. Janzen, Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle, in Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft Vol. 125, New York, Gruyter, 1972, p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 87.

⁶C. Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1967, p. 194-198.

⁷E. Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles of the Prophets," in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 81, No. 2, p. 260-263.

announcements of doom.⁸

Amos compares the impending disaster of Israel to a funeral dirge very explicitly in chapters five and six of his book. He begins with the solemn words, "Listen to this oracle I speak against you, it is a dirge, House of Israel" (5:1). Three times within this context, doom is announced to the inhabitants of Israel especially to the guilty upper classes and the royalty of the Northern Kingdom. Each oracle is introduced by the interjection hōy which could easily be understood as "curse be . . ." "Woe for those who turn justice into wormwood. . . ." (5:7); "Woe to those who desire the day of the Lord. . . ." (5:18); "Woe to those ensconced so snugly in Zion . . ." (6:1). Amos has clearly transformed the funeral lament into a prophetic curse against an enemy of Yahweh, in this instance, Israel. And he has incorporated the concept of the day of Yahweh into this curse context with 5:18-20.

Although Amos is the first prophet, and the first Biblical writer, to use the funerary hōy within a curse context⁹ there is an Assyrian treaty of the eighth century B.C. (contemporary of Amos!) which also incorporates hōy (woe) into the curse material at the end of the contract. It is a suzerain treaty between Ashurnirari V of Assyria and Mati'ilu of Arpad.¹⁰

⁸Clifford, op. cit., p. 458.

⁹Am 5:18 and 6:1.

¹⁰J. B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton, University Press, 1969, p. 533, Par. (v), line 8.

(8) If Mati'ilu sins against this treaty with Ashurnirari, King of Assyria, may Mati'ilu become a prostitute, his soldiers women, may they receive [a gift] in the square of their cities (i.e. publicly) like any prostitute, may one country . . . them to the next; may Mati'ilu's (seed) be that of a mule, his wives barren, may Ishtar, the goddess of men, the lady of women, take away their "bow", cause ther [sterility, . . . may they say "Woe, we have sinned against the treaty with Ashurnirari, King of Assyria." (Break)

Both the Assyrian treaty and the yôm Yahweh text of Amos contain curses. The former as a threat against either of the contracting parties if they break the treaty and the latter against Israel because she did break the covenant with Yahweh. This is not surprising, however. Resemblance between the Old Testament covenant forms and the ancient Near Eastern treaties has already become an established fact in the Biblical world.¹¹ More significant for our study are the parallel trends between the curse formula of the treaties and the curse formula of the prophets.¹² In general this research assumes that the prophets

¹¹K. Baltzer, The Covenant Formulary: In Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings, Oxford, Blackwell, 1971, xiii-221 p.; D. J. McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963, xxiv-220 p.; G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant", in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. I, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1962, p. 714-723; G. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1965, p. 487-503; J. A. Thompson, "Near Eastern Suzerain-Vassal Concept in the Religion of Israel", in Journal of Religious History, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1964, p. 1-19.

¹²F. C. Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru Inscriptions compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 75, No. 2, 1963, p. 155-175; F. C. Fensham, "Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 74, No. 1, p. 1-9; D. R. Hillers, Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964, xix-101 p.

regard the disobedience of Judah and Israel to Yahweh's covenant in the same light in which a suzerain would regard the disobedience of his vassal, that is, the curses of the treaty would immediately affect the guilty partner.

Amos 5:18-20 speaks of only one curse; darkness (hōšek) as punishment for the sins of Israel. Amos' audience was familiar with the symbolic meanings of the word "darkness": first, the idea of darkness as the absence of God. God is light and his presence lights up the darkness with his manifestations (Ex 3:2; 19:18), salvation (Ps 27:1), life (Jb 3:20) and knowledge (Ps 42:3). When God is absent darkness prevails in the form of chaos (Gen 1:1), sin (I S 2:9), death (Jb 3:5) and ignorance (Qo 3:14). Secondly, darkness is a curse one invokes on one's enemies. It is one of the plagues Yahweh sent to punish Egypt when the pharaoh wouldn't let Israel leave his land (Ex 10:21-23). Job cursed with darkness the day he was born (Job 3:4-10) and the Psalmist called forth darkness upon those who wanted to kill him (Ps 35:6). The curse list of the Deuteronomic Code includes blindness and darkness for anyone who transgresses the commandments of Yahweh (Dt 28:28-29).

Darkness in the form of blindness was a common curse in the legal codes and treaties of the ancient dynasties and kingdoms of the Near East, expressed in the idea of changing light into darkness. The earliest text we have which includes this curse comes from the second dynasty of Isin (18th century B.C.): the sun god Shamesh is implored to hit the transgressor's face so that his day will be turned into dark-

ness.¹³ A Babylonian Kudurru installed during the reign of King Marduk-Nadin-Akhe (fourth dynasty) warned would-be violators of the same fate if they disturbed his monument or tried to take away the land. "May Shamash, the judge of heaven and earth, smite his countenance so that his bright day may turn to darkness for him."¹⁴ A suzerain treaty between Esarhaddon of Assyria and Ramataya, city ruler of Urakazabanu has a curse list comprising one-half of the treaty.

Three times within this text curses which pertain to darkness or blindness are invoked upon the transgressing partner. "May Shamesh . . . take away your eyesight; walk about in darkness!"; ". . . may your days be somber, your years dark, may they decree for you an unrelieved darkness . . . "¹⁵ The third example is indirect but the summons no less cruel: "Just as one cuts off the hands and feet and blinds the eyes of those who blaspheme against the God or lord, so may they bring about your end. . . . "¹⁶ Inscribed on an eighth century B. C. Aramaic stele of Sefire are these words: ". . . as a man of wax is

¹³J. Hempel, "Die israelitischen Anschauungen von Segen und Fluch im Lichte altorientalischer Parallelen", in Apoxysmata, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Bd 81, Berlin, A. Töpelmann, 1961, p. 77.

¹⁴L. W. King, ed., Babylonian Boundary Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum, London, Longman's and Co., 1912, p. 41, (19). Curses found on boundary stone inscriptions, tomb warnings and temple dedications have been included in this study as examples of curse parallels to the covenant curses because of their legal significance and their importance as common curse material in the ancient Near East.

¹⁵Pritchard, op. cit., p. 538, Par. 40, line 422 and p. 539, Par. 56, lines 486-487.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 540, Par. 95, line 626.

blind, so may Matî^c-el be blinded!"¹⁷ Darkness without light was the fate of any Babylonian who refused to obey the Code of Hammurabi:¹⁸

If that man did not heed my words which I wrote on my stela, and disregarded my curses, and did not fear the curses of the gods, but has abolished the law which I enacted, has distorted my words, has altered my statues, effaced my name inscribed (thereon), and has written his own name (or) has commissioned another (to do so) because of these curses - as for that man, whether king or lord or governor or person of any rank . . . : may he determine as the fate for him a reign of woe . . . darkness without light, sudden death!

Amos most certainly drew from this vast background of darkness as a curse in both Israelite tradition and the legal documents of the ancient Near East when he used darkness to warn Israel of her imminent punishment by Yahweh. This day of Yahweh was to be a day of judgment for Israel because she had transgressed against the Lord and broken his covenant. The punishment for the breach of the covenant was the curse of darkness. It was coming soon and there was no way to avoid it. The poor fellow who tried to get away from the lion and the bear was not even safe in his own home, and neither was Israel in her attempt to escape the day of punishment of Yahweh.

Before Amos concludes his oracles of doom against Israel he once more predicts darkness as a punishment: "That day . . . I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight" (8:9). Prophets after him also spoke of darkness as a curse against the enemies of Yahweh: Is 5:30; 24:18; Ez 32:8; Jl 2:2; 3:4; Zeph 1:15, 17.

¹⁷J. A. Fitzmyer, The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefîre, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967, p. 15.

¹⁸Pritchard, op. cit., p. 178-179, lines 20-70.

Israel had been warned by Amos. The day of expected victory and blessings would be turned into a day of defeat and curses. Amos called it the "day of Yahweh". What is the meaning of day in this context?

The word yôm (day) has a variety of meanings in the Old Testament. L. Černý, before beginning his analysis of the day of Yahweh, classifies the different meanings of the Hebrew word yôm.¹⁹ Using a semasiological point of view rather than the more common grammatical one, he distinguishes two groups or categories into which yôm can be placed. The first use of yôm, he says, is for measuring some quantity of time: twenty-four hours, sunrise-sunset, that day; or some quantity other than time, such as the length of a journey ("a day's work") or the amount of work ("the bread of two days"). His second category defines yôm "as an indefinite section of the continuous flow of time, the content of which is qualified in some way."²⁰ This flow of time can be qualified by an act or happening ("day of battle," "day of harvest") or by a proper name or pronoun ("day of Midian," "day of Jezreel"). Černý concludes that in the phrase "day of Yahweh," as used by the prophets, yôm fits into the second category defined as a continuous flow of time qualified by the proper name Yahweh, in the past or future. From this definition of "day" one must examine the content of the whole phrase yôm Yahweh to establish its origin and its use by Amos in 5:18-20.

¹⁹L. Černý, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, Prague, V. Praze, 1948, p. 5-8.

²⁰Ibid., p. 7.

The phrase yôm Yahweh is uniquely Israelite and prophetic with no counterpart in any ancient Near Eastern text. Yet, there is evidence from extra-Biblical texts of an indefinite "day" in the future during which the gods would act to punish by curses any contracting partner who broke a treaty or covenant.

Tukulti-Ninurta of Assur and Kaštiliaš, the king of the Kassites were joined together by a political treaty with Kaštiliaš as the vassal. One night the men of TukuIti-Ninurta stopped the merchants of Kaštiliaš and found on them a document which proved that Kaštiliaš had turned traitor. Taking the document, the king of Assur went before the god Shamash to plead with him to destroy Kaštiliaš according to the terms of the treaty which he had broken.²¹

He hath no respect for thine oath, he hath
transgressed thy command, devising oppression,

.

[By] thy command, in defeat in war let his
people [and] [his] city(?) [be destroyed!]

Tukulti-Ninurta declared war on the Kassites considering it the day of divine punishment for Kaštiliaš because of his breach of the covenant. The king of Assur proclaims:²²

Come, draw up thy battle array,
for this is the day when the blood of thy people
shall pay for the wasting of my fields,
and they shall shed a gruesome flood (of their
gore) like Addi (the storm god) over thy camp.

²¹R. C. Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson, "The Excavations on the Temple of Nabû at Nineveh", in Archaeologia, Vol. 79, No. 2, 1929, p. 132-133.

²²R. C. Thompson and M. E. L. Mallowan, "The British Museum Excavations at Nineveh, 1931-32", in Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology, Vol. 20, 1933, p. 122-123.

.....
 Thou hast ravaged all my land, thou hast
 shewn forgetfulness [of thy covenant(?)] . . .

In the British Museum there is a series of boundary stones and memorial tablets from Babylon dating from the Kassite Dynasty down to the Ninth Babylonian Dynasty. There is a regular pattern running through these stelae. To protect them from being changed, neglected, transgressed, erased, removed, consigned to fire, thrown into water, buried in the dust, destroyed, annihilated, or turned face down, they bear a note of warning: on that day (future) the violator would be cursed by the gods. For example:

1. On a commemorative stele erected in honor of Aded-tir, the dagger-bearer of Marduk, by his son:²³

Col I

(9) whosoever in days to come
 (10) the image
 (11) of this memorial stone
 (13) shall destroy,
 (14) or by means of
 (15) crafty device shall cause them to disappear,
 (16) may Marduk, the great lord, in anger
 (17) look upon him, and his name and his seed
 (18) may he cause to disappear!

2. A deed regarding the purchase of corn land by Marduk-nasir, the king's officer from Amil-Enlil, the son of Khambi.²⁴

(31) Whensoever in later days an agent
 (32) or a governor, or prefect, or a superintendent,

²³King, op. cit., p. 116.

²⁴Ibid., p. 41-42.

-
- (35) shall direct his mind to take away these
lands,
 - (36) or shall lay claim to them, or cause a
claim to be made,
 - (37) or shall take them away or cause them to
be taken away
-

Col II

- (34) May Nabû, the exalted minister appoint
his days of scarcity and drought
- (35) as his destiny!
- (36) May all the great gods, whose names are
mentioned on this memorial stone,
- (37) drive him into evil and unhappiness!
- (38) His name, his seed, his offspring, (and)
his posterity
- (39) may they destroy in the mouth of the wide-
spread people!

On other stelae from this collection there are alternate expressions referring to time such as: "Whensoever in future time", "Whensoever in after time", "in future time," etc., but all are concerned about an indefinite future time during which, should a legal infraction occur, the divine curses written into the texts would automatically come down upon the offender.

Columns erected in honor of chief gods and goddesses during the time of the Dynasty of Larsa (2025-1763 B. C.) were shielded from molestation with curse warnings.

1. Near the temple he built in honor of Shamash Kudur-Mabuk erected a clou d'argile daring anyone to destroy its walls with this warning:²⁵

²⁵E. Sollberger, Inscriptions royales, sumériennes et akkadiennes, Paris, Cerf, 1971, p. 201-202

- (25-51) A jamais, dans les jours futurs, celui qui ne consolidera pas ce bâtiment de briques cuites quand il sera devenu vétuste, qui ne réparera pas son soubassement, qui arrachera sa porte, qui enlèvera ses pierres de seuil, qui ne restaurera pas son coffre s'il s'est écroulé, qui le (=le bâtiment) détruira avec méchanceté et exposera ses fondements au soleil, qui le convertira en terre inculte: cet homme, soit-il roi ou seigneur, que Nergal, le dieu mon propre créateur, lui enlève le sens dans sa colère furieuse! que Samaš le seigneur du ciel et de la terre, le maudisse d'une funeste malédiction!

2. On a basalt column erected for the Sumerian goddess Inana we read:²⁶

- (42-52) Celui qui quelque jour dans la suite des temps briserait mon ouvrage, en changerait l'emplacement (et) le placerait en un lieu hostile, en effacerait l'inscription (et) y inscrirait son nom, (ou) à cause de cette malédiction, inciterait un autre à le faire, qu'Inana, la reine de tous les pays, dans sa colère et sa fureur prononce (contre lui) une malédiction mauvaise!

We can see there is a close connection between the use of "day" in the legal documents of the ancient Near East: treaties, kudurru stones, memorial-tablets and that of Amos in his phrase yôm Yahweh. Both refer to an indefinite future time when the gods (Yahweh) will inflict punishment on those who have transgressed a divine sanction.

Amos contends that Israel has already broken the covenant with Yahweh by her infidelity and sins (2:6ff; 3:2) and she will be punished on that "day" (3:14; 4:2), a "day" in which Yahweh himself will inflict punishment on his erring people. The author of Deuteronomy, a legal

²⁶Ibid., p. 207.

document,²⁷ predicts that Israel will break the covenant and "on that day" the evils and troubles of the covenant curses will come upon them.

And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to sleep with your fathers; then this people will rise and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake me and break my covenant. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured; and many evils and troubles will come upon them, so they will say in that day, "Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?" And I will surely hide my face in that day on account of all the evil which they have done, because they turned to other gods. (Dt 31:16-18)

For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, and turn aside from the way I have commanded you; and in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands. (Dt 31:29)

This will be Yahweh's "day" of punishment just as it was Shamash's "day" or Nergal's "day" or Inana's "day" in the extra-Biblical texts: The "day" of divine curses. It was Amos, however who borrowed the legal term "day of . . ." and added the name of his God, Yahweh, thus coining the phrase "Day of Yahweh" to inform Israel that Yahweh's time of vengeance was upon them for infraction of the covenant. The curses of that covenant (in vv. 18-20, specifically (darkness)) were near at hand and no one could hide from them. Yahweh had spoken - his word must be fulfilled. Yahweh demanded faithfulness from his covenant

²⁷Deuteronomy represents a unified whole with all the elements of the covenant formulary structure: 1) historical description, Chs 1-11, 2) reading of the Law, Chs 12-26:15, 3) acceptance of the covenantal obligations, 26:16-19, and 4) blessings and curses, Ch. 28. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 31.

partner, Israel, the same way the suzerain lord demanded faithfulness from his vassals. A breach of that covenant by Israel invoked the divine wrath and the curses of the covenant (Lv 26; Dt 28).

"A day of darkness (hōšek) not light (ʾôr) . . . gloom (ʾāpēl) with no brightness (nōgah) in it" (Am 5:18, 20). By means of synonomous parallelism Amos emphasized his message of doom for a faithless people.

II. ZEPHANIAH 1:7, 14-18

A. Historical Background

The next yōm Yahweh text, chronologically, comes from the prophet Zephaniah. When Zephaniah came onto the scene in Judah the North had been destroyed by Assyria almost one hundred years earlier (721 B.C.) and her inhabitants were either exiled in Nineveh or left behind to fend for themselves in a war-torn nation among foreign colonial installations. The voices of Isaiah and Micah had been stilled in the South and Jeremiah had not yet begun his ministry. The young Josiah had just ascended the throne of Judah after the murder of his father Amon (640 B.C.), inheriting a nation of moral and religious decadence and political corruption. The religious innovations of King Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.) had been reversed by his successor King Manasseh (687-642 B.C.). Manasseh rebuilt the high places, erected altars for the worship of Baal (Zeph 1:4), revived child sacrifice (Zeph 1:7b-8a) and allowed foreign religious practices to

²⁸Hillers, op. cit., p. 43-79.

replace Yahwism (Zeph 1:4b-5, 7b-9a). The counselors and leading persons in the court who gave advice to the young king were only interested in pleasing Assyria (Zeph 1:8b) to avoid invasion. This caused violence and fraud to become rampant in the kingdom (Zeph 1:9b). The merchants and traders cheated and swindled the humble of the land (Zeph 1:10-11; 2:3). Eventually, Josiah would inaugurate a great religious and social reform to correct these abuses (622 B.C.) but in the meantime the stern reproach of the prophets fell on deaf ears. Zephaniah's prophetic ministry probably occurred during these years of decadence from Josiah's coronation (640 B.C.) to his religious reform (622 B.C.). Scholars place it between the years 635-625 B.C.²⁹

Zephaniah, a prophet of Yahweh, tried to get Judah to reform and return to the worship of Yahweh. In vivid word pictures he painted the description of the punishment which would come upon those who refused conversion.

B. Textual Criticism

Zephaniah 1:2-2:3 must be taken as a single speech which embodies two separate yôm Yahweh oracles (1:7-13, 14-18). Each of these oracles begins with reference to the day of the Lord:

For the day of the Lord is at hand;
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice
and consecrated his guests. (v. 7)

²⁹A. S. Kapelrud, The Message of the Prophet Zephaniah: Morphology and Ideas, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1975, p. 42.

The great day of the Lord is near,
 near and hastening fast;
 The sound of the day of the Lord is
 bitter,
 the mighty man cries aloud there. (v. 14)

Since the first six verses of chapter one set the stage for these two oracles, they must be briefly commented.

After a brief introduction (v. 1) Zephaniah prefaces his first speech with two short oracles of general destruction (vv. 2-3). Both are identical in form. Each begins with the verb "to sweep away (*ʾāsap*)³⁰ and ends with the words "' . . . from the face of the earth, says the Lord.'" This prelude of judgement on all the earth summarizes the whole book which is divided into oracles of judgement against Judah and oracles of judgement against the pagans.³¹ The author believes he has included all the nations of the known world.

Unlike his predecessor Amos, Zephaniah first directs his words of doom against Judah and Jerusalem. Yahweh is angry with their inhabitants: those "who prostrate themselves . . . before the array of heaven," "who swear by Milcom," "who turn aside from Yahweh," "who do not seek Yahweh" and "who will not bother with him" (vv. 4-6). The terminology which the prophet uses to describe Judah's unfaithful conduct is identical to that in Deuteronomy which binds Israel to observe law and remain loyal to the covenant. The words *hiṣṭahawā* ("to worship"),

³⁰F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 62.

³¹Outlined, it looks like this: a) Zeph 1:1-2 - threat of world catastrophe, b) 1:4-2:3 - oracle against Judah, c) 2:4-15 - oracles against the nations.

nīša ("to swear"), sûg ("to turn back"), biggēš ("to seek") and dāraš ("to inquire", "to ask about") are all found in the book of Deuteronomy in relationship to Yahweh's command that Israel remain faithful to him because he has led them into the land of Canaan which he promised to their father Abraham.³² Zephaniah accuses Judah of not remaining faithful to these covenantal promises of loyalty to Yahweh, and of turning away from him to seek other gods as the source of its blessings. For this there is inevitable punishment.

In the legal documents of the ancient Near East, specifically in the suzerainty treaties, the same stipulations of loyalty were demanded of the vassal by the suzerain. "And the Sun, the great king, was ve[ry happy] about . . . that Aziras fell down at the feet of the Sun."³³ ". . . if you remove him from the kingship of Assyria . . . and install another king, another lord over yourselves and swear the oath of loyalty to another king or lord -"³⁴ "Formerly in the time of my father's father, Kissuwadni broke away from Hatti and went over to Harri"³⁵ ". . . if you do not seek the life of Ashurnirari, his sons . . . then may Ashur . . . turn your lands into wastelands . . ."³⁶

³²Kapelrud, op. cit., p. 64.

³³Pritchard, op. cit., p. 529, Par. (i), line 20; p. 533, Par. (iii); D. D. Luckenbill, "Hittite Treaties and Letters", in The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1921, p. 172, No. 2, Text KBo. I, No. 3, lines 21-31.

³⁴Pritchard, op. cit., p. 535, par. 5, line 62. Treaty of Esarhaddon of Assyria with Ramataya, city ruler of Urakazabanu.

³⁵Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 180, No. 4, Text KBo. I, No. 5, lines 5-7.

³⁶Pritchard, op. cit., p. 533, Par. v, lines 6-7.

"... if you do not seek to do what is good for him, if you act wrongly toward him . . ."³⁷

So the demands for exclusive loyalty to one king in political treaties correspond to Israel's concept of a single, exclusive Deity.

The relation between the people of Israel and Yahweh is patterned after the conventional model of the relation between a king and his subjects according to Israel's concept of the kingship of Yahweh.³⁸

Disloyalty means punishment from the king and the yôm Yahweh texts in Zephaniah warn Israel of the consequences she must pay for her breach of the covenant.

The first yôm Yahweh text includes all of verses 7-13. It can be outlined as follows:³⁹

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 1. Announcement of the day of the Lord | - | v. 7 |
| 2. Unit 1 ("on the day") Punishment of the officials and king's sons | - | v. 8 |
| 3. Unit 2 ("On that day . . .") Punishment of those filled with fraud | + | v. 9 |
| 4. Unit 3 ("on that day . . .") Punishment of traders and merchants | - | v. 10-11 |
| 5. Unit 4 (At that time : . .) | | |
| a. Punishment of the overconfident, lazy and unbelievers of Jerusalem | - | v. 12 |
| b. The punishment to be inflicted | - | v. 13 |

Each of the units, by their opening words, refer to the day of the Lord.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 536, Par. 21, line 229.

³⁸ M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 81-91.

³⁹ L. Sabottka, Zephania: Versuch einer Neuübersetzung mit philologischem Kommentar, Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1972. p. 27-29. I will follow basically his outline.

The text starts out:

Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord
is at hand;
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice
and consecrated his guests. (v. 7)

The phrase "Be silent before the Lord God!" in the text heralds that a tremendous act of God is about to take place.

The verb "be silent" (has) is rarely used in the Old Testament. It can be found only seven times and five of those are in the prophetic literature (Jg. 3:19; Neh 8:11; Am 6:10; 8:3; Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7 and Zech 2:13). All the texts suggest the awe and respect one should have in the presence of a person of high position, in this case, Yahweh himself. There is a feeling of the immediate proximity of God either in his word (Jg 3:19; Neh 8:11) or in a theophany in which God is about to perform a mighty deed (all the prophetic texts). Zeph 1:7 is concerned with the solemn moment that precedes and heralds the frightening day of Yahweh.

Zephaniah probably uses the double designation "Lord God" here which he otherwise rarely uses (see 2:7 and 3:17)--to indicate the day's threatening aspect.

Josef Scharbert, in his exegesis of Zephaniah postulates that the phrase "Be silent before the Lord God" was a fixed liturgical call which the prophet quoted and used to introduce the festive celebration of the day of Yahweh.⁴⁰ His theory is based on the assumption that

⁴⁰J. Scharbert, Die Propheten Israels um 600 v. Ch., Köln, J. P. Bachem, 1967, p. 31.

there existed an annual cultic day of Yahweh in Israel on New Year's Day. That there was such an annual celebration in Israel has been disputed and cannot be proven by Biblical texts.⁴¹ It is possible, however, that there was a cultic call "Silence before the Lord God!" at the beginning of Israel's liturgies to stimulate the assembly to an attitude of awe and respect for their God before they celebrated their feasts, offered their sacrifices, or listened to God's word. A vestige of this may be present in Neh. 8:11 where the people are asked to be silent to prepare for Nehemiah's reading of God's Law during the Feast of Tabernacles. Scharbert's suggestion that Zephaniah borrowed the call may be valid, but that the prophet used it in a cultic context in his day of Yahweh text is less probable. It is more likely that he borrowed from his predecessor Amos rather than from the cult. Zephaniah lengthened the cultic call which had been shortened by Amos to "Silence!", but retained Amos' arrangement of the cultic summons into a prophetic oracle of doom. The silence here precedes God's arrival on his day of punishment for Juda and Jerusalem. Habakkuk and Zechariah (Hab 2:20 and Zech 2:12), following Zephaniah, placed the call "Silence before the Lord!" within the context of prophetic judgment and punishment.

Zephaniah used another fixed expression to emphasize the imminence of Yahweh's day of punishment: "For the day of the Lord is at hand!" He repeats it in 1:14 and his successors in the prophetic

⁴¹Supra., p. 25, n. 36.

ministry pick it up and use it in their oracles of doom (Is 13:6, 22; Ez 7:7; 30:3; Jl. 1:15 and Ob 15). J.-G. Heintz contends that the phrase "The day of Yahweh is near" is close to one found in a prophetic text from Mari, "His days are near," which refers to the end of the enemy's days.⁴² He makes the connection in this way: "[la fin des] jours de l'ennemi est proche" est égal à "proche est le jour de [la victoire de] Yahweh."⁴³ He adds that the Sitz im Leben of the prophetic phrase is the holy war as put forth by von Rad.⁴⁴ To see the origin of this exclamation, "For the day of the Lord is at hand," as von Rad contends, in the stereotyped cry with which the troops were summoned to take the field as they went into battle with Yahweh⁴⁵ is to cede to supposition rather than fact. For nowhere in scripture do we find this cry in the context of the holy war in Israel. Even von Rad, in his monumental work on the holy war, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel, does not mention it. He backs up his claim only with a question, "Could it not be possible that this formula is only accidentally missing from the ancient accounts . . . ?"⁴⁶ Many Biblical problems could easily be solved if we added in those things which we thought were "accidentally missing". One must see this term simply for what it is: an announce-

⁴²J.-G. Heintz, "Aux Origines d'une expression biblique: ŪMŪŠŪ QERBŪ. in A. R. M., X/6, 1971, in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1971, p. 528-540.

⁴³Ibid., p. 538.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 539.

⁴⁵G. von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh", in Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1959, p. 108.

⁴⁶Heintz, loc cit.

ment of the nearness of the terrible day of Yahweh.

. . . the Lord has prepared a sacrifice (zēbah)
and consecrated his guests (qarā).
And on the day of the Lord's
sacrifice - (zēbah) (vv. 7b-8a)

Using the image of a sacrificial feast during which the victim is slaughtered and its blood runs over and down the alter, Zephaniah portrays the punishment of guilty Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah paints a more detailed and gory picture in his earlier oracle of doom against Edom:

The Lord has a sword; it is sated
with blood,
it is gorged with fat,
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the Lord has a sacrifice in
Bozrah,
a great slaughter in the land of
Edom.

.
in place of bulls, a race of mighty men.

.
for this is the day of the Lord's
vengeance (Is 34:6-8)

It is interesting to note that Isaiah's sacrificial slaughter of the enemy bears a relationship to a day of the Lord! It is possible that Zephaniah borrowed this image of sacrificial punishment from Isaiah, since it would have been well known to his listeners, but reversed the roles. Juda and Jerusalem probably cheered when Edom was placed on the pyre but when the same fate was assigned to them their delight must have been somewhat dampened. God's chosen people were to

be the victims of slaughter while the nations (consecrated guests) stood by and cheered the destruction.⁴⁷ Into the same context of sacrificial slaughter Jeremiah places Egypt as the victim (Jer 46:10) as later on, Ezekiel puts Gog, the king of Magog, under the blade of the sword (Ez 39:17).⁴⁸

Simply stating that Yahweh will have a day of sacrifice, Zephaniah makes a list of those who deserve punishment: the royal officials, the king's men, the violent, the fraudulent and the merchants' (v. 11).⁴⁹ Repetition of the phrase "on that day" in these verses keeps the attention of the audience on the day of the Lord.⁵⁰ And when that day comes, they are told, the guilty will not be able to escape (cf. Am 5:19). Yahweh will search them out and give them their just punishment (v. 12). And what a punishment it will be!

Their goods shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from
them. (1:13)

Punishment in the form of curses. Curses that are identical to those at the end of the covenant code in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

⁴⁷J. M. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel in International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, C. A. Briggs, et. al., eds., New York, Scribner, 1911, p. 179.

⁴⁸Kapelrud, op. cit., p. 52.

⁴⁹M. Bić, Trois Prophètes dans un Temps de Ténèbres: Sophanie - Nahum - Habacuc, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1968, p. 57.

⁵⁰Kapelrud, op. cit., p. 80.

"But if you break my covenant . . . I will make your cities waste . . . and your lands shall be desolate, and your cities shall be a waste." (Lv 26:15, 31, 33. See also Dt 28:29b, 51-52). The prophet Isaiah had tried to warn Judah of the same impending curse for infidelity to Yahweh (Is 1:7) but she did not repent so Zephaniah repeats it affirming the punishment.

Let us compare the wording of a curse in a vassal treaty of Esarhaddon of Syria to that of the above prophetic curse: ". . . you will be turning over your dwellings to be shattered, your people to be carried off."⁵¹ The inscription on a stele from Sefire contains this malediction: "Whoever will not observe the words of this inscription . . . on any day . . . may the gods overturn th[at m]an and his house and all that (is) in it."⁵²

The last two curses in this section are of a special type of maledictions known as "futility" curses. "Though they build houses, they shall not inherit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them" (1:13b). Hillers describes this type as "consisting of a protasis, which describes the activity, and an apodosis, the frustration of the activity."⁵³ The exact wording of these futility curses used by Zephaniah can be found in the covenantal curse lists (Dt 28:30, 33, 39; Lv 26:16). This form of curse can also be found

⁵¹D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon", in *Iraq*, Vol. 20, Part I, 1958, p. 52, Col. iv, lines 294-295. Also in Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

⁵²Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, p. 21, Stele I, Face C. IX, lines 17, 20, 21, 22.

⁵³Hillers, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

in curses described in Ashurbanipal's annals⁵⁴ and in Sefîre I.⁵⁵ The prophets too, make extensive use of the futility curse in their oracles of doom (Hos 4:10; 5:6; 8:7; 9:12; 16; Am 5:11; Mi 3:4; 6:14-15; Hag 1:6).

From this first yôm Yahweh text in Zephaniah (1:7-13) it is possible to deduce that the prophet employed ideas and expressions which he borrowed from ancient Near Eastern treaties to compose his threats of doom against Judah and Jerusalem. Most striking is the similarity of the curse language in both. In addition to these literary sources, Zephaniah used the Mosaic covenant and previous prophetic doom oracles.

The second yôm Yahweh text in Zephaniah (1:14-18) resembles the first one in its introductory phrase but then it flows into a lengthy list of curses seen as punishment for those who have sinned against Yahweh (v. 17) to be administered on the day of the Lord.

The inaugural cry heralds the imminent coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord:

The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast (v. 14)

The adjective great (gadôl) already adds a new dimension to the day: a sense of importance, an aura of the spectacular. It will be an event unparalleled in the history of God's mighty deeds and its

⁵⁴Pritchard, op. cit., p. 300, col. (ix)

⁵⁵Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 15, Stele I, Face A, III, lines 21-25. Cf. p. 81, Stele II, Face A, lines 1-4.

advent is rapidly approaching. There is little time left to prepare for it. Those who have not repented must bear the whole brunt of its devastation. God's judgment has been handed out and nothing can stop the punishment which is upon the guilty now.

. . . the sound (gôl) of the day of the Lord is
bitter (mar),

The mighty man (gibbôr) cries aloud there: (v. 14b)

Who is the gibbôr in this text? The word can be translated as "great man," "warrior" or "hero." Perhaps he is the strong, brave warrior of the army whose feats in battle prove him almost invincible. Yet, when Yahweh comes on his day to punish, not even this "Titan" will be able to withstand the power of his wrath. It will be a bitter sound to hear the gibbôr cry with fear and anguish in defeat before the Lord.

But could the gibbôr not also be Yahweh, the divine warrior who comes to wage war against his unfaithful people? Yahweh as war God was not an unknown concept in Israel's history and religion.⁵⁶ The only other time that Zephaniah uses the word gibbôr specifically refers to Yahweh (Zeph 3:17; see also Is 15:3; 42:12 and Ps 24:8). C. H. Gordon, and others who have followed his translation, has demonstrated that mar can also mean "great" or "mighty" as well as "bitter."⁵⁷

⁵⁶p. C. Craigie, "Yahweh is a Man of Wars", in The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1969, p. 183-188; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult", in Biblical Motifs, A. Altmann, ed., Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 11-30; P. D. Miller, "God the Warrior," in Interpretation, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1965, p. 39-46; G. E. Wright, "God the Warrior", in The Old Testament and Theology, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 121-150.

⁵⁷C. H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1965, Par. 10.1556; M. Dahood, Psalms III: 101-150, Garden City, Doubleday, 1970, p. 21-22, 75; Sabottka, op. cit., p. 52.

To borrow this translation and apply it to the sound of the day of the Lord emphasizes even more dramatically the greatness of the day. Great is Yahweh the warrior; great will be the noise of the battle and great will be the destruction the day will bring. Zephaniah's description of the day in the verses which follow bears out this hypothesis.

Even though there are strong elements of war in this passage we cannot conclude with von Rad that the concept of the day of the Lord encompasses a pure event of war, or that the Sitz-im-Leben of the day is the holy war in Israel's history.⁵⁸ In this context the battle is identical to that waged by an angry suzerain against a vassal who has broken one or more of the treaty stipulations between them. To punish his vassal and bring him back into subjugation, the great king attacks the royal city of the vassal. The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic tells of the treason of the vassal king Kaštiliaš, ruler of the Kassites against the great king of Assyria who vows punishment in the form of war.⁵⁹

Il n'y aura pas de paix sans bataille, avant que
le combat ne [soit fini], jusqu'à ce que j'ai monté
ton insolence sur ton dos . . .

From Mari comes this letter containing a threat of invasion from Iarîm-Lim king of Aleppo to an erring vassal king, Iašûb-Iaḥad of Dîr.⁶⁰

⁵⁸von Rad, op. cit., p. 97-108.

⁵⁹J. Harvey, Le Plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la Rupture de l'Alliance: Étude d'une Formule littéraire de l'ancien Testament, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1967, p. 170.

⁶⁰G. Dossin, "Un Lettre de Iarîm-Lim, Roi d'Alep, a Iašûb-Iaḥad, Roi de Dîr", in Syria, Vol. 33, No. 1, p. 67, line 30.

Maintenant, à l'approche du printemps, je viendrai, et
je m' avancerai par la baie de ta porte d' enceinte. Je
te ferai voir les armes amères du (dieu) et de Iarim-Lim.

In each case a messenger is sent to the erring king to inform him of his infractions and warn him that invasion is imminent. Interestingly, J. Harvey believes the prophets play the rôle of royal messenger sent by the Sovereign Lord Yahweh to his wayward vassal, Israel.⁶¹ Yahweh, the overlord, leads his army to battle Israel who has been found guilty of breaking the covenant. What a devastating day of Yahweh it will be!

A day of wrath is that day
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements. (vv. 15-16)

It will be a day of anger. Yahweh is a jealous God and is angry with Judah and Jerusalem who have gone after other gods forgetting the covenant which they made with him in the desert: "You shall have no gods except me" (Dt 5:7). Yahweh had warned them he would not tolerate the men and women who turned away from him (Dt 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:17-28; 31:17; 32:21-22).

In the international treaties as well, the anger of the suzerain blazes up against the vassal who has revolted and made an alliance with another king or who has, on his own, tried to harass and invade smaller nations, forcing them to submit to vassalage so he can establish his own suzerainty. Again in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic we

⁶¹J. Harvey, "Le 'Rib-Pattern', Réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l' alliance", in Biblica, Vol. 43, Fasc 2, 1962, p. 193-194.

read of the anger of the king of Hatti against the insubordination of the Kassite vassal: "Today are we wrath as an honest man whose [property] a footpad has despoil'd."⁶² The historical introduction in the treaty between Mursilis of Hatti and Duppi-Tessub of Amurru describes the loyalty of the grandfather of Duppi-Tessub who did not anger the father of Mursilis by rebelling.⁶³ Mursilis, of course, is trying to retain the loyalty of the present king of Amurru by praising the loyalty of his grandfather and father and the favors which the king bestowed on them because of their loyalty. In the last two paragraphs of the treaty are written the curses to come upon Duppi-Tessub, if he angers the king of Hatti and the blessings if he remains loyal.⁶⁴ Another such treaty with punishments for the vassal who angers the great king is between Hattushili of Hatti and Ramses II of Egypt.⁶⁵ Carved on boundary stones and memorial tablets found in Assyria and Babylon are the curses which the angry gods will heap upon the head of whomsoever disturbs the stelae.⁶⁶

So far, Zephaniah's image of Yahweh coming as an angry warrior to punish the rebellious inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem seems to be borrowed more from an ancient Near Eastern legal and Israelite covenantal tradition than from the institution of the holy war.

⁶²Thompson and Mallowan; op. cit., p. 124, Col. IV, line 14.

⁶³Pritchard, op. cit., p. 203, Par. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 202, Pars. 20-21.

⁶⁵Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 191, No. 6. Text KBo. I, Nos 7 and 25, Obverse, line 30.

⁶⁶King, op. cit., p. 17, Col VI, lines 1-2.

Each of the curses which follow describes an aspect of the war: distress and anguish, ruin and devastation, darkness and gloom, clouds and thick darkness, trumpet blast and battle cry.

The first two curses are against the inhabitants of the city, that is, against the very person of the transgressors: distress (šarāh) and anguish (mešûqāh). They could refer to the bodily injury inflicted upon the transgressors by the invasion, or to the suffering which will overtake them as they watch their holy city and promised land reduced to ashes. Either way, the punishment will be great. It is possible that both are intended; this would reflect the influence of the military curses in Dt 28:53, 55, 57. The same type of curse can be found in an Egyptian/Hittite treaty. It asks that the gods bring misery and poverty to the contracting party who does not fulfill the terms of the contract.⁶⁷

The next set of parallel curses inaugurates maledictions against the property of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem: cities and land will be laid in ruin (šo'āh) and devastation (mešo'āh). These are two of the more popular curses that one wished on his enemy. Yahweh warns Israel he will destroy the land which he gave them if they are not loyal to the covenant. "And I will lay your cities waste . . . " (Lv 26:31); And I will devastate the land . . . " (Lv 26:32): "They will besiege you in all the towns that Yahweh has given you." (Dt 28:52) Earlier, Isaiah had asked Yahweh how long Israel would "hear and not hear, see and not see," and received this reply: "Until her cities

⁶⁷Pritchard, op. cit., p. 206.

lie in ruin without inhabitants and the houses without men in the land utterly desolate" (Is 6:11). This then was to be the fate of the people of unclean lips.

Parallel curses can be found in Assyrian and Hittite treaties and Assyrian and Sumerian memorial tablets. ". . . then may Ashur . . . turn your land into wasteland, your people into . . . , your cities into ruin mounds; your house into ruins."⁶⁸ "May Adad blast his land with a destructive bolt. . . ."⁶⁹ "May Mîlqart and Eshmun deliver your land to destruction, your people to be deported."⁷⁰ ". . . que Nanna, mon maître, (et) Ningel, ma maîtresse, règlent son sort! qu'ils réduisent sa ville en ruines."⁷¹ ". . . the land may it be devastated and uprooted."⁷²

The smoke from the burning cities and land and the dust from the advancing army and fleeing survivors cover the sky with darkness (hošek), gloom (ʾāphēlāh), clouds (ʿānān) and thick darkness (ʿārāphēl). Zephaniah takes up the image of darkness from Amos and adds ʾāphēlāh to intensify the gloom and darkness, although set here in a military context, ʾāphēlāh is primarily employed in the Old Testament as a curse coming from Yahweh (Ex 10:22; Dt 28:29; Is 8:22; 58:10; Jer 23:12; Jl 2:2; Prov 4:19). Also ʿānān and ʿārāphēl usually have

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 533, Col. V, lines 6-7.

⁶⁹Budge and King, op. cit., p. 108, Col. VIII, lines 83-84.

⁷⁰Pritchard, op. cit., p. 534, Col. IV.

⁷¹Sollberger, op. cit., p. 185, IV B 6a (V 21-VI 29).

⁷²Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 175, No. 2, Text KBo. 1, No. 3, Reverse, line 16.

nothing to do with war, holy or unholy, but rather describe a theophany of Yahweh (Ex 16:10; 19:16; 20:21; Dt 4:11). The tripartite image of war, curse, and theophany in this text emphatically illustrates that the darkness and gloom caused by the smoke rising from the ruins result from the carrying out of the covenant curses upon Judah and Jerusalem for their infidelity by Yahweh himself, on his day.

The actual attack of the city is described: "against fortified cities" (ʿal haʿārīm habbešurôt) and "against lofty battlements" (weʿal happinnôt haggēbōhôt). The storming of the walls is preceded by two familiar ancient battle customs which give the signal for the troops to attack: the blowing of the šōpār and the cry of the terūʿāh.⁷³ The šōpār is a ram's horn blown to muster the troops as well as the signal to attack the enemy (Jos 6:4-20; Jdg 3:27; 6:34; 7:18-20). The terūʿāh is a battle cry yelled as loudly as possible by the soldiers to put fear into the hearts of the enemy and to make them think a large army is attacking. The city walls of Jerusalem considered impregnable by her inhabitants will fall before the Divine Warrior, Yahweh, who will come in anger and justice.

This concludes the "Battle Hymn" of the day of Yahweh. The poem describes the military punishment of Judah and Jerusalem by Yahweh for a breach of the covenant in the same language found in the Deuteronomic Code and the ancient Near Eastern legal treaties. But war is only one of the descriptions of the day of Yahweh. The text continues:

⁷³von Rad, Der heilige Krieg, op. cit., p. 6, 11. P. Humbert, Le "terou'ah": Analyse d'un Rite biblique, Neuchâtel, Secrétariat de l'Université, 1946, 48. p.

I will bring distress on men,
 so they will walk like the
 blind,
 because they have sinned against
 the Lord;
 their blood shall be poured out like
 dust,
 and their flesh like dung. (v. 17)

We are suddenly no longer in the context of war but in that of general curse language relating to infractions of a legal treaty or boundary stone. The curses of distress (šārar) and blindness (ʿiwārôn) have both been dealt with above, and will therefore not be repeated here.

The word "sin" (ḥāṭā) literally means "to miss the mark" in Hebrew.⁷⁴ In Akkadian it is a common technical term for rebellion. Hezekiah's use of ḥāṭā in 2 K 18:4 contains the idea of rebellion against his Assyrian overlord (Cf. I S 24:10 and Jg 11:27). J. Pedersen contends that the core of sin is a breach of the covenant.⁷⁵ Yahweh warns Israel: "I will set myself against you in fury and punish you sevenfold for your sins" (Lv. 26:28), if she does not remain faithful to the covenant which he gave to her.

When a vassal broke the stipulations of an international treaty he was considered to have sinned against the overlord and was liable to punishment. The various terms used can be summarized as follows:

⁷⁴E. Maly, Sin: Biblical Perspectives, Dayton, Pflaum, 1973, p. 9-15; G. Quell, "Hamartano", in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. I, G. Kittel, ed., Grand Rapids, Eerdmann, 1964, p. 271-272.

⁷⁵J. Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture, Vols. I-II, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 415.

"Si un de tes descendants pêche, que le roi de Hatti le traduise à son tribunal."⁷⁶ "If Mati'ilu sins against this treaty with Ashurnirari, king of Assyria, may . . . "⁷⁷ "If you sin against the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal . . . "⁷⁸ "The Harri sinned against Hatti and against Kissuwadni greatly he sinned."⁷⁹ ". . . the people of Halab sinned against Hattushili, the king of Hatti, thus committed sin."⁸⁰ ". . . the king of Hatti is angered against his servants because they have sinned against him . . . "⁸¹

Judah sinned against Yahweh. She turned from her God and made alliances with other gods forgetting the oath she had made when she promised to obey the stipulations of the covenant. Those who acted in this way would have their blood poured out on the ground. As blood is the life of a living being, to shed another's blood was to take his life (Lv 17:11, 14). To wish a person dead was to call upon the gods (or Yahweh) to pour his blood out on the ground. It is this type of curse that we have here in Zephaniah, ". . . their blood shall be poured out like dust." Elijah pronounces King Ahab's punishment for

⁷⁶E. Cavaignac, "Dadasa-Dattassa", in Revue Hittite et Asiatique, Vol. 2, No. 10, 1933, p. 68, line 9.

⁷⁷Pritchard, op. cit., p. 533 (v), Par. 8.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 535, Par. 9, line 101.

⁷⁹Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 181, No. 4, Text KBo. I, No. 5, Obverse, Col. I, lines 30-33.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 189, No. 5, Text KBo, I, No. 6, Obverse, lines 25-27.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 191, No. 6, Text KBo, I, Nos. 7 and 25, Obverse, line 30.

taking Naboth's vineyard in the form of a simile curse, ". . . in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick your blood, too." (I K 21:19). In effect, Ahab is killed and his blood poured out in such profusion that not only do the dogs lick it but the prostitutes wash in it (I K 22:35; 38). In an oracle against Edom, the arch enemy of Judah, Isaiah calls down this oath on them for their treacherous abuse of God's chosen people, ". . . the mountains shall flow with their blood . . ." and "Their land shall be soaked with blood" (Is 34:3, 7). Two of the curses in the long curse list at the end of the treaty between Esarhaddon of Assyria and Ramataya of Urakazabanu pertain to the shedding of blood. "May Ishtar . . . into your hearts, so that your blood dribbles down to the ground like rain." "Just as this chariot is spattered with blood up to its running board, so may they spatter your chariots in the midst of your enemy with your own blood."⁸² In conjunction with this, a badly broken stone tablet was found with part of a treaty between Šamsi-Adads V of Assyria and Marduk-zâkir-šumi I of Babylon in the excavations from Kujundschik. What has been preserved is the section containing the curses. One such curse reads: ". . . sein Leben möge er wie Wasser ausgiessen, . . ."⁸³ Keeping in mind that blood is the life of the person, this curse can easily be transposed: ". . . may his blood be poured out like water."

⁸²Pritchard, op. cit., p. 539, Par. 55, line 469 and p. 540 Par. 90, line 612.

⁸³E. Weidner, "Der Vertrag Šamsi-Adads V mit Marduk-zâkir-šumi I", in Archiv für Orientforschung, Vol. 8, 1932-33, p. 29, line 18.

The next curse, ". . . and their flesh-(poured out) like dung," refers to one of the most horrible fates that could befall ancient Near Eastern man--not to have a decent burial. To have parts of one's dead body scattered as dung over a field is to be easy prey for the birds and animals. If the corpse is devoured by these predators it is, of course, not properly buried nor can the nepeš find its rest. Such was the destiny of Jezebel (2K 9:36-37) as described in Deuteronomic curse terminology.⁸⁴ The author of Psalm 83 pleads with Yahweh to destroy his enemies as of old he did Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River where their bodies served as dung for the ground (vv. 9-10). This threat is also uttered by the prophet Jeremiah over both Judah (8:2; 16:4; 9:21) and the nations (25:33) indiscriminately. In the article, in which he shows parallel trends between Near Eastern treaty curses and prophetic maledictions, Charles Fensham has a section entitled, "The corpse of the transgressor will be exposed."⁸⁵ He cites examples from international treaties, kudurru-stones, prophetic curses and other Old Testament maledictions directed against a proper burial or a peaceful rest for the transgressor. Delbert Hillers, in his monumental book on treaty curses and parallel prophetic curses, declares that this common Old Testament curse, typical in Deuteronomy 28:26, is stereotyped in its three ideas of the body left unburied, as food for the birds and beasts, and refuse on the ground.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 349; Hillers, op. cit., p. 69.

⁸⁵Fensham, "Common Trends", op. cit., p. 161-163.

⁸⁶Hillers, op. cit., p. 68-69.

The resemblance of the yōm Yahweh curse terminology in Zephaniah to other Old Testament Deuteronomic and prophetic texts and to the legal codes of the ancient Near Eastern world tends to support the theory that the origin of the concept of the day of the Lord lies in a legal rather than a holy war or cultic context.

Neither their silver nor their gold
shall be able to deliver them
on the day of the wrath of the
Lord. (v. 18a)

The day of the Lord is once again mentioned in this text with emphasis on the wrath of Yahweh which will flame out against his people because they chose other gods rather than their God of the covenant. The silver (kesep) and gold (zahāb) probably allude to the silver and golden idols to whom Judah had been paying homage (Cf. Is 2:20; 30:22; 31:7; 40:19; 46:6; Ez 7:19f; 16:17; Hos 2:10b). When Yahweh comes in his anger and fury to inflict punishment on an unfaithful people, not even these idols will be able to save them.

In the fire of his jealous wrath,
all the earth shall be consumed;
for a full, yea, sudden end
he will make of all the inhabitants
of the earth. (v. 18b)

Zephaniah returns to the universal theme with which he began this speech (vv. 2-3). He has warned Judah that her breach of the covenant means punishment and now he addresses his words to the nations. The fire of God's anger will destroy Philistia, Moab, Amon, Egypt and Assyria "because they laughed at my people" (Zeph 2:8). These verses serve as an introduction to the oracles against the nations which follow (2:4-15).

There is a problem with Zeph 2:1-3; these verses are out of place between the introduction of the oracles against the nations (v. 18b) and the oracles themselves (2:4-15). They call Judah to repentance⁸⁷ and therefore should come directly after the second yôm Yahweh text, that is, after 18a. This would put 18b where it belongs, just before the oracles against the nations which it introduces.

Zephaniah 2:1-3 is not a yôm Yahweh text but will be dealt with here briefly in connection to the day of the Lord oracles. Judah has proven unfaithful to the covenant and the curses of the covenant are about to fall upon her as Yahweh comes on the day of his wrath. Zephaniah's oracle of repentance gives a ray of hope: a few may be saved if they seek Yahweh and turn back in obedience to Yahweh and his law. There is a chance to avoid the punishment but they must repent of their rebellious ways (Cf. Dt 30:2-3). This action resembles that threatened in the type of legal letter which an overlord would send an insurgent vassal giving him a chance to repent and return in submission to his former master. The form is always the same: a listing of the vassal's deeds of misconduct, a threat to send troops if he continues in his sin, a promise to hold back the army if he once again swears allegiance to the overlord.⁸⁸ Zephaniah follows this same form in his speech containing the yôm Yahweh texts (1:2-2:3). Unfaithful

⁸⁷Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 206 believes that these verses go along with the oracle against Philistia.

⁸⁸J. Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 170-174; Thompson and Hutchison, *op. cit.*, p. 131-133; Thompson and Mallowan, *op. cit.*, p. 121-127. J. Blenkinsopp, "The Prophetic Reproach", in *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 90, No. 2, 1971, p. 267-278.

Judah, threat of punishment in the form of curses and then assurance, of salvation if she returned to Yahweh.

In summary we can say that the prophet Zephaniah, like his predecessor Amos, conceived the day of the Lord as the time in which curses would come true for Yahweh's enemies, in this case, Judah and Jerusalem. Using the form and language of the international treaties and legal codes and Judah's own Deuteronomic Code, the prophet warned his compatriots of the impending destruction to be inflicted by Yahweh's anger because of their disloyalty to his covenant.

III. EZEKIEL 13:1-16

A. Historical Background

The prophetic activity of the prophet Ezekiel between 593-571 B.C. can be determined from his book itself. He received his prophetic call in Babylon (1:1-3) where he had been taken off in exile during the first deportation of Judah (597 B.C.).⁸⁹ King Jehoiachin had also been deported at this time and the latter's uncle, Zedekiah, was reigning in his stead in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's last oracles were pronounced during the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, in 585 B.C. (Ez 29:17).

Chapter 13, which includes the yôm Yahweh text in which we are interested, is part of the long section of Ezekiel's book containing

⁸⁹C. G. Howie, The Date and Composition of Ezekiel, in JBL Monograph Series, Vol. IV, Philadelphia, Society of Biblical Literature, 1960.

the oracles aimed explicitly at Judah and Jerusalem before the siege of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. (Chs. 4-24).⁹⁰ The decade between 597 B.C. and 587 B.C. was a time of crisis for Jerusalem. After the death of Josiah, idolatry and pagan practices were reintroduced into Jerusalem and Judah (Ez 6:3ff). Even among the priests and in the Temple the abominable worship of false gods was carried on (Ez 8:5ff). Associated with this unfaithfulness to Yahweh was a worldly and superstitious confidence that Yahweh would protect his city and its inhabitants during the uncertainties of the times. King Zedekiah was a weak and vacillating ruler who fluttered like a butterfly between the two dominating empires of the time: Babylon and Egypt. Babylon was the stronger and each time Judah broke away from Babylon to pledge allegiance to Egypt there always arose the threat of retaliation by Babylon hanging over the city of Jerusalem. One can understand, therefore, that under such circumstances prophets who foretold future peace, good times and upheld the invincibility of Jerusalem, - in other words, the prophets of peace - were welcomed. With dark days at hand and an uncertain future to boot, most people liked to be reassured that better times were just around the corner. It is with these "false prophets," these

⁹⁰The date of Ezekiel is difficult to determine and there are some authors who feel that it is a judgment in retrospect referring to the past destruction of Jerusalem, thus dating it after 587 B.C. This is the thinking of A. J. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh," in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 93, No. 3, 1974, p. 331-332 and von Rad, "The Origin," op. cit., p. 106.

prophets of peace, that Ezekiel will come into conflict.⁹¹ Criticism of false prophets is not new with Ezekiel or his prophetic predecessors (Am 7:14; Is 28:7ff; 30:10f; Mi 2:11; 3:5-7). Jeremiah's stand against false prophets forms a conspicuous feature in his oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (Jer 5:31; 6:13f; 8:10f; 14:13-16; 23:9-40; 27:9-10; 16-18, 28).

Chapter 13 of Ezechiel is broken up into two distinct oracles: one against false prophets, the other against false prophetesses.⁹² It is only the first oracle that contains the yôm Yahweh text.

B. Textual Criticism.

As it stands, Ezechiel 13:1-16 is full of inconsistencies, irregularities of style, abrupt changes in address (from second to third person), strange repetitions in the phraseology, and contradictions in thought.⁹³ Much dividing and subdividing has been done by the

⁹¹Most scholars would agree that the false prophets to whom Ezekiel is speaking are those in Jerusalem, although we do know that there were false prophets in Babylon also (Jer 29:8-9).

⁹²W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary. Westminster, SCM Press, 1970, p. 162 sees a close resemblance in structure in both these oracles: 1) both have similar introductions (vv. 2 and 17); 2) they are connected by a title common to both (v. 1); 3) each of the main sections are divided into two subsections: prophets (vv. 1-9, 10-16) and prophetesses (vv. 17-21, 22-23); 4) each subsection shows the same threefold structure and serves the same object of making Yahweh known.

⁹³Everson, op. cit., p. 332, note 2.

commentators.⁹⁴ It is composed from a collection of oracles by the redactor, with each oracle possibly originating from the prophet Ezekiel himself. There are definitely two distinct oracles intertwined, both of them against false prophets. One is in the second person (vv. 2a, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15b) and one in the third person (vv. 2b, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10-12, 15a, 16) as A. Bertholet points out.⁹⁵

As the edited text stands, it is possible to accept a second division, as suggested by J. Blenkinsopp.⁹⁶ He cuts the text into two parts: part one, vv. 1-9; part two, vv. 10-16. Each part follows the schema of a judgement reproach so well known in the prophetic literature (Jer 6:9-12, 16-19; 8:4-12; 5:11-17; 19:3-9 and Ez 35:3-9) and in the suzerain treaties.

⁹⁴A. Bertholet, Hesekiel, in Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Vol. 13, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1936, p. 47-49 divides vv. 1-16 into two parts: A includes vv. 2a, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15b and part B has vv. 2b, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15a, 16; G. Fohrer, Ezekiel, Vol. 13 of Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1955, p. 68-72 sees vv. 10-16 as a separate unity but divides vv. 1-9 into two units: (1, 2, 5 and 7-8) and 3, 4 and 6, 9). Each of these units is designated as Schelt- and Drohwort combinations. G. A. Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, in The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1951, p. 137-138, following Rothstein, divides the verses into two units: (vv. 2, 7, 8, 10, 12-16) and (vv. 3, 5, 6, 9), W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, in Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, Vol. 13, Neukirchen, Kries Moers, 1969, p. 281-293 divides vv. 1-16 into two units (vv. 1-9 and vv. 10-16) but sees verses 4, 6, and 7b as later additions to the original text of vv. 1-9. K. Carley, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, in The Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge, University Press, 1974, p. 80 has vv. 1-16 as a unit but vv. 4, 6, 9 he claims were not part of the original. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 162-168 divides the chapter into only two sections: vv. 1-9 and vv. 10-16.

⁹⁵Bertholet, op. cit., p. 47-49.

⁹⁶Blenkinsopp, op. cit., p. 269.

Part I vv. 1-9

- a. Messenger formula, kōh 'āmar Yahweh (v. 3)
- b. Accusation in form of a question (vv. 4-7)
- c. Therefore, lākēn, kōh 'āmar Yahweh (v. 8)
- d. Punishment (v. 9)

Part II vv. 10-16

- a. Messenger formula kōh 'āmar Yahweh
(The messenger formula in v. 3 is used for both parts. The author does the same thing in the two oracles against the prophetesses by using the one messenger formula of v. 18 for the two).
- b. Accusation (vv. 10-12)
- c. Therefore, lākēn, kōh 'āmar Yahweh (v. 13)
- d. Punishment (vv. 14-16).

The prophet Ezekiel functions as a royal messenger representing Yahweh, "le souverain lointain"⁹⁷ who admonishes a segment of the religious leaders of Judah, the prophets, for failing to proclaim his word to the people. These "false prophets" deceive the people by preaching peace when there is no peace. They are, however, genuine Israelite prophets who have at one time in their lives received a call from Yahweh to prophesy on behalf of the people of God. Their duty, as messengers of Yahweh, is to faithfully transmit the message they have received from God. But they have become false prophets because they go beyond their commission "and give a message directed by their own insight or caprice, without waiting to receive a vision."⁹⁸ Thus their messages become only "deceiving visions and lying oracles" (Ez 13:6-7; Jer 14:14; 23:26-27). Most of the prophetic denuncia-

⁹⁷Harvey, Le Plaidoyer, op. cit., p. 147.

⁹⁸Eichrodt, Ezekiel, op. cit., p. 162.

tions of these "traitors of the profession" include other groups of the Israelite community who have also turned away from relying on God's word to listen to the dictates of their own hearts and their impulsive whims: princes, priests, idolaters, merchants and land owners (Am 7:14; Is 28:7-10; 30:10-13; Mi 2:11; Jer 5:30-31; 6:13-14; 8:10-11; 20:6). Prophets such as Micah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel reserve a few choice words just for these "proclaimers of peace when there is no peace" (Mi 3:5-7; Jer 14:13-15; 23:9-32; Ez 13:1-19). The fourfold juridical form discussed above can be seen especially in Mi 3:5-7 and Jer 14:13-15.

From the Mari archives comes this letter of Iarîm-Lim, king of Alep sent to Yasub-Yahed, king of Dir accusing him of transgressing the treaty between the two monarchs.⁹⁹ The structure of the letter is the same as we have seen: 1) messenger formula "...ainsi (parle) Iarîm-Lim" (lines 1-4), 2) accusations against Yasub-Yahed before Shamâs with a historical recitation (lines 5-27), 3) "Jé te jure . . ." as introduction to the punishment (line 27) and 4) the proclamation of the punishment which will be by way of combat in the spring (lines 27-33).

Ezekiel has borrowed from this juridical form to accuse the false prophets and warn them of impending punishment. And it is with in this form that he announces the day of the Lord.

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man prophesy against the prophets of Israel, prophesy and say to those who prophesy out of their own minds: 'Hear the word of the Lord!' Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

⁹⁹Dossin, op. cit., p. 66-67.

Your prophets have been like foxes among ruins,
 O Israel! You have not gone up into breaches,
 or built up a wall for the house of Israel,
 that it might stand in battle in the day of the
 Lord. They have spoken falsehood and divined a
 lie; they say, 'Says the Lord,' when the Lord
 has not sent them, and yet they expect him to
 fulfill their word. Have you not seen a
 delusive vision, and uttered a lying divination,
 whenever you have said, 'Says the Lord,'
 although I have not spoken?" Therefore, thus
 says the Lord God: "Because you have uttered
 delusions and seen lies, therefore, behold, I
 am against you, says the Lord God. My hand
 will be against the prophets who see delusive
 visions and who give lying divinations; they
 shall not be in the council of my people, nor
 be enrolled in the register of the house of
 Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel,
 and you shall know that I am the Lord God."
 (Ex 13:1-9)

Ezekiel begins with the messenger formula, "Thus says Yahweh," right away to establish the origin of the oracle. It is God's word in contrast to the empty visions and lying prophecy of the prophets whom he is accusing. The main accusation against the false prophets is their failure to prepare and warn Israel against the impending doom of punishment and destruction. The responsibility of a prophet as "sentry of Israel" is a demanding one (Ez 3:16-21; 33:1-9). To shirk this duty, for whatever reason, is to incur the wrath of Yahweh and its drastic consequences.

There is no description of the day of the Lord in this first oracle, but it is presented as an imminent day of punishment which could have been avoided if the prophets had not misled the people with lies and illusions. In two parable-like images, Ezekiel describes the irresponsible and lackadaisical manner of these prophets, the "conscience of Israel," who should have been using every means at their

disposal to call Israel to repentance, to a return to the observance of the covenant, and thereby ward off the judgment that was coming. But instead, like foxes who make their nests among the ruins of a city (cf. Lam 5:18; Neh 4:3) they felt perfectly at ease while the religious, moral and political fiber of Jerusalem rotted away becoming ripe for the invasion of all kinds of scavengers, threatening even the safe holes of the "jackals."

If the destruction of the day of Yahweh threatened the already tottering walls of Jerusalem, full of the gaps of sin, indifference and false security, it wouldn't take much to breach them. It was the duty of the prophets to have realized the danger and prevented it by helping to fill in the gaps and solidify the walls, that is, by making people aware of their sins and weaknesses vis-à-vis Yahweh. Even though Ezekiel uses military language here in reference to the siege of a city, he is not necessarily envisioning the invasion of an outside country such as the capture of Jerusalem by Babylon. It is Yahweh himself, on the day of the Lord, who will breach the wall, invade the city, and bring about its ruin along with the slaughter of its inhabitants.

The prophets, too, had turned away from Yahweh. Rather than proclaim God's word which was not pleasant to hear, they created optimism by preaching words of peace when there was no peace. They sought to become persons of great importance and influence in the community, to be hailed as harbingers of victory while in reality they lined their pockets with hypocritical gold. Their punishment would be extinction and exile: "My hand will be against the prophets who see delusive visions and who give lying divinations; they shall

not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel" (Ez 13:9). These maledictions echo curses of the Deuteronomic covenant:

Lest there be one who when he hears the words of this sworn covenant blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart' . . . the Lord would not pardon him, but rather the anger of the Lord and his jealousy would smoke against that man, and the curses written in his book would settle upon him, and the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven. (Dt 29:19-20)

. . . and the Lord uprooted them from their land, in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as at this day. (Dt. 29:28)

The covenant which they failed to keep would no longer keep them! Curses, not blessings, would be their destiny.

To have one's name remembered among the living was the only way a man could be assured of immortality after his death. His name, in his posterity, so to speak, kept him "alive." To be deprived of this blessing meant annihilation and oblivion. (Cf. Jer 11:19; Nah 1:14). Words to the same effect occur in an Egyptian treaty from the thirteenth dynasty: "He shall not live who is hostile to me; he shall not breathe the air who revolts against me; his name shall not be among the living . . ." ¹⁰⁰ A Syrian treaty from 1350 B.C. wishes this upon the transgressor: "Whoever transgresses these agreements, Adad . . . and Shamash, the Lord of judgment, Sin, and the great gods

¹⁰⁰J. H. Breasted, ed., Ancient Records of Egypt; Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest, Vol. I, Chicago, University Press, 1906, p. 336 and 765, lines 36-37.

will make him perish, will make disappear his name and (his) descendants from the lands."¹⁰¹ Also from Hittite treaties: "May they exterminate from the earth your name and your seed."¹⁰² "And thou, Mattiaza, together with thy land, (like) a tablet laid aside, not sent, from the midst of Harri, shall (thy) name perish."¹⁰³ The treaty of Esarhaddon of Assyria states: "Just as a mule has no offspring, may your name, offspring and descendants disappear from the land."¹⁰⁴ A Babylonian memorial tablet curse reads: "His name, his seed, his offspring, (and) his posterity may they destroy in the mouth of widespread peoples."¹⁰⁵

Exile was equally dreaded as a curse by Israel for several reasons. Canaan was the promised land given to Abraham and his descendants by Yahweh. To live in a foreign land was to reject that gift. After the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, especially during the reign of David, Yahweh became the God of the land of Israel and the concept germinated that only in Israel could he be worshipped and adored. Exile also meant living among the pagans, an unclean people. A covenant warning was there for them (Dt 28:36, 41, 63-65; Lv 26:33-34, 39) and only obedience to God's law could guarantee a perpetual inhabitation of the Land. But the prophets had gone against

¹⁰¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 532, line 77.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁰³Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 170, No. 1, Text KBo. I, Nos. 1 and 2, Reverse, lines 54-69 and 30-37.

¹⁰⁴Pritchard, op. cit., p. 539, Par 66, line 537.

¹⁰⁵King, op. cit., p. 42, Col. III, lines 38-39.

that law and Ezekiel warns them of the consequences.

The practice of removing conquered peoples on a large scale was common in the ancient Near East, but the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727) was the first to resettle peoples in different parts of his empire. The curse of the exile, interestingly, comes mainly from Assyrian treaties. ".Mati'ilu, together with his sons, daughters, officials, and the people of his land (will be ousted) from his country, will not return to his country, and behold his country again."¹⁰⁶ "May Melqart and Eshmun deliver your land to destruction, your people to be deported."¹⁰⁷ "Keep this treaty, do not sin against this treaty with you, lest you lose your lives, deliver your land to destruction, and your people to be deported."¹⁰⁸ In the curse list of the Code of Hammurabi is found mention of exile as a punishment, "May he order by his forceful word the destruction of his city, the dispersion of his people . . ."¹⁰⁹ and "and may they carry him away in bonds to a land hostile to him."¹¹⁰

The conclusion from the study of this text is that the origin and background of this yôm Yahweh oracle in Ezekiel is in the juridical institutions of the covenant and ancient Near Eastern curse lists, especially vassal-treaties and their terminology. The purpose of the oracle is to warn the false prophets about the curses of the covenant,

¹⁰⁶Pritchard, op. cit., p. 532, Par. (i), line 10.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 534, Par (iv).

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 537, Par. 25, line 283.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 179, Reverse, Par. XXVI, line 80.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 180, Reverse, Par XXVIII, line 10.

especially those of extinction and exile, because of their breach of the covenant.

The second part of the oracle against the false prophets, Ez 13:10-16; also condemns them for preaching false hope and declares that the same calamities that are to overtake Israel will touch them as well.

Because, yea, because they have misled my people, saying, 'Peace' when there is no peace; and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets daub it with white wash; say to those who daub it with white wash that it shall fall! There will be a deluge of rain, great hailstones will fall, and a stormy wind break out; and when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, 'Where is the daubing with which you daubed it?' Therefore, thus says the Lord God: 'I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath; and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to destroy it. And I will break down the wall that you have daubed with white wash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundations will be laid bare; when it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it; and you shall know that I am the Lord. Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall, and upon those who have daubed it with white wash; and I will say to you, the wall is no more, nor those who daubed it, the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her, when there was not peace,' says the Lord God. (Ez 13:10-16).

There is no doubt that this section also refers to the day of the Lord spoken of in verse 3: the same false prophets are condemned (vv. 3, 16); the crime is the same, falsehood and lies (vv. 4, 8, 10, 16); Jerusalem is portrayed as a tottering wall (vv. 5, 10, 12, 15); and it is Yahweh himself who comes to inflict the punishment (vv. 8, 13-15).

The roughly improvised and tottering walls represent the

illusory ideas, false hopes, and self confidence which the people of Jerusalem had built up around themselves. This is why they had to protect themselves from the fury of Yahweh on his day. The prophets, instead of fortifying the walls with suggestions of moral commitment and a return to the covenant, upheld these false hopes and made them look like soundly based expectations of the true faith when they uttered their deceitful promises of salvation (šālôm).¹¹¹ Whitewashing a wall might hide its defects but it will not prevent its destruction. In fact, the words of assurance of the prophets were the words which insured the doom and destruction of Jerusalem.

Can one look upon this text as referring to the actual historical fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. when the armies of Babylon came to knock down its wall, destroy the city and send the people into exile? Some scholars say yes, that the prophecy of Ezekiel was just before the fall of the city and the event itself fulfilled the prophecy.¹¹² Others contend that it is a post-587 B.C. oracle which denounces the prophets for not having prevented the calamity.¹¹³ We cannot disregard either of these theories because of the unknown factor of the oracle's date. Yet a third possibility is equally plausible: it claims no special

¹¹¹Eichrodt, Ezekiel, op. cit., p. 167. "Shalom is characteristic of Isaiah's hope of salvation (Is 9:5f; 32:7) and has evidently been adopted as a slogan to express an optimistic faith."

¹¹²H. G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel" in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. VI, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 147; W. A. Irwin, The Problem of Ezekiel: An Inductive Study, Chicago, University Press, 1943, p. 147.

¹¹³Everson, op. cit., p. 331; Cooke, op. cit., p. 137; Freedman, op. cit., p. 451.

historical event is intended, that the day is only one of general destruction inflicted by the storm of the Lord's fury against a sinful people. This storm would combine the three most destructive agents of the lower heavens: wind (rûah s^eārôt), rain (gešem šotēp) and hailstones (ʿeben). The author has used the more intensive form of these phenomena: "a stormy wind," "a deluge of rain" and the unusual epithet for hailstones, ʿeben which literally means ice or crystal stones rather than the more common bārād. It is Yahweh who is in the storm showing displeasure against his adversaries (cf. Ex 9:18-34; 10:19; Ps 18:12-13; 78:47-48; 105:32; 107:25; Is 28:2, 17; 30:30; Ez 38:22; Hag 2:17), laying bare the foundations of Jerusalem leaving it devastated and ruined. A curse of hailstones can be found in the Sefire treaty where the wish is expressed that hailstones may shower on Arpad,¹¹⁴ and that the great gods of heaven and earth may pour forth a flood, an irresistible deluge, rising from the bowels of the earth on Ramataya of Urakanzabanu if the latter breaks the treaty with Esarhaddon of Assyria.¹¹⁵

This evidence shows that Ezekiel conceives the day of the Lord as the time when Yahweh himself will come in a storm to bring upon the false prophets of peace, curses worthy of their infraction of the covenant. In the same messenger form that a suzerain would send to a rebellious vassal, the prophet warns the false prophets and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who listen to them that the approach of Yahweh to punish them (yôm Yahweh) is imminent.

¹¹⁴Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 15, Stele I, Face A, III, line 26.

¹¹⁵Pritchard, op. cit., p. 539, Par. 56, line 472.

IV. ISAIAH 13:6-13

A. Historical Background

This Isaian yôm Yahweh oracle is included in the longer speech of the prophet directed against the Babylonian Empire (Ch. 13). The whole chapter could not have come from the time of the prophet Isaiah himself. Isaiah's period of ministry was between 740-700 B.C. under four Judean kings: Uzziah (781-740 B.C.), Jothan (740-736 B.C.), Ahaz (736-716 B.C.) and Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.). Assyria was the conquering political giant (745-606 B.C.) during his lifetime, not Babylon, as the poem indicates (vv. 1, 19). The speech has been dated within the exilic era between 562-550 B.C. after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and not long before 538 B.C. when Cyrus, the Persian monarch, actually conquered Babylon.¹¹⁶ In 562 B.C., after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the Medes became a threat to the Babylonian Empire. This historical situation is theologically interpreted by the author of Isaiah 13.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶J. Bright, A History of Israel, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1959, p. 333-335; A. J. Everson, The Day of Yahweh as Historical Event: A Study of the Historical and Theological Purposes for the Employment of the Concept in the Classical Prophets of the Old Testament, Unpublished dissertation presented to the Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., 1969, p. 11-17; E. A. Leslie, Isaiah: Chronologically Arranged, translated and Interpreted, New York, Abingden, 1963, p. 119; R. B. Y. Scott, "Isaiah" in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 3, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 254-258.

¹¹⁷For Isaian authorship of Chapters 13-23 see R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, New York, Harper, 1941, p. 443-447.

Reading the political signs of the times, the author sees the rise of Cyrus in his already victorious campaigns against a weakening Babylonian Empire as the beginning of the end for the country that destroyed the Israelites' homeland and sent them into exile. With the downfall of Babylon the author expresses the hope that the Jews will be given their freedom by Cyrus to return home to Judah and rebuild their land, their holy city, and their temple. Cyrus and his invading armies are conceived by the prophet as instruments of Yahweh to punish Babylon's inhuman treatment of his chosen people. When Babylon fell in 538 B.C. to Cyrus and the Persians, this prophecy was understood by the exiles as having been fulfilled.

This yōm Yahweh oracle, which is included in the pronouncement against Babylon in chapter 13 (vv. 6-13), may be of pre-exilic origin and could have been understood in reference to Assyria, Egypt, Edom, or even Judah or Jerusalem and later applied to Babylon.¹¹⁸ The exilic author found the punishment of Babylon as valid as that of the former enemies of Yahweh and used precisely the same form of maledictions and identical terminology to describe it.

B. Textual Criticism

From the point of view of form and content, chapter 13 of Isaiah can be divided into five different sections:¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸J. Bright, "Isaiah I", in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, New York, T. Nelson & Sons, 1962, p. 499-500; S. Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13:2-14: 23, Lund, CWK Gleerup, 1970, p. 113-114; E. J. Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, Dublin, Browne and Nolan, 1960, p. 154-155, 161.

¹¹⁹Erlandsson, op.cit., p. 14.

1. v. 1 - introduction;
2. vv. 2-5 - the object of Yahweh's wrath: Babylon;
3. vv. 6-13 - yōm Yahweh oracle;
4. vv. 14-18 - the invasion of the Medes;
5. vv. 19-22 - total destruction of Babylon.

The yōm Yahweh oracle (vv. 6-13) describes in detailed imagery the punishment which Yahweh is going to inflict upon Babylon, his enemy. This is the first time the phrase "day of the Lord" has been included, per se, in an oracle against a foreign nation. All the others have been limited to Israel and Judah. In both cases, against Israel or against a foreign nation, identical elements are present: a day of punishment against an enemy of Yahweh, and punishment in the form of curses. Israel was an enemy of Yahweh because she broke the covenant; Babylon is an enemy of Yahweh because she sent into exile the chosen people and destroyed their land. The curses directed against an enemy (Israel or a foreign nation) are to be regarded as part and parcel of common curse material which can be used against any transgressor or adversary.¹²⁰

A glance at the isolated text of vv. 6-13 reveals curse motifs similar to those of the yōm Yahweh oracles previously studied.¹²¹

¹²⁰F. C. Fensham, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," in Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika; "Papers read at the 9th meeting in Stellenbosch," Potchefstroom, Herald Beperk, 1966, p. 90-97; Hays, op. cit., p. 81-92.

¹²¹These motifs have been based on those given by S. Erlandsson, op. cit., p. 142-153.

1. Lamentation motif - v. 6a (Am 5:18; Zeph 1:11; Ez 13:3);
2. Devastation motif - v. 6b, 9b, 12 (Zeph 1:15; Ez 13:12,14);
3. Calamity and terror motif - vv. 7-8 (Zeph 1:15; Ez 13:12, 14);
4. Wrath motif - vv. 9a, 13b (Zeph 1:18; 2:2; 3:8; Ez 13:13, 15);
5. Darkness motif - v. 10 (Zeph 1:15; Am 5:18, 20);
6. Pride motif - v. 11;
7. Cosmic motif - v. 13a (Ez 13:13).

1. Lamentation motif. (v. 6a)

Wail, (hêlîlû) for the day of the Lord is near (qārôb);

(v. 6a)

The mourning cry yîl and the phrase qārôb yôm Yahweh are both found in Zephaniah (1:11 and 1:14) in relation to the day of the Lord, but the Isaian author has placed the Volksklagen and the imminence of the day side by side to accentuate the mourning and grief one should have in anticipation of the great and terrible day of Yahweh. Yîl is closely related to the other mourning cry, hōy which was used by Amos, in a context of punishment.¹²² The evolution of a funeral lamentation into the later custom of its association with the cursing of one's enemies was demonstrated in the discussion of Amos 5:18-20 above (pp. 55-57). Familiar with this usage of the lament, the Isaian author either borrows it from Amos or from the common curse material of the ancient Near Eastern world. Babylon has become the enemy of Yahweh because of her inhuman treatment of Israel. When the curses which Yahweh has called down upon her take effect, and the time is near, her destruction will be so complete that all who loved her will moan and wail with grief.

¹²²Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., p. 140.

2. Devastation Motif. (vv. 6b, 9b, 12)

as destruction from the Almighty
it will come! (v. 6b)

.....

to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it. (v. 9b)

.....

I will make men more rare than fine
gold,
and mankind more than the gold of Ophir. (v. 12)

These passages predict that the ruin of Babylon and its surrounding land will be so complete that nothing will grow there any more and its inhabitants will either flee, be killed or taken captive. It will become a wasteland where only the wild animals come to prowl and search for food: the curse of barrenness. The author, further on in the chapter, describes well the barrenness of the city and land:

Never more will anyone live or be born there
from generation to generation.
No Arab will pitch his tent there,
nor shepherds feed their flocks,
But beasts of the desert will lie there,
and owls fill its houses.
Ostriches will make their homes there
and satyrs have their dances there.
Hyenas will call to each other in its keeps,
jackals in the luxury of its palaces . . . (Is 13:20-22)

The doomed city of Babylon is cursed never to be inhabited again. Yahweh, the Mighty One, will have vengeance on his enemy and the enemy of his people.

There is a remarkable resemblance between the curses of devastation and barrenness in international treaties and those of

prophetic maledictions against a foreign nation found in Isaiah 13 (Cf. also Is 17:9; 23:13; 34:11-15). In the Sefire treaty the vassal is threatened with his city's becoming a tell if he is disobedient. It will be inhabited by such desert animals as gazelles, foxes, hares, wild-asses, owls and magpies.¹²³ Elsewhere in Esarhaddon's letter to the God Ashur there is a description of a ruined city where hyenas and foxes live.¹²⁴ From the Annals of Ashurbanipal, "Wild asses, gazelles and every kind of wild animal of the desert I caused to lie down there undisturbed."¹²⁵ Coming from that same Annal, "... in the city street the owl screeches."¹²⁶

From this evidence it is clear that the author depicts the utter desolation of Babylon. It is cursed, therefore desolate and deserted.¹²⁷

The devastation motif also includes the destruction of sinners. Babylon has sinned against Yahweh. They will be struck down with only a few left. Those remaining will wander around like lost sheep, hunted by the enemy like gazelles. Weakened and without defense they will become prey to all who pass by. To impress on the minds of the guilty

¹²³Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 15, Sf I, Stele I, Face A, III, lines 32-33.

¹²⁴R. Borger, "Die Inschriften Asarhaddons König von Assyrien, in Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 9, Berlin, Graz, 1956, p. 107.

¹²⁵M. Streck, Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's, in Vorderasiatische Bibliothek Vol. II, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1916, p. 58.

¹²⁶T. Bauer, ed., Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Vervollständigt und neu bearbeitet, in Assyriologische Bibliothek, Vol. I-II, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1933, p. 78.

¹²⁷Fensham, "Common Trends", op. cit., p. 166-168; Hillers, op. cit., p. 44-54.

the diminution of their number the author compares it to very rare fine gold (Jb 28:19; 31:24; Pr 25:12; Cant 5:11; Lam 4:1) and the precious gold from Ophir (I Ch 29:4; Jb 22:24; 28:16). This curse depicts the shortage of men in the coming day of punishment. If Hillers is correct in his transposing bnth "daughters" instead of bkth "hens" as proposed by Fitzmyer,¹²⁸ in Sefire Treaty I, the curse would read like this: "and may his seven daughters go looking for food, but not seduce (anyone)."¹²⁹ Hillers concludes that the curse suggests that Mati'el's daughters will become prostitutes in order to earn a living - but will not make a go of it because there will be so few men left after the destruction of the city.¹³⁰ A curse list from an Assyrian treaty includes this malediction concerning destruction and the decrease of men after the punishment: "... let one thousand houses decrease to one house, let one thousand tents decrease to one tent, let only one man be spared in the city to tell about my feats."¹³¹

The doom oracle which begins Is 4:1 contains a similar idea, "And seven women will fight over a single man that day." The Isaian apocalypse speaks of only a few men being left when Yahweh comes to judge the earth (Is 24:6) and both the Old Testament curse lists make mention of the same malediction as punishment for sin (Lv 26:22; Dt 28:62).

¹²⁸Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 15, Sf I, Stele I, Face A, III, line 24.

¹²⁹Hillers, op. cit., p. 71-72.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 74.

¹³¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 533, Par. (vi) line 5.

Implied in this curse is the idea of an almost complete obliteration of the progeny of a nation or tribe. The reduction of the male population to a handful lessens the threat of rebellion and rebuilding of the city. "With few men to beget offspring it will take longer for the nation to populate and gain the power and strength needed to make its name known again.

3. Calamity and terror motif. (vv. 7-8)

Therefore all hands (yād) will be feeble (rāpah),
and every man's heart (lēbab) will melt (māsas),
and they will be dismayed (bahal).
Pangs (šir) and agony (hebel) will seize them,
they will be in anguish (hūl) like a
woman in travail.
They will look aghast (tāmah) at one another;
their faces will be aflame (lahab).

The horror of the day of Yahweh is graphically described in these verses: cowardice, weakness, terror, spasms and pains like a woman's in childbirth, amazement and dismay. It is before the Lord Almighty and his destructive force that the guilty must cringe. The faces of the terrified ones become red and burning as a flame in their anguish and weeping (Jb 16:16). The suffering is also compared to a woman giving birth, which is a common metaphor for a sudden agony which comes upon someone causing the groaning to get louder as the pains get worse and worse (Is 21:3; Jer 13:21; 22:23; 49:24; 6:24). In other words, the punishment from Yahweh will come upon the people when they least expect it and it will be very severe. The rest of the world will be looking on (vv. 4-5) as fear grips the hearts of the inhabitants of Babylon and terror invades their bodies.

The calamity and terror terminology is paralleled in other

prophetic passages relating to doom oracles: "feeble hands" (Zeph 3:16), "hearts grow weak" (Is 19:1), "to be terrified" (Zeph 1:18), and "confusion, agitation and flushing face" (Joel 2:6; Neh 2:11).

A Sefire stele combines all terror and calamity of punishment into a general curse, "... but among its people (let there rather be) the din of affliction, and the noi[se of crying and lamentation."¹³²

4. Wrath and anger motif (vv. 9a, 13b)

Behold the day of the Lord comes,
cruel (akzārî), with wrath (‘ebrāh) and fierce
anger (hārôn ʾap.),

... at the wrath (‘ebrāh) of the Lord of hosts
in the day of his fierce anger (hārôn ʾap.).

The wrath motif of Isaiah 13:9, 13 has its parallel especially in Zephaniah (1:18, 2:2; 3:8). Here the wrath of Yahweh is justified because Judah has broken the covenant while in Isaiah it is the same God and the same jealous wrath but this time vented against a foreign nation, Babylon. Babylon had provoked God's anger by touching his "sacred one," Israel.

There are four Hebrew words which are often used to describe Yahweh's divine anger against his enemies: ʾap. ("anger"), zāʿam ("indignation"), hēmāh ("fury") and ‘ebrāh ("wrath"). The author of Isaiah 13 chooses two of them, ʾap and ‘ebrāh and places them side by side in the sentence to accentuate the intensity of the Lord's

¹³²Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 15, Sf I, Stele I, Face A, III, line 29.

displeasure with Babylon's conduct. He also conveys to his audience the cruel nature of this anger by his insistence on the adjective "fierce" (hārôn) before ʔap.¹³³

In the ancient world it was the normal behavior to invoke a curse on one's enemy or on the transgressor of a treaty, contract or boundary stone who had provoked the anger of a king or property owner. Once an abuse had occurred, the various gods who had witnessed the original oath were called upon to implement the curses. So in reality, the gods, too, were angered by the infraction of an oath. This comes out time after time in legal documents and kudduru-stones that have come to light in excavations in Syria, Hatti and Mesopotamia.¹³⁴ A striking resemblance to the intensity and cruelty of the anger of Yahweh in Isaiah is the anger of Inanna in the Code of Hammurabi:¹³⁵

May Inanna, the lady of battle and
conflict, who bares my weapons;
my gracious protecting genius, the
admirer of my reign, curse his rule
with her great fury in her wrathful heart!
May she turn good into evil;

In the prophetic texts, however, it is always only Yahweh who has been offended and provoked to anger and it is he alone who is to carry out the punishment of the curses.

¹³³Zephaniah also used "fierce anger" to describe Yahweh's wrath (2:2; 3:8).

¹³⁴Sollberger, op. cit., p. 207, IV B1 4e, lines 42-52; King, op. cit., p. 35, 116; Pritchard, op. cit., p. 202.

¹³⁵Pritchard, op. cit., p. 179, Reverse Par. xxvii, line 100.

5. Darkness motif. (v. 10)

For the stars of the heavens and
their constellations
will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its rising
and the moon will not shed its
light.

The important word in this verse is darkness (hōšek), familiar to us from Amos 5:18,20 and Zephaniah 1:15, 17. Darkness is a curse against sinners. Amos contrasts darkness with light without mentioning the cause of the darkness, but only giving a detailed description of it. What was important for Amos was not how the darkness would come about but the fact that the day of Yahweh would be a day of punishment and grief not one of rewards and joy. Israel had sinned; she would not go unpunished. Zephaniah adds a cosmic dimension. The punishment will consist of "clouds and thick darkness" (cf. Ex 10:21-23), as well as the personal infliction of blindness. The Isaian author relies heavily on the image of great cosmic disturbances which will produce darkness over the whole earth (cf. Is 50:30; 8:22; Am 8:9 and Ez 32:7), the failure of the sun (šemeš), moon (yārēah) and stars (kôkâb) to give light. Yahweh is using these hosts of heaven to bring about the immobilization of Babylon. No one will be able to see anyone else or move about as long as the earth remains in darkness.

It would be redundant to repeat curse parallels which pertain to darkness in the extra-Biblical legal treaties and memorial tablets. This was covered above when the motif of darkness was discussed in relationship to the yôm Yahweh texts of Amos and Zephaniah.

6. Pride motif. (v. 11)

I will punish the world for its evil,
 and the wicked for their iniquity;
 I will put an end to the pride (gā'ôn) of the
 arrogant (zēd),
 and lay low the haughtiness (ga'āwāh) of the
 ruthless.

The author of Isaiah 13 introduces a motif not yet seen in a yôm Yahweh oracle but certainly not unknown to his prophetic predecessors, in the Israelite tradition or the texts outside the Bible: that of pride. The purpose of the day of the Lord here in Isaiah 13:11 (as in 13:6) is to strike down the high and the proud since no one save Yahweh can be high on that day (2:11, 17). There is no respect of persons; Yahweh intervenes against the proud, whoever they may be: in Israel or in any other nation. The idea that Yahweh will take action against the proud is of great antiquity. Right after creation the minds of Adam and Eve aspired "to be like God" (Gen 3:4); they were banished from the Garden of Eden. The builders of the tower which was to reach to the heavens were thwarted when Yahweh dispersed them and confused their language (Gen 11:4-9). Moses had to keep warning Israel not to give herself credit for God's actions when she arrived in the promised land of Canaan (Dt 8:17; 9:4; 32:27). The Wisdom Literature has the contrasting, "He will lift up the lowly and bring down the proud" to differentiate between the just and the unjust (Ps 18:27; 75:7; 147:6; Pv 15:25). The cedars of Lebanon were the classical symbol of pride and haughtiness in the Old Testament (Ps 29:5; 80:10; Is 2:13; 37:24; 14:8). But the cedars will fall powerless before the judgment of Yahweh. The arrogant and the haughty who have appropriated dominion and

power will be laid low as a consequence of their pride: Israel (Is 2: 6-17; 5:10), Assyria (Is 10:12-14), Egypt (Is 31:3), Moab (Is 16:1), Tyre (Is 23:9). From an early period, pride had been attributed to Babylon with its great ziggurats (cf. Gen 11:1ff). The pride of Babylon comes out in Is 1:9f; 13:2-18, 19-22 and 14:1-21. The apex of her pride, however, was to enslave Israel; for that she had Israel's God, Yahweh, to answer to. Babylon had usurped the sovereignty of Yahweh.

If we read just this yôm Yahweh text in Is 13:6-13, it would be impossible to say to whom it is addressed for no country is named. But since the author has inserted it here in this oracle against Babylon, we must assume that this is the proud city to be destroyed.

That man's pride will be struck down by the god (or gods) is also mentioned in texts outside the Bible. S. Erlandsson quotes from one such Akkadian text: "that somebody is acting ina ramanisu = of his own accord," which leads to the judgment of the god or gods."¹³⁶

The haughtiness of a vassal toward an overlord which leads to rebellion also demands an immediate reprisal against the one who transgresses the oath of the treaty. The introduction to a treaty between Shuppiliuuma of Hatti and Mattiuaza of Mitanni recounts the differences which arose between Hatti and Mitanni because of the "presumptuousness" of Tushratti, the father of Mattiuaza:¹³⁷

¹³⁶Erlandsson, op. cit., p. 148.

¹³⁷Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 163-164, No. 1, Text KBo. I, No. 1 and 2, lines 1-16, 17-24.



A second time Tushratta, the king acted presumptuously (made himself big) toward me
 Now I, the Sun, Shuppiliuuma, etc., took measure against the presumptuousness of Tushratta, the king. The Euphrates I crossed; against Ishuwa I marched and Ishuwa in its totality I devastated.

The Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, writes this clause into his treaty with the Urakazabanu king, Ramatanya, to make sure the latter remains submissive and loyal (not haughty and rebellious) not only to Esarhaddon, but also to the crown prince designate, Ashurbanipal, as soon as he became king: ". . . if you will not be submissive to this crown prince designate Ashurbanipal, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, so that he cannot exercise kingship and lordship over you -"138 there follows a long litany of "ifs" before the passage concludes with the curse list. These are maledictions that will come upon the king and his people if any one, or all of these "ifs" come to pass. In another case, the infidelity of Kaštiliaš to his treaty with Tukulti-Ninurta I provoked an engagement of war. The insolence of Kaštiliaš had to be punished: "Il n'y aura pas de pardon sans combat, Il n'y aura pas de paix sans bataille, avant que le combat ne [soit fini], jusqu'à ce que j'aie montré ton insolence sur ton dos, jusqu'à ce que tu sois précipité dans une mort non prédéterminée par le destin."139

On his day Yahweh will raise up the lowly, in this case Israel, and bring down the proud from their thrones, that is, Babylon (cf. Jb 5:11; 12:19).

138Pritchard, op. cit., p. 535, Par 4, line 41.

139Harvey, op. cit., p. 171.

7. Cosmic Motif. (v. 13a)

Therefore I will make the heavens
- tremble,
and the earth will be shaken out of
its place,

Earthquakes were a frequent and disastrous phenomenon in the ancient Near East, and Palestine certainly had her share. Israel believed they were caused by the footsteps or the voice of Yahweh - a feature of the theophany. Thus Yahweh appeared on Mount Sinai amidst the quaking of the mountain (Ex 19:16-18; Ps 68:8), with Israel as she conquered the Promised Land (Jg 5:5), and to Elijah on Mount Horeb (I K 19:11). But Yahweh also came in the earthquake in anger to punish David's enemies (2 S 22:8), the enemy of the Psalmist (Ps 18:8), and even Israel (Ps 60:1-3; Jer 4:24-26).

The author of Isaiah 13 describes Yahweh coming in a traditional theophany to punish Babylon because he is angry with this proud and haughty city for going beyond the bounds of her power and exiling Israel, God's chosen one.

The typical verbs which here describe the great upheavals of the earth are rāgaz ("tremble") and rā'as ("shake"). Nahum employs the same words to describe Yahweh's intervention to punish Nineveh (1:5). In Joel's doom oracles Yahweh will punish both Israel (2:10) and the nations (4:16) with the same phenomenon of the shaking and trembling of the earth.

There is no specific mention of an earthquake or of the shaking and trembling of the earth in the extra-Biblical legal texts,

but there are curses which can be interpreted as resulting from an earthquake. The first one comes from Syria:¹⁴⁰

. . . on any day on which he will d[o] so, may the gods overturn th[at m]an and his house and all that (is) in it: and may they make its lower part its upper part!

The second example comes from the Code of Hammurabi:¹⁴¹ ". . . May he cause the foundations of his nation to crumble."

In summary, what conclusions can be drawn from the discussion relative to the employment of a yôm Yahweh oracle against a foreign nation, specifically Babylon, by the prophetic author of Isaiah 13? The following are significant: 1) This oracle has an identical curse terminology and the same motifs found in the previous yôm Yahweh texts against Israel and Judah: 2) Babylon, a foreign nation, will receive punishment from God not because she broke the Yahwistic covenant, but by virtue of her status as an enemy of Yahweh: 3) Babylon invoked God's anger when she destroyed Israel and took God's people into exile: 4) the author may have borrowed an anonymous pre-exilic yôm Yahweh text, and inserted it into the general oracle against Babylon in Chapter 13: 5) the sources from which the author draws to describe the punishment of Babylon for her haughtiness against Yahweh are other prophetic and Old Testament oracles, the general curse material of the ancient Near East, and curse lists from international treaties and other legal texts: and 6) the use of this oracle against a foreign

¹⁴⁰Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 21, Sf I, Stele, Face C, IX, lines 20-24.

¹⁴¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 179, Reverse, Par. xxvii, line 20.

nation is not necessarily in the context of warfare¹⁴² but in the general curse milieu of the ancient Near East.

V. MALACHI 3:22, 23-24

A. Historical Background

The book of Malachi dates from the era in Israel's history after the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah (520 B.C.). The temple had been rebuilt (516 B.C.) and its priesthood and cultic life reinstated. As time passed, however, the religious enthusiasm aroused by these two prophets subsided and the Jewish community drifted into a state of cultic and moral deterioration (1:6-2: 9). Abuses crept in: divorce (2:10-16), marriage with foreign women (2:11-13), the wealthy cheating the poor (3:5), the irresponsibility of the priests (2:1-3, 8-9) and a corrupt temple worship (1:7-8, 13). Since these were the same abuses that Ezra and Nehemiah confronted, Malachi must have preached before the mission of these two reformers. If Ezra arrived in Jerusalem somewhere around 458 B.C. (398 B.C.?)¹⁴³ and Nehemiah's first term as high commissioner of the restored Jewish community was between 445-443 B.C. then Malachi's period of ministry

¹⁴²Hays, *op. cit.*, p. 81-87, places the usage of oracles against the nations within the context of warfare.

¹⁴³For the problems of dating of Ezra's mission see H. H. Rowley, "The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah", in The Servant of the Lord and other Essays on the Old Testament, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. 137-168.

can be dated from 490 to 450 B.C.¹⁴⁴

The author of this prophetic book introduces himself as Malachi in the opening verse (1:1). In Hebrew, the word mal'ākī means "my messenger." Wishing to remain anonymous and/or wanting to stress his role as God's messenger, the author simply calls himself "Malachi," and leaves his real name hidden forever from the probing pen of exegetes. What does remain is his message of doom against Israel for once again going against God's commandments.

B. Textual Criticism

According to J. A. Fischer, the book of Malachi can be divided into six oracles called disputation speeches (Disputationswort), each having the same question and answer style: 1) Yahweh or the prophet makes a statement, 2) this is disputed by priest or people and 3) a discourse is developed in which threat and promise of salvation appear side by side.¹⁴⁵ The six Disputationsworte are:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. 1:2-5 | - | against Edom |
| 2. 1:6-2:9 | - | against the priests |
| 3. 2:10-16 | - | against mixed marriages |
| 4. 2:17-3:5 | - | against hypocritical offerings |
| 5. 3:6-12 | - | against cheating of tithes |
| 6. 3:13-21 | - | against the arrogant |

E. Sellin puts these speeches into what he calls "a semblance of order:"

¹⁴⁴R. C. Denton, Introduction and Exegesis of the Book of Malachi in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 6, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 1117-1118; A. Deissler, "Malachie" in La Sainte Bible, Tome II, L. Pirot et A. Clamer, eds., Paris, Letouzey and Ane, 1964, p. 633.

¹⁴⁵J. A. Fischer, "Notes on the Literary Form and Message of Malachi," in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1972, p. 315-320.

A) preaching of repentance (speeches 1, 3, 5), B) an oracle against the priests (speech 2), C) warnings against doubters (speeches 4 and 6).¹⁴⁶

The closing verses of the book (3:22-24) are considered as two appendices to the six Disputationsworte.¹⁴⁷ Just when they were added to the book of Malachi is impossible to determine. It is in these additions that the yōm Yahweh oracle appears. A mention of "the day" in some previous verses of chapter three¹⁴⁸ possibly led the author to conclude his work by identifying "the day" as the day of Yahweh, a concept familiar to him from the writings of prophets before him.

The first appendix (3:22) exhorts Israel to remain faithful to the commandments of God.

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

One can safely say that this verse was added not too long after the final compilation and editing of the prophecy itself because it is in perfect continuity with the rest of the book in Deuteronomic terminology and theology. The strong Deuteronomic overtones also confirm

¹⁴⁶ E. Sellin, Das Zwölfprophetenbuch, übersetzt und erklärt, Teil II, in Kommentar zum Alten Testament, E. Sellin, ed., Leipzig, A. Deichert, 1929, p. 536-537.

¹⁴⁷ H. G. Mitchell, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi and Jonah, in The International Critical Commentary, New York, Scribner's, 1912, p. 85.

¹⁴⁸ "... the day of his coming?" (3:2); "on the day which I am preparing..." (3:11); "For the day is coming now..." (3:19a); "The day that is coming..." (3:19b) and "... on the day I am preparing, says Yahweh" (3:21).

that the prophecy was written before Ezra and Nehemiah at which time the P Code became the religious law in Judah.

The sense of the verb zākar is "to remember." In Deuteronomy, Israel is asked to remember the great acts of God on her behalf either to reward (Dt 5:15; 8:18; 9:27; 15:15; 16:3; 24:18, 22; 32:27) or to punish (Dt 7:18; 8:2; 9:7; 24:9). By remembering Yahweh's benevolence toward her, Israel is stimulated to keep the commandments of the covenant out of gratitude for God's love. Several authors have also recently recognized the juridical character of the term "to remember."¹⁴⁹ To remember a law is to obey it. To forget a law is to not observe it, thus to incur punishment as in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic where the king of Assyria reminds the Kassite king: "Thou hast ravaged all my land, thou hast shewn forgetfulness [of thy covenant(?)] . . ."¹⁵⁰

The phrase "the statutes (ḥuqqīm) and ordinances (mišpāt)" is also highly Deuteronomical (Dt 4:1, 5, 8; 5:1; 11:32; 12:1).¹⁵¹ In all these texts Yahweh reminds Israel that she must "observe," "learn" and "keep" the laws of the covenant if she is to enjoy the blessings of that covenant. A refusal to obey would mean punishment with the curses of

¹⁴⁹W. Schottroff, "Gedenken" im alten Orient und im Alten Testament. In Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, Bd. 15, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen/Moers, 1964, x-370 p. H. G. Reventlow, "Das Amt des Maskin zur Rechtsstruktur des Öffentlichen in Israel", in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1959, p. 161-175; W. Vogels, La Promesse Royale de Yahweh: Préparation à l'Alliance, Ottawa, University Press, 1970, p. 49, footnotes 28 and 29; Deissler, op. cit., p. 660.

¹⁵⁰Thompson and Mallowan, op. cit., p. 124, Col IV, line 5.

¹⁵¹Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 337.

the same covenant. Malachi, although writing to an audience hundreds of years after the Sinai event, maintains that the covenant has not changed and the laws are as binding on the people now as they were on their ancestors who ratified the original covenant with Moses.

The name "Horeb" for the holy mountain on which Yahweh gave his law to Israel suggests a Deuteronomic borrowing since the other traditions use the Yahwistic Sinai.

It is possible that the author (editor?) added this verse as a fitting conclusion for the book of Malachi and even for the entire collection of the Book of the Twelve.¹⁵² The author was convinced and wanted his audience to realize "that the law is the fundamental basis of Israel's religion and that prophecy points out to the holy people the conditions of their covenant relationship with Yahweh."¹⁵³

Later on, another redactor adds the second appendix as an exegesis of 3:1, "Behold I send my messenger to prepare a way before me."

Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse. (3:23-24)

¹⁵²O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, p. 442; Deissler, op. cit., p. 627; D. R. Jones, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi in Torch Bible Commentary, London, SCM Press, 1962, p. 206; T. H. Robinson, Die zwölf kleinen Propheten in Handbuch zum Alten Testament, I, Reihe, 14, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1954, p. 262; J. M. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi, in The International Critical Commentary, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912, p. 81.

¹⁵³Jones, op. cit., p. 206.

A messenger coming to prepare a divine manifestation of Yahweh is known from Is 40:3. Throughout the pre-exilic prophetic preaching, the day of Yahweh has as its main characteristic, a day of doom for Israel as punishment for her breach of the covenant. The author of the book of Malachi combines these two concepts. In 3:1 he speaks of a messenger (mal'ak) who will announce the day of Yahweh's coming: a day so terrible for the transgressors that they will not be able to endure it. The redactor follows this dual theory of the original author but goes one step further and identifies the herald with Elijah the prophet. It is Elijah, according to Israelite tradition, who will come to inaugurate the messianic era and prepare the way for the Messiah.¹⁵⁴ This shows a continued reappropriation of the expectation of judgment upon Israel on the day of Yahweh in a later historical time. How far into the future one can project this: "later historical time" to get a dating for vv 23-24 is problematic. The best one can say is that it is "later" noting from the difference in the vocabulary of these verses and that of the main body of the book is that it is "later." A third century author has been postulated by some scholars for various reasons: 1) Joel's prophecy (400-350-B.C.) on the day of Yahweh was known by the redactor who used it as a basis of his own description of the day;¹⁵⁵ 2) the identification of Elijah as the

¹⁵⁴For Elijah as a forerunner see D. J. Russell, The Method and Message of Apocalyptic, in The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1964, p. 78, 323.

¹⁵⁵Deissler, op. cit., p. 660.

herald with Sirach 48:10-11 and Rabbinic texts; ¹⁵⁶ and 3) the crisis between fathers and sons in verse 24 was caused by the influx of Greek thought and influence.¹⁵⁷

Must one follow Deissler's theory that the author of the second appendix depends on Joel for his description of the day of Yahweh as great (gādōl) and terrible (yārē') and thus place his text in the fourth rather than the fifth century B.C.? Could it not have been just the reverse: that Joel borrowed from Malachi? It is possible that the redactor did borrow, but from a prophetic description of the day of Yahweh earlier than Joel's. Malachi's is the shortest of the Yôm Yahweh texts and it would seem that the redactor telescoped the whole drama of the day into the one phrase: "the great and terrible day." Other prophets had designated the day as "great" and then went on to describe how terrible it would be for those who did not return to Yahweh (Hos 1:11; Jer 30:7; Zeph 1:14-18).

The function of the messenger of Yahweh, identified as Elijah, is to prepare the way for the coming of Yahweh (Mal 3:1) which will bring punishment upon the land. He will do this by warning the people that there is need for repentance of their sins if the malediction is to be avoided.

The messenger "will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (3:24).

¹⁵⁶A. Gelin, "Malachie", in Introduction à la Bible, Vol. I, A. Robert and A. Feuillet, eds., Paris, Desclée, 1957, p. 574.

¹⁵⁷Deissler, op. cit., p. 661; J. M. P. Smith, Book of Malachi, op. cit., p. 83.

The verb šûb, "to return," has a Deuteronomic sense of turning back to Yahweh with all one's heart after having sinned and repented (Dt 30:10; Jer 24:7; I K 8:48; 2K 23:25).¹⁵⁸ Might not the sign of sons and fathers "turning toward each other in love" be taken not only literally but also symbolically? Yahweh, the father, and Israel, the son, are no longer estranged by sin but turned toward each other, and the covenant is renewed. The father-son relationship of Israel to Yahweh well corresponds to the definition of covenantal love found in Deuteronomy.¹⁵⁹

If the turning of the fathers and sons toward each other is to be taken literally, one must assume a rift between fathers and sons at the time of the writing. The author does not specify the cause of this familial disharmony, but rather than attributing it to an influx of Greek thought and influence as A. Deissler suggests, one might with more probability see it as the result of quarrels within the family arising from the divorce and remarriage of foreign wives (Mal 2:10-16).¹⁶⁰ When these marriages broke up, the first wife either had to leave with the children or remain alone with them, and this caused animosity between the sons and the fathers. If this indeed is the case, then Judah is considered hostile to Yahweh for her sins of

¹⁵⁸Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 335.

¹⁵⁹D. J. McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1965, p. 144-147; F. C. Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant", in Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright, H. Goedicke, ed., Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 121-135.

¹⁶⁰J. Halévy, "Le Prophète Malachi", in Revue Sémitique, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1909, p. 44.

divorce and remarriage. The Jews will be put under the ban (hērem) unless they listen to Elijah and return to their former wives and children in obedience to the law of Moses (Dt 5:21; cf. 24:1-4). This sign of familial unity reflects the covenantal love of Israel and Yahweh.

The punishment for refusing to repent is noted only as to "smite the land with a curse" (hērem). The Hebrew word for "curse" is here the familiar hērem so frequently used for the period of conquest with relation to the holy wars.¹⁶¹ The definition of a hērem given by Brown, Driver and Briggs is "a thing hostile to theocracy and therefore (in the strictest application) to be either destroyed or set apart to sacred uses."¹⁶² There will then be complete destruction of Judah: land, men, women, children and animals. Nothing can survive a hērem!

But there is hope that the ban will be averted through repentance: "Remember . . . turn . . . lest . . ." This is the first time that we have an explicit note of hope in yōm Yahweh text - hope via repentance. The pre-exilic texts with which we have been dealing tended to convey an ominous and tragic mood because their authors believed that a breach of the covenant had been committed by Israel and nothing could hold back the imminent punishment which Yahweh would inflict upon her when he came on this day. But all was not doom with these prophetic voices, since they included oracles of repentance

¹⁶¹A. Malamat, "The Ban in Mari and the Bible", in Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume, M. Haran, ed., Jerusalem, the Magnes Press, 1960, p. 149-158; von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁶²Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., p. 356.

(Am 5:4-6, 14-15; Zeph 2:1-3; Ez 33:10-19) and of salvation (Am 9:11-15; Zeph 3:14-20; Is 2:1-5; 4:2-6; chs 7-9; Ez ch 37 etc.).

The redactor's use of accusation/intervention/salvation in vv 23-24 is in harmony with the rest of the book. In each of the six Disputationsworte, there is an accusation of sinning contrasting with an opportunity for repentance and salvation inaugurated by Yahweh or his messenger.

	<u>Accused</u>	<u>Salvation</u>	<u>Intecessor</u>
First oracle (1:2-5)	Edom	Israel	Yahweh
Second oracle (1:6-2:9)	Priests	Those who offer perfect sacrifice	Yahweh
Third oracle (2:10-16)	Divorcees	Those who remain married	Yahweh
Fourth oracle (2:17-3:5)	Priests	Purified Levites	Messenger
Fifth oracle (3:6-12)	Cheaters of tithes	The repentant	Yahweh
Sixth oracle (3:13-21)	Evil doers	Those who fear Yahweh	Yahweh
Verses 23-24	Dissenters	The repentant	Elijah

Within this yôm Yahweh doom oracle is an oracle of salvation and a call to repentance. Salvation and a withdrawal of the punishment are promised if there is repentance. The summons to repentance, "Remember . . . turn . . ." stands as a bridge between the two oracles. Doom is proclaimed to incite repentance and the failure to repent is the basis for the approach of doom, since the people can be judged for failure to repent only if they were earlier called to repentance.

T. M. Raitt has demonstrated in a recent article the literary structure of a prophetic summons to repentance: 1) Messenger formula ("Thus says Yahweh . . ."), 2) vocative (guilty party), 3) admonition

("Return," "Seek," etc.) 4) promise 5) accusation, and 6) threat.¹⁶³ He has selected twenty-nine prophetic texts which he contends fit this structure.¹⁶⁴ Although Malachi 3:22-24 is not considered a "true" prophetic summons to repentance according to Raitt's definition, the purpose of the prophet Elijah in this text remains to call the people to repentance before they fall under the ban.

The sending of the prophet Elijah as a messenger from Yahweh to warn of destruction and to promise a chance for repentance recalls the preliminary warnings sent to a vassal guilty of not conforming to the stipulations of a treaty. If the offender chose to turn the messenger away, or to put him in jail, or to kill him, or just to ignore the message, that is, if there seemed to be no sign of repentance and no hope that the vassal's rebellious actions were over, the suzerain lord declared war on him.¹⁶⁵ Documents have been found which substantiate this implementation of international law. In the epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I an ultimatum ("rîb à avertissement" as J. Harvey calls it) ¹⁶⁶ is sent to Kaštiliaš by Tukulti-Ninurta I citing the former's offenses and warning him of an imminent invasion. Kaštiliaš acknowledges his bad conduct but feels that nothing can save him, and he readies his troops to march into battle anyway, goes to war against Tukulti-

¹⁶³T. M. Raitt, "The Prophetic Summons to Repentance", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 83, No. 1, 1971, p. 30-49.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 34-35.

¹⁶⁵Harvey, "Le Rîb - Pattern", op. cit., p. 191.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 180.

Ninurta I and is defeated.¹⁶⁷ Another document, entitled "Letter on the Subject of Milavata," was written to a vassal by a Hittite king enumerating the vassal's many offenses against a treaty even though the king had been very good to him over the years. The overlord warns that if the vassal doesn't reform the worst would befall him.¹⁶⁸ There also exists a document in which a vassal denies the charges brought against him. Ramses of Egypt, in a letter to the king of Mirâ, denies having committed any offense against the Hittite king: "I have held fast to the oath, I have not let it go."¹⁶⁹

Isaiah 1:16-20; Mi 6:8; and Ps 50:14-15 all contain a "rîb à avertissement" in which Israel receives a warning from Yahweh which demands a change in her conduct. The same idea, although it is not in a strict rîb structure, may be found in Mal 3:23-24. Yahweh sends his messenger to Israel to warn that if her inhabitants do not mend their familial break-ups the worst would come to them.

In summary, the following points seem to be pertinent: Malachi retains the characteristic essential to the previous prophetic yôm Yahweh oracles, that of a great and terrible day, a day of destruction. This doom oracle is addressed to Israel, and, like those of Amos, Ezekiel and Zephaniah which we have seen, presents Israel's broken relationship to Yahweh and his covenant. The deuteronomic vocabulary found in this oracle: "remember," "statutes and ordinances," "servant

¹⁶⁷Thompson and Mallowan, op. cit., p. 124-126.

¹⁶⁸F. Sommer, Die Ahhijava-Urkunden, Munich, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1932, p. 198-205.

¹⁶⁹Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 197, No. 11 KBo I, No. 24, Reverse, lines 11-15.

of Yahweh" and "Horeb" suggests that the author wants to place Israel's sins and punishment within a covenantal context. A messenger, Elijah, is to be sent before the "day of curses" to warn Israel of her impending doom and to assure her that Yahweh will lift the "ban" if her people will only return to him by once again taking up their family ties in love. The literary structure of this call to repentance resembles that of a prophetic summons to repentance as presented by T. M. Raitt: a prophet/messenger is sent by Yahweh to a guilty party to admonish, accuse and threaten, but also to promise that the punishment may be avoided with repentance. The structure resembles the "rîb à avertissement," one of two types of legal processes (rîb) against Israel, as structured by J. Harvey, in which Yahweh is the accuser through the words of his messenger but this one closes on a positive note of clemency if repentance is manifested. Both the summons to repentance and the "rîb à avertissement" resemble the ultimatum which an overlord used to send his vassal who had begun to fall away from the fundamental stipulations of their treaty.

VI. OBADIAH 15a, 16-21

A. Historical Background.

The book of Obadiah is the shortest of all the prophetic books (only 21 verses) and is full of problems: unity, form and date. The reason for this complexity is best summed up in T. H. Robinson's conclusion that the book is a collection of fragments of longer poems probably dating from different periods of time but all referring more

or less directly to Edom.¹⁷⁰ These fragments must have been "circulated" in isolated form for a long time before they were finally brought together.

The Nabateans began early (first half of the sixth century) to push the Edomites from the craggy fortress at Seir. It was probably at this time that an older prophet¹⁷¹ predicted the downfall of Edom, Israel's arch-enemy and her brother-people.¹⁷² Ironically enough, though, Edom was not completely routed from her territory, so that when Jerusalem and Judah fell in 587 B.C. she was still around to raid and loot Judah and occupy the entire expanse of the Negeb district (Lam 4: 21, 22; Ez 25:12-14; ch 35; Ps 137:7). From 500-450 B.C. another great Arabian thrust penetrated into the Edomite district. The prophet Obadiah, living in the restored community of Jerusalem and reading the political signs of the times, prophesied against Edom, interpreting her imminent downfall as a just punishment from Yahweh for her brutal behavior toward Israel. To the older prophecies (vv. 1-9; cf. Jer 49:7-22) the prophet added and incorporated his own oracle (vv. 10-14, 15b) which predicted Edom's complete destruction, a destruction worthy of Edom's hostile attitude toward her brother nation Judah (v. 10) at the time when Jerusalem had been taken by the barbarians (v. 11). The last verses (15a, 16-21) are considered an appendix

¹⁷⁰T. H. Robinson, "The Structure of the Book of Obadiah", in Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1916, p. 408.

¹⁷¹J. M. P. Smith, "The Structure of Obadiah", in The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1906, p. 131-138 sees this older prophet as a contemporary of Isaiah in the eighth century; G. A. Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets, New York, Armstrong, 1901, p. 168 states that Ob 1-9 are older than the fourth year of Johoiakin.

¹⁷²W. W. Cannon, "Israel and Edom: The Oracle of Obadiah", in Theology, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1937, p. 129-140, 191-200.

reflecting a later date and occasion (425-400 B.C.)¹⁷³ in which Edom still survived, but had greatly diminished. It was not until 312 B.C. that the Nabateans were firmly established at Petra. During this time period, the religious reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah were taking hold in Judah and Jerusalem (445-400 B.C.). The author of the Obadiah appendix possibly interpreted this national conversion as a sign of Yahweh's coming to establish a united Israel as the world ruler on Mount Zion. In his oracle, addressed to Israel, he predicts the judgment and overthrow of all the nations, with Edom to be especially hard hit since more than any other nation, she had slaughtered, done violence to, and mocked Israel (vv. 10-14).

B. Textual Criticism.

This yôm Yahweh oracle can be divided into three parts:

- 1) judgment against the nations (vv. 15a, 16), 2) judgment against Edom (vv. 17-18) and 3) Israel's re-possession of enemy territory (vv. 19-21).

For the day of the Lord is near upon
all the nations.
For as you have drunk upon my holy
mountain,
all the nations around shall drink;
they shall drink and stagger,
and shall be as though they had not
been. (vv. 15a, 16)

¹⁷³J. M. P. Smith, "Structure of Obadiah", *op. cit.*, p. 131; J. A. Brewer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Obadiah and Joel, in The International Critical Commentary, Vol. 26, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1911, p. 8-9; T. Henshaw, The Latter Prophets, London, Allen & Unwin, 1958, p. 268.

The day of the Lord is near at hand - kî qārôb yôm Yahweh.

This expression is a familiar one and the author probably borrowed it from previous yôm Yahweh oracles (Is 13:6; Zeph 1:7, 14). Israel, to whom this oracle is addressed, has had her "day of the Lord" (cf. vv. 1-14; "day of their ruin," "day of distress," "day of misfortune"); she has drunk from the cup of Yahweh's wrath (Is 51:17, 22b, 23). Jerusalem's destruction in 587 B.C. is equated to her "drinking of the cup of wrath." The foreign nations will also drink in their turn. (Jer 25:15-38; Ps 75:9).

The day of the Lord in Obadiah is described as a day of Yahweh's wrath which is symbolized by the verb "to drink" (satah). The theme of Yahweh's anger and wrath echoes one of the characteristics of the Lord's day in Zeph 1:15, 18; Is 13:9,13; and Ez 13:15. These texts present the nations staggering and reeling from the force of the destructive sword which Yahweh will send them (cf. Jer 25:16, 27-30). Their devastation will be so great that all traces of them will be completely obliterated; they "shall be as though they had not been." This is a good definition of the hêrem ("ban," "curse") also mentioned in Malachi 3:24 as Israel's punishment during the day of the Lord: there will be nothing left to designate the former existence of all the nations.

There are two different aspects of the day of Yahweh in verses 17 and 18: the destruction of Edom and the salvation of Israel. Verse 18 will be dealt with first as it is a continuation of the doom curses which are pronounced over Yahweh's enemies. Though the previous verses dealt with all the nations, verse 18 singles out Edom for a

harsher punishment than the others.

The house of Jacob (bēt ya'āqob) shall be a fire (ʿesh),
and the house of Joseph (bēt yōsēp) a flame (lehabah),
and the house of Esau (bēt ʿēsāw) a stubble (qas);
they shall burn (dālaq) them and consume (ʾākal) them,
and there shall be no survivors (šarid) to
the house of Esau (bēt ʿēsāw);
for the Lord has spoken (dibbēr). (v. 18)

As all other nations must drink from the cup of wrath of Yahweh,
Edom cannot escape (Jer 49:11-13; Lam 4:21-22).

A very important word in this verse is bayit. In its generic sense it simply means a dwelling place, a "house" (Gen 19:3; Ex 12:16, etc.). In the book of Joshua we find the term expanding to encompass all the members of one tribe: "house of Joseph" (Jos 17:17), "house of Ephraim" (Jud 10:9) or all the tribes together as the people of Yahweh, "house of Israel" (Josh 21:45). With the establishment of the monarchy in Israel a new concept is added to the word bayit, that of "dynasty," especially after the prophecy of Nathan to David (2 S 7:12, 16). It is in this sense of "dynasty" that we are to understand bayit in this text. The house (dynasty) of Esau (Edom) will be destroyed by Yahweh through his agents, the house (dynasty) of Jacob (Southern Kingdom) and the house (dynasty) of Joseph (Northern Kingdom). In other words a united Israel will finally prevail over Edom. The animosity between the two nations started with the birth of their founders Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:23-26). Their childhoods were torn with jealousy, hate and deceit (Gen 25:29-34; 27:1-45). When the two finally separated after a short reunion (Gen 33:1-16), each became the leader of a nation: Jacob of Israel, and Esau of Edom. Edom, the smaller and weaker nation, was often the vassal of Israel (2 S 8:14; 2K 3:9;

14:7). Edom's constant subjugation by her brother-nation generated hatred and loathing. Each time she could, Edom threw off the yoke of Israel and regained her borders, even at times extending those borders into Israel (2 K 8:22). Edom finally saw her chance to get even and gain possession of a large area of Israel's southern territory; when Babylon ravaged the capital city, Jerusalem, Edomite mercenaries helped the Babylonians attack and sack the city. It was especially for this crime, and for not coming to the aid of her "brother," that the Israelite prophets condemned Edom and called down God's fury upon her (Jer 25:21; 27:3; 49:1-22; Lam 4:22; Ez 25:12-14; 32:29; 35:1-15; 36:5; Am 1:11-12; 9:12).

The fifth century prophet writing under the name of Obadiah, sees that Edom still hasn't been punished for her evil deeds against Israel, and once again predicts an end for this enemy, a disastrous one. Fire and flame will reduce Edom to stubble, and no one will survive. The "ban" (hērem) is once more invoked. The best part, according to the author, is that Yahweh will give the house ("dynasty") of Israel (Jacob and Joseph) the pleasure of personally destroying forever that ancient foe, Edom.

The direct result of the downfall of Edom and the nations is to be the salvation of Israel, especially if the latter is to be Yahweh's instrument of destruction (fire and flame). This leads us to verse 17 in which Yahweh promises Israel the repossession of her former boundaries.

But in Mount Zion (har sīyyon) there shall be
those that escape (p^elētāh),
and it shall be holy (qōdes);
and the house of Jacob (bēt ya'āqōb) shall possess (yāraś)
their own possessions (mōrāśēm). (v. 17)

The day of the Lord holds no danger for Israel. She will completely escape its effects. In fact, she will benefit from the day! All the territory which had been taken away from her by her enemies will be restored to her.

The fact that Israel is holy (qādōš), enthroned on Mount Zion (har šiyvōn) and will reposses her Promised Land shows she is in a right relationship with Yahweh. We are once more in a covenantal context. The very heart of the covenant at Sinai was the continual relationship between the Lord and his people (Ex 23:22) and the promise that they would possess the Holy Land (Ex 33:1-3). In order to gain this land Yahweh would fight for Israel and conquer her enemies (Ex 23:22-33:33:2; 34:11 etc.).¹⁷⁴ The perpetuity of these promises took root in the blessing-forms found as a counterbalance of the covenant curse-forms in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

1) Possession of the land:

I will give peace to the land, and you shall sleep with none to frighten you. I will rid the land of beasts of prey. The sword shall not pass through your land. (Lv 26:6)

Yahweh will summon a blessing for you in your barns and in all your undertakings and will bless you in the land that Yahweh is giving you. (Dt 28:8)

Included also in this blessing of the land are all the promises of its fertility (Lv 26:3-5, 10; Dt 28:3-5, 11-12).

¹⁷⁴F. C. Fensham, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 13 No. 2, 1963, p. 133-143; by the same author, "Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible", in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1967, p. 308-314.

2) Conquering enemies:

You shall pursue your enemies and they shall fall before your sword. (Lv 26:7)

I will set you high above all the nations of the earth. (Dt 28:1)

The enemies that rise against you, Yahweh will conquer for your sake. (Dt 28:7)

3) Continual relationship between Yahweh and his people:

If you live according to my laws, if you keep my commandments and put them into practice . . . I will be your God and you shall be my people. (Lv 26:3, 13)

Yahweh will make of you a people consecrated to himself as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and follow his ways. (Dt 28:9)

Yahweh will put you at the head and not at the tail; you will always be on top and never underneath, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God that I enjoin on you today, keeping and observing them, not swerving to right or left from any of the works I enjoin on you today by following any other gods and serving them. (Dt 28:13-14)

All three of these blessings are contained in the text of Obadiah: Jacob shall have his possessions once more; the house of Jacob will be a fire, the house of Joseph a flame on the house of Esau (an enemy); and Mount Zion and all those who dwell within will be called holy.

We have repeatedly found a close affinity between the prophetic curses of the Old Testament and the curse lists of the ancient Near

Eastern vassal treaties. According to F. Charles Fensham's paper (cited above), the covenant promises of the Old Testament resemble those made by the major party of a vassal treaty to the minor party to give the submissive loyal king the hope of a peaceful future under the protection of the great king.¹⁷⁵

The promises of Obadiah 17-18 find their counterpart in the Hittite and Assyrian international treaties. [The promise that the house ("dynasty") of Israel would reign on Mount Zion corresponds to the promise of a great king that the line of the vassal would continue, even forever, in certain cases.¹⁷⁶ A first example comes from Hatti:¹⁷⁷

So honor the oath of loyalty to the king and
the king's kin! and I, the king, will be loyal
toward you, Duppi-Tessub. When you take a wife,
and when you beget an heir, he shall be king in
the Amurru land likewise.

Another treaty from Hatti extends the royal line further into the future:¹⁷⁸

The children of Mattiuaza and the children of
my daughter, their children and their children's
children, shall rule in Mitanni in future days.

Numerous other treaties contain the same promise by the overlord,¹⁷⁹ but the examples cited serve to substantiate the comparison between

¹⁷⁵Fensham, "Covenant . . .", op. cit., p. 306-308.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 307.

¹⁷⁷Pritchard, op. cit., p. 204, Par. 8.*

¹⁷⁸Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 168, No. 1, Text KBo. I, Nos. 1 and 2.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 187, No. 5, Text KBo. I, No. 6, lines 11-16, p. 198, No. 12, Text KBo. I, No. 8, lines 16-21.

Obadiah and the vassal treaties.

Yahweh's promise to help Israel conquer her enemies corresponds to the clause of protection promised by the great king to his vassal against the latter's enemies.¹⁸⁰ These promises also are to be found in Hittite treaties. The first one is between Shubbilumia of Hatti and Mattiuaza of Mitanni.¹⁸¹

... when an enemy of Mitanni, or an enemy of the king of Mitanni appears, then the king of Hatti shall seek the well-being of the king of Mitanni.

The other example comes from the treaty between Murshili of Hatti and Shunashshura of Kissuwadni.¹⁸²

If there arises serious hostility against Shunashshura; if the enemy of his assaults come into his land; if into the land of the Sun (the call?) comes; I, the Sun, will come with my picked troops. If before the Sun any word comes, before my picked troops, I will send help.

Another short formula which also suggests protection of the vassal from enemies is:¹⁸³

Wenn du nun immer handelst und die Sonne
freundlich schüttest,
so will ich, die Sonne, dich und entsprechend(?)
deine Söhne gut behandeln,
und mein Sohn wird auch deine Söhne entsprechend(?)
freundlich schützen; ich die Sonne, aber
werde dich schützen.

¹⁸⁰Fensham, "Covenant...", op. cit., p. 307

¹⁸¹Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 167, No. 1, Text KBo. I, No. 1 and 2, lines 68-73.

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 184, No. 4, Text KBo. I, No. 5, Reverse, Col. III, lines 1-6, p. 192, No. 6, Text KBo. I, Nos. 7 and 25, lines 30 and 35.

¹⁸³J. Friedrich, Staatsverträge des Hatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache, in Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft, Vol. 34, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs' Buchhandlung, 1930, p. 111, Kol. I, Par. 6, lines 35-38.

The good relationship which Israel enjoyed with her God depended on her loyalty to his commandments. The covenant formula says it all: "If you live according to my laws, if you keep my commandments and put them into practice . . . I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Lv 26:3, 12b). In the vassal treaty, too, it was necessary that good relations exist between the overlord and the vassal if both parties were to benefit from the treaty. The Sefire II text talks about obedience and about tranquillity between the kingdoms of Matî^cel and Bir-Ga'yah:¹⁸⁴

But if you obey, (may) tranquillity [. . . And] if you say in your soul and think in your mind, ["I am an ally, and I shall obey Bir-Ga'yah] and his sons and his offspring," then I shall not be able to raise a ha[nd against you, nor my son against your son, nor my offspring against your offspring], neither to strike them, nor to destroy their name.

Ramses II of Egypt and Hattušiliš of Hatti, both great overlords, were hostile to each other but each was willing to sign a parity treaty ¹⁸⁵ that would strengthen their common defense against the encroachments of the "Sea Peoples." Peace and brotherhood between them were essential if they were to keep their enemy at bay.¹⁸⁶

Behold, Hattušiliš, the Great Prince of Hatti, has set himself in regulation with User-maat-Re Setep-en-Re, the great ruler of Egypt, beginning from this day, to cause that good peace and brotherhood occur between us forever, (10) while he is in brotherhood with me and he is at peace with me, and I am in brotherhood with him and I am at peace with him forever.

¹⁸⁴Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 81, Sf II, Face B, lines 4-7.

¹⁸⁵Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 716-717.

¹⁸⁶Pritchard, op. cit., p. 199.

The last promise which Yahweh made to Israel through the prophet Obadiah was that his people would repossess the land which he had given them. Yahweh had promised Israel this land through Abraham and he had fixed the boundaries of that land in Moses' day: it was to reach the land of the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites (Ex 33:1-3; Cf. Dt 11:24). David's kingdom had reached these boundaries (2 S 24:5-8), but Israel sinned and lost all of this territory at the time of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The small portion of their homeland which the returned exiles possessed was a far cry from the glorious expanse they had once owned from Dan to Elath and from the Jordan to the Western Sea (cf. Dt 34:1-4). Hope of regaining that territory, however, burned eternally in their hearts. The prophecy in Obadiah rekindled that hope that Yahweh would soon help Israel conquer all her enemies and permit her to repossess that land which her God had given her.

Obadiah enumerated the boundaries and the lands which Israel would possess in verses 19-21:

Those of the Negeb shall possess
Mount Esau,
and those of the Shephelah the
land of the Philistines;
they shall possess the land of
Ephraim and the land of
Samaria
and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
The exiles in Halah who are of the
people of Israel
shall possess Phoenicia as far as
Zarephath;
and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in
Sepharad
shall possess the cities of the
Negeb.

Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion
to rule Mount Esau;
and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

Some scholars contend that these three verses are not from the pen of the author of vv 15a, 17-18 but from that of a later redactor who comments on and expands verse 17.¹⁸⁷ This would explain the position of verse 18 between verses 17 and 19-21 which seems to cut off the sequence of thought from "the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions" (v. 17) to the list of the conquered lands which Israel shall possess as her own. To look closely at the territories to be repossessed: Mount of Esau (Edom), Philistia, Ephraim and Samaria (Northern Kingdom), Gilead, Phoenicia, Negeb, is to see the ancient boundaries of David's kingdom (2 S 24:5-8). Although David never controlled Philistia, the author has included it to have the future Israelite kingdom contain all the land from Dan to Beersheba (North to South) and from the Jordan to the Western Sea (East to West). He has probably defined the division in ideal rather than geographical terms (cf. 1 K 8:65; 2 K 14:25).

An overlord's promise that a particular royal line would continue to possess the country was another clause of protection for a vassal in the vassal treaties, especially those from the Hittite kings. Some treaties even included a detailed description of the borders and main parts of the country,¹⁸⁸ in order to motivate the vassals to remain loyal to them.

¹⁸⁷Brewer, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁸⁸Fensham, "Covenant . . .", op. cit., p. 307-308.

Ulmi-Tesup, the king of Dadasa obtained from the king of Hatti a large area of land well defined by the suzerain:¹⁸⁹

1.15-16: Le pays que je t'ai donné, Ulmi-Tesup, les frontières que je t'ai fixées, garde-les, ne les francis pas. Voici ces frontières.

1.16-18: Du côté du pays de Pitassa, le mont Hava, le Gantanna, Zarnija, Sanantarva sont frontières. Zarnija et le Gantanna sont au pays du Hulaja. Sanantarva est au Pitassa . . .

The treaty continues thus for eighteen lines more defining boundary limitations. Another Hittite king, Murshili, divided up all the conquered lands between himself and his vassal, Shunashshura of Kissuwadni.¹⁹⁰ Without any elaboration of boundaries, a treaty-blessing in the closing paragraph of the contract between a king of Hatti and a king of the Hurrians was used to bring all the conquered Hurrian territory back within the confines of the kingdom's former boundaries.¹⁹¹

May the Mitanni country return to the place which it occupied before; may it thrive and expand. May you, Mattiwaza, your sons and your sons' sons . . . and (you) the Hurrians, exercise kingship forever.

What can be proposed, by way of summary, as the predominant concept of the day of the Lord in the oracle of Obadiah 15a, 16-21? The day is here still a day of the coming of the Lord to punish the guilty hostile forces. It is a doom oracle against the foreign nations,

¹⁸⁹Cavaignac, op. cit., p. 68-69.

¹⁹⁰Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 187, No. 4, Text KBo. I, No. 5, Reverse, Col. IV, lines 40-66.

¹⁹¹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 206.

in particular against Edom. The curses of destruction and annihilation are directed against the adversaries of Yahweh and Israel.

When the smoke has cleared, Zion will be avenged for the disgrace and calamity brought upon her by Edom and the other nations at the time of the exile. "Woe to the nations who rise against my race! The Lord Almighty will punish them on judgment day" (Jdt 16:17). The day will be one of salvation for Israel. She shall repossess the lands taken away from her by her enemies, as the blessings of the covenant promise (Dt 28:8, 11). There is a close resemblance between the blessings promised to Israel in the oracle, and the blessings expressed in the Near Eastern texts, as close a resemblance as there was between their curses. The dual aspect of the day of the Lord in Obadiah - curse/blessing--is identical to that expressed by the legal terminology and the form of the international vassal treaties.

This is only the second yôm Yahweh oracle we have seen against a foreign nation(s); the first one was against Babylon in Isaiah 13:6-8. In the Isaian text there was no specific mention of salvation for Israel at the destruction of Babylon, but we can suppose that if the day is one of punishment for the enemies of Israel, it will be a day of blessing and victory for Israel.¹⁹²

VII. Joel 1:15; 2:1b-2a, 10-11

A. Historical Background

Joel is the last author of the Old Testament to use expressis

¹⁹²Fensham, "Possible Origin", op. cit., p. 92.

verbis the phrase yôm Yahweh. The dating of this book is hard to fix since no date is given in the subscription, nor is there any reference to it which would fix its time in other books. The prevailing view among scholars today is that the present text and structure of Joel are essentially the product of an author working during the post-exilic era in the first half of the fourth century. T. Henshaw has pretty well summarized the reasons for a post-exilic dating of Joel: 1) the Northern Kingdom is not mentioned in the book of Joel; Israel is synonymous with Judah (2:27; 3:2, 16); 2) Judah is described as being scattered (3:1, 12, 17), thus implying a post 587 B.C. date; 3) the second temple is in existence (1:9, 13; 2:14, 17); 4) the importance attached to the daily meal and drink offerings in the temple points to the post-exilic period. They are regarded as essential to assuage the divine wrath. Joel does not protest against sacrifices as the pre-exilic prophets do (Am 5:21-25; Is 1:11-15; Mi 6:6-8; Jer 7:21-23); 5) There is no reference to the Syrians, Assyrians or Babylonians who figure so prominently in the pre-exilic books; 6) the reference to the sale of Jewish slaves to the Ionian Greeks (3:6) suggests a later date rather than an earlier one; 7) the people are called upon to repent of their sins in general terms (2:12, 13) rather than of the specific sins denounced by the pre-exilic prophets; 8) the reference to the city wall (2:9) carries

us down beyond the time of Nehemiah.¹⁹³ Others, however, defend the conservative position of an earlier date during the pre-exilic period.¹⁹⁴

The prophecy of Joel is divided into two sections: chapters one and two, and chapters three and four. With few exceptions, most scholars see the work as the product of a single author in spite of the divergent themes in each section, but with the possibility that the second part may have been written a few years later than the first.

The first section deals with a locust plague and the drought which follows it, while the second section concentrates on the destruction of Israel's enemies. The continuity of thought in these two parts is so apparent that their unity is achieved. Although accepting this continuity of thought, some scholars prefer to attribute separate authors to each section and even allow for the possibility of a third hand inserting later material.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³Henshaw, op. cit., p. 281-282; H. W. Wolff, "Joel" in Dodekapropheten, in Biblischer Kommentar-Altes Testament, Bd 14, Neukirchen, Neukirchener Verlag, 1963, p. 7; A. Weiser, Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten, übers. und erklärt, Teil I, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Vol 24, Gottingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1949, p. 89-91; J. Bourke, "Le jour de Yahvé dans Joel", Revue Biblique, Vol. 66, No. 1, 1959, p. 7, note 4; W. Cannon, "The Day of the Lord in Joel", in The Church Quarterly Review, Vol. 103, No. 1, 1926/27, p. 36-37.

¹⁹⁴A. S. Kapelrud, Joel Studies, in Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift, Uppsala, Lundequist, 1948, p. 191; A. F. Kirkpartick, The Doctrine of the Prophets, New York, MacMillan, 1897, p. 58.

¹⁹⁵B. Duhm, "Anmerkungen zu den zwölf Propheten", Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 31, No. 1 and 2, 1911, p. 1-43, 184-188; J. M. P. Smith, Commentary on Joel, op. cit., p. 56; Brewer, op. cit., p. 56; A. Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, New York, Associated Press, 1961, p. 239-240.

The theme of the day of the Lord runs throughout the two parts, and one might say, is the link the author used to unite two separate oracles which originally contained no reference whatsoever to the day of Yahweh: a locust plague and Yahweh's judgment on Israel's enemies. Joel so vividly describes the locust swarm and the ravages it caused as it swept through Palestine devouring everything in its path, that it seems beyond question that there was historically such a locust invasion during his time, and that the plague could not be merely a symbolic image.¹⁹⁶ A locust plague was very real in the ancient Near East, and feared above all for its lasting devastation. John D. Whiting, a visitor to Jerusalem during one of these locusts attacks on the area, attests that Joel's description accurately corresponds to what he saw as these insects destroyed all vegetation and swarmed over the walls of the city to penetrate into food, clothing, bedding and throughout people's houses in general.¹⁹⁷ He described them as an army invading a camp.

Joel, aroused by the calamity of the locust invasion which had devastated the country, sees in it the approach of the day of

¹⁹⁶This is especially true of the older authors: A. Hoonacker, Les douze petits Prophètes, in Etudes bibliques, Paris, Gabalda, 1908, p. 143-144; A. von Merx, Die Prophetie des Joël und ihre Ausleger von den ältesten Zeiten bis zu den Reformatoren, Halle a.S., Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhuesen, 1879, p. 44, 61-65; E. B. Pusey, The Minor Prophets with Commentary: Explanatory and Practical and Introductions to the Several Books, London, J. H. Parker, 1961, p. 102.

¹⁹⁷J. D. Whiting, "Jerusalem's Locust Plague", in National Geographic, Vol. 28, No. 6, 1915, p. 511-550; See also the description by Mr. Aaronsohn as related to G. L. Robinson, The Twelve Minor Prophets, New York, Doran, 1926, p. 34-35.

Yahweh as a punishment on Judah and Jerusalem. He implies that national sins are the cause of the plagues from which the nation is suffering though he names no specific sins. W. W. Cannon suggests that Israel was committing the same sacrilegious sins deplored by Malachi: 1) the sacrifice of imperfect victims (1:6-14), 2) the withholding of tithes and offerings (3:8), and 3) the conduct of unworthy priests (2:1-9).¹⁹⁸ Cannon does not consider Joel and Malachi as contemporaries, but says that "these are the types of sins to be expected in a community where ritual strictness has assumed a high place in ethical theory."¹⁹⁹ Such a community was post-exilic Jerusalem.

To do away with the locust plague and to avoid an even worse calamity, Joel calls for a national time of mourning, a cultic fast, the return to Yahweh. Because of Joel's strong emphasis on repentance in the first part of the book, Kapelrud contends that he should be called a prophet of repentance rather than one of judgment.²⁰⁰ But when Joel speaks of the day of Yahweh, he is above all a prophet of doom.

B. Textual Criticism

In the first part of Joel's prophecy (chs. 1-2) there are three texts which mention the day of Yahweh (1:15; 2:1-2, 10-11). All

¹⁹⁸Cannon, "Day of the Lord", op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 42.

²⁰⁰Kapelrud, Joel Studies, op. cit., p. 185.

of them, as we shall see, are taken almost verbatim from previous prophetic texts about the day of Yahweh. Joel probably borrowed these oracles from the prophetic literature without changing them, and interpolated them into his work to remind Israel that the locust plague warns of the imminent coming of the day of the Lord.²⁰¹ Even though Joel has changed the context, he maintains judgment and destruction as the theme of the day.

The first yôm Yahweh text is a taunting call, a lament over the impending day of the Lord. Earlier in the text the prophet had summoned the people to lament (1:5-14); he now leads them in a song of mourning.

Cry out to Yahweh,
 "Alas (ʾāhāh) for the Day!
 For the Day of the Lord is near (qārōb
yôm Yahweh),
 and as destruction (śōd) from the
 almighty (śadday) it comes." (1:15)

The interjection ʾāhāh (alas) is a cry of lament identical in meaning to the hōy of Amos 5:18. It is a funeral cry translated by the prophets into an oracle of doom. Joel uses ʾāhāh rather than hōy because that is what he finds in Ezekiel 30:2f, one of the yôm Yahweh texts he interpolates into his book: "Howl: 'Alas (ʾāhāh), the day!' For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near."²⁰² If

²⁰¹J. M. P. Smith, Commentary on Joel, op. cit., p. 50-51.

²⁰²Both von Rad, "The Origin," op. cit., p. 97 and M. Delcor, "Jour de Yahve", in Catholicisme: hier, aujourd'hui, demain, Vol. 25, No. 6, 1965, p. 1053-1058, have included this minor variation text as one of the original yôm Yahweh texts.

Israel does not heed the warning of the locust plague and repent, the destruction of her land and people will be so great on the day of the Lord that those remaining will cry and lament over their losses as at a funeral.

The day of the Lord has not yet arrived but it is so imminent that there is not time for anything except to repent, to turn to Yahweh whom the people have forgotten. The theme of the proximity of the day is a common one to the prophets (Is 13:6; Ez 7:7, 12; 30:2; Zeph 1:14; Ob 15). It conveys the impatience of Yahweh toward an ungrateful Israel or an arrogant pagan nation which has dared to harm his chosen people. Joel sees, too, that the sins of the people of his time rouse God's anger to the point of an imminent calamity. Inserting the yôm Yahweh text of Ezekiel 30:2 which speaks of a sudden, unexpected day of the Lord, Joel warns Israel of the doom which will soon overcome them.

The doom of which the text speaks is simply "destruction (sōd) from the Almighty," words taken verbatim from Isaiah 13:6, "Howl, for the day of Yahweh is near, bringing devastation from Shaddai." The text expresses the destruction which will come in the near future: "day of the Lord is near," but in the following verses Joel describes the visible signs of the disaster already present in the locust plague: famine, shriveled grain, withered corn, empty barns and storehouses and starving animals (1:16-20). By inserting a combination of the yôm Yahweh texts of Ezekiel and Isaiah into the description of the ravages of a locust horde, Joel wants to associate the latter with the traditional prophetic concept of the day of the Lord, so that it

becomes a forerunner of the day and part of the day's destruction.

The two forms of punishment associated with the day of Yahweh in this text: explicitly destruction and implicitly locusts, are traditional curse forms in Israel and the ancient Near East. We have already seen the destruction motif associated with the day of Yahweh in the discussion of Isaiah 13:6-13 above.²⁰³ Joel is the only prophet who links a locust plague (Heuschreckenplagé) to punishment of Yahweh's enemy on his day. Nahum uses the locust imagery only when he compares the sudden and complete disappearance of Nineveh to a swarm of locusts that fly away never to be seen again (3:15-17).

The locust plague was one of the most feared of all the ancient Near Eastern curses because of the complete devastation that it brought. Locusts (ʿarbēh) were one of the ten plagues of Egypt (Ex 10:1-20; Ps 105:34). Throughout Israel's history locust plagues were used as punishments by Yahweh when his people sinned or turned away from him (1 K 8:37; 2 Ch 6:28; 7:13; Ps 78:46; Am 4:9). The curse list in Deuteronomy 28 threatens Israel with a locust invasion if she doesn't observe the commandments of the covenant, "You will cast seed in plenty on the fields but harvest little, for the locust will devour it" (v. 38). Because of its great size and destructive power, a locust horde, moving quickly and devouring all in its wake, was sometimes used metaphorically to describe an advancing army ravishing city and country-side to destroy its enemy (Nah 3:15-17; Jg 6:5; 7:12; Jer 46:23).

²⁰³Supra, p. 110-114.

Various natural calamities, including the locust, were often called upon to overtake a transgressor who dared defy any one of the stipulations of an international treaty. D. R. Hillers, in his section of curses entitled "Devouring Animals," does not include the locust but mentions other insects such as the moth and the louse.²⁰⁴ We can understand this if we remember that Hiller's aim is to include only those curses in the Old Testament which parallel treaty curses of uncommon human experience, making the parallels themselves more dramatic.²⁰⁵ And the locust was certainly a common human experience in the Near East! F. C. Fensham lists the locust as one of the natural calamities used as a curse by the prophets and in the Near Eastern treaties.²⁰⁶ In the treaty of Esarhaddon, it is written: ". . . may locusts, which diminish the (produce) of the land, (devour) your crops . . ." ²⁰⁷ In the Sefire treaty, the wish that locusts may devour Arpad for seven years is expressed.²⁰⁸ A third Assyrian vassal treaty contains this curse: "May [locusts] appear and devour his land, may . . ." ²⁰⁹

The second yôm Yahweh text in this first part of Joel's work is also an interpolation, this time borrowed from the prophet Zephaniah (1:14a, 15b):

²⁰⁴Hillers, op. cit., p. 55-56.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 43.

²⁰⁶Fensham, "Common Trends", op. cit., p. 168-169.

²⁰⁷Pritchard, op. cit., p. 538, Col. 47, line 440.

²⁰⁸Fitzmyer, op. cit., Sf. I, Stele I, Face A, III, line 27.

²⁰⁹Pritchard, op. cit., p. 533, Par. (vi).

for the day of the Lord is coming,
 it is near,
 a day of darkness and gloom
 a day of clouds and thick
 darkness! (2:1b-2a)

The curse of darkness is one of the dominant themes of the day of the Lord (Am 5:18, 20; Zeph 1:15, 17; Is. 13:10). Again we see the genius of Joel who combines the traditional curse of darkness with the locust plague rendering them inseparable in their relationship to the day of Yahweh.

Like the dawn there spreads across the mountains
 a vast and mighty host,
 such as never been before,
 such as will never be again
 to the remotest ages. (2:2b)

The host of locusts as it spreads across the land brings about darkness, the clouds of thick darkness as it blots out the light of the sun. The number of insects is so great they are like a terrible invading army advancing toward the city causing darkness through their density and the smoke from the burning fields and towns (vv 3-9). The locusts are Yahweh's army. They are the means by which Yahweh will punish and bring utter destruction upon Judah and Jerusalem.

The portrayal of devastation caused by the locust army in the following verses (vv 3-9) is vivid and descriptive. Like a phalanx of marching soldiers in battle array, they press on devouring everything they touch and leaving stubble and ruin in their wake.

We see that not only has Joel borrowed the terminology of the day of the Lord: hošēk, ʾāpēlāh, ʿānān, and ʿārāpēl from Zephaniah, but the description of an invading army, too (v. 16).

Joel has transposed the army of men into an army of locusts, but the destruction is no less complete.

The third and last yôm Yahweh text in part one of Joel concludes the description of the locust invasion:

The earth quakes (rāgaz) before them
 the heavens tremble (rā'as), -
 The sun and moon are darkened (qādar)
 and the stars withdraw (āsap) their shining (nōgah).
 The Lord utters his voice (qōl)
 before his army (hayil),
 for his host (mahāneh) is exceedingly great (rab);
 he that executes his word (dābār) is powerful (āšūm)
 For the day of the Lord (yôm Yahweh) is great (gādōl)
 and very terrible (nōrā);
 who can endure (yakōl) it?
 (2:10-11)

Originally the trembling of nature (Ex 19:16, 18; Jg 5:4-5; Pss 18:7; 29:8-9; Is 64:1; Hab 3:6) and the darkening of luminaries (Ex 14:20; 10:21-23; Ps 105:28; Is 13:10, 13) were tied to the idea of Yahweh coming to intervene on behalf of his people. This idea was sometimes inverted by the prophets to mean fear and punishment for Israel and Judah at Yahweh's coming (Is 2:10, 19, 21; Am 5:18, 20; 8:9; Zeph 1:15). Joel retains the two elements of the theophany: the convulsions of the heavens and the earth, and punishment for Israel's sins, but merges both into the locust plague and the day of Yahweh. The theophoric imagery and terminology he borrows from Isaiah 13 is transferred from Yahweh to the locusts.

Joel 2

The earth quakes before them,
the heavens tremble.
(v. 10a)

The sun and moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their
shining. (v. 10b)

Isaiah 13

Therefore, I will make the
heavens tremble. And the
earth will be shaken out
of its place. (v. 13)

For the stars of the heavens
and their constellations
will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its
rising
and the moon will not shed
its light. (v. 10)

By applying identical phenomena to both "appearances:" the locust plague's and Yahweh's, the author stresses that the locusts are sent by Yahweh and used by him to bring about the punishment of Juda and Jerusalem. It is the density of the swarm that causes the earth to tremble and the skies to darken.

Yahweh's presence, however, is manifested in the sound of his voice. He is before his locust army commanding them to strike, devour, and ravish. They are his instruments of destruction. Numerous and powerful, they obey the voice of their leader as they march behind him. Often the voice of Yahweh giving orders is associated with a theophany (Ex 19:16; Ps 29; I K 19:1-18). In this text, the orders are given to a victorious army.

To tie Yahweh's punishment of Judah and his locust army to the day of the Lord, Joel interpolates a yôm Yahweh text resembling Zeph 1:10, 14 and Mal 3:23: "For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it (Joel 2:11b)?" The locust plague and the day of the Lord are placed side by side. There is no question in the author's mind that the locust curse (and indirectly that of

darkness) is being carried out by Yahweh as punishment for a breach of the covenant. What that breach is, he does not say. We learn further on in his plea to repent that Judah has in fact turned away from Yahweh and the covenant:

But now, now - it is Yahweh who speaks -
 come back (sûb) to me with all your heart,
 fasting, weeping, mourning.
 Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn,
 turn (sûb) to Yahweh your God again,
 for he is tenderness (hannûn) and compassion (rahûm),
 slow to anger, rich in graciousness (hesed)
 and ready to relent (niham). (Joel 2:12-13)

Right away one can see that this passage is rich in covenantal language: sûb, hannûn, rahûm, hesed, niham.²¹⁰ Israel has broken the covenant and the locust plague is the curse sent to punish Judah. But it is not too late: there is time to repent. The prophet proclaims a fast throughout the land (2:15, 17) as a sign of repentance (cf. the fast of the Ninevites in Jonah 3:5-10). The people wail and lament before the altar of the temple (1:13-20; 2:12-17). The author then reverts to his first notion that the locust plague was only a harbinger of the day of Yahweh, a warning to return to Yahweh before it is too late.

The plague stops (2:19-20) and with its ceasing come promises to restore the land and all that the locusts have devastated, another indication that the locust curse is associated with the day of the Lord. Through repentance and renewed fidelity to the covenant, Judah receives the reversal of the curses, the blessings of the covenant.

²¹⁰Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 334, 335; Vogels, op. cit., p. 109-110.

There is no longer to be drought but bounteous harvests (2:22-24); instead of famine, store houses will overflow (2:26).

I will make up to you for the years
devoured by grown locust and hopper by
shearer and young locust,
my great army
which I sent to invade you. (2:25)

Yahweh will once again be their God, and they his people (2:27).

What picture of the day of Yahweh does Joel give us in the first part of his book? He interpolates three traditional yôm Yahweh texts: 1:15 (= Is 13:6 and Ez 30:2); 2:1b-2a (= Zeph 1:14a, 15b) and 2:10-11 (= Is 13:10, 13 and Zeph 1:10, 14), weaving them into a long poem about the ravages of the locusts which he describes at length (1:2-12, 16-20; 2:1a, 2b-9). By combining these two events, he wishes to associate the locust plague with the traditional curses of the day of the Lord. Seeing the locusts as punishment for sin against Yahweh, the prophet calls for national lamenting and fasting (1:13-14; 2:12-17).

Joel starts with the locusts as messengers of the day of Yahweh (1:15), which warn Judah that her misfortune is caused by her sins and that unless she repents, a destruction far worse than a locust plague will come upon her. The prophet then continues his description of the day of Yahweh (2:1a-2v). He has so interwoven the portrayal of a locust invasion with that of the day of the Lord, though, that the locusts no longer appear to be messengers of a future calamity, but rather emerge as instruments of Yahweh's punishment on the present community of Judah. In other words, the locusts signify that the "day" is upon the people of God because they have

turned away from him. The locust-army described in the last yôm Yahweh text (2:10-11) is the same destruction-causing force seen in the first two. The intensity of the invasion is heightened and Yahweh is given the role of commander of the army. There can no longer be any doubt that the locust plague and the day of the Lord are one and the same event. The only way to avoid the disaster and/or to turn the trial into blessings for Judah is to turn to Yahweh and do penance. Only if the people repent can Yahweh promise that everything shall be as it was before.

There is no doubt that Joel uses liturgical motifs, especially a cultic day of repentance, in the first part of his book.²¹¹ But it is less probable that he sees the day of the Lord as a cultic day.²¹² One need only consider the prophetic tradition which precedes him and from which he draws his material. The features Joel has accentuated in his descriptions of the day of the Lord: the greatness and proximity of the day, the darkening of the luminaries, the shaking of heaven and earth, a day of destruction by a locust plague; maintain the covenantal and legalistic terminology found in the previous yôm Yahweh texts. The traditional concept that the day of the Lord is a day of doom and disaster, a day during which the curses of the covenant will come upon an unfaithful Judah--all of this is

²¹¹Some scholars see the whole book of Joel, both parts of it, as a cultic liturgy: G. W. Ahlström, Joel and the Temple Cult of Jerusalem, in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 21, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1971, p. 63-97; E. Kutsch, "Heuschreckenplage und Tag Jahwes in Joel 1 und 2", in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol 18, No. 2, 1962, p. 81-94; Kapelrud, Joel Studies, op. cit., p. 179.

²¹²Kapelrud, Joel Studies, op. cit., p. 180.

made relevant to Joel's fourth century audience. They have sinned by turning away from their God, and therefore, Yahweh himself will come to inflict disaster upon them just as surely as he has in the past on their ancestors who had broken the covenant. The prophet uses the locust plague and its disastrous effects as a sign of greater plagues to come on the day of Yahweh if Judah doesn't repent. By further paralleling the disaster brought by the day of Yahweh with the locusts, we can assume his implication that the present locust plague is the punishment of the day of the Lord. Either way, the concept of the day remains the same: a day of curses for unfaithful Judah.

VIII. JOEL 3:3-5; 4:14-17

A. Historical Background

Years have passed, a decade or two perhaps, yet, still within the lifetime of the author of the first part of Joel, that is, early fourth century B.C. Judah has repented and the manifold blessings promised to her by Yahweh for this return to him have come to pass. The fields yield a hundredfold, the granaries are full of wheat and the vats full of wine. The whole tone of this second part of Joel (chs 3-4) is different from that of the first, at least as far as Judah is concerned. A spirit of optimism prevails; now by their repentance the community is back in the good graces of Yahweh and his blessings on them seem unlimited. Now that material prosperity has been restored, the prophet foresees Yahweh inaugurating a spiritual renewal and bringing about the long overdue judgment on the nations (cf. Mal 3:22, 23-24). The day is drawing near when Yahweh will put

on trial, judge and punish the nations "for all they have done to Israel, my people and my heritage" (Joel 4:2b). This "day" also is seen by the author as a day of the Lord. The first one was against Judah; this second one is against the nations.

The unity of the two parts is striking, and strongly suggests the mind and hand of a single author. J. Bourke outlines the two parts, Chs. 1-2 with Chs. 3-4, and shows their resemblance by way of: 1) identical phraseology,²¹³ 2) the two gatherings at Zion²¹⁴ and 3) the organic unity of both sections with the principle passages of the day of the Lord as the core of the whole structure.²¹⁵

There exist two distinct days of the Lord in Joel. The first one is historically tied to the local incident of a locust plague against Jerusalem, while the second one expands to include the judgment of all the nations. The question arises; Can this second day in Joel be seen as eschatological in the sense of referring to the end-time, to an end of history? M. Treves says no, unless eschatology is seen to represent promises of deliverance to the oppressed and punishment to the guilty.²¹⁶ He goes on to add, "Le 'jour du Seigneur' de Joël est simplement le jour que le Seigneur choisit pour intervenir dans les choses humaines, afin de punir le mauvais et de

²¹³Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 5-9. He has used 1:15; 2:1b-2a; 2:10-11; 3:2-4 and 4:14b-16a.

²¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 9-11. J1 1:14; 2:1; 2:15-17; 4:2-3; 4:9-12.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 11-15.

²¹⁶M. Treves, "The Date of Joel", in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1957, p. 150; Ahlström, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

délivrer l'opprimé."²¹⁷ Bourke disagrees with Treves especially in his concept of time. Bourke sees three successive stages of time development in the prophets: the near future expressed by hinnēh yāmim ba'îm, an imminent future depicted by qārôb hayyôm and a more distant future expressed in the formula 'ahărît.²¹⁸ This more distant future, he says, is in Joel eschatological in the strict sense of the end-time.²¹⁹ It is however, hard to accept such a pat division of time this early in Israel's history. Time, for the Hebrew, was not divided into periods and labelled.²²⁰ Most of Joel's so called, "Eschatological phrases:" a sending of the spirit, cosmic wonders, the punishment of the nations, the restoration of Israel, the elimination of foreigners (enemies of Israel) from Jerusalem, etc., are all embedded in Israel's religious and historical traditions. Joel is using past traditional images to describe the ideal, yet historical Juda and Jerusalem that will exist after Yahweh has defeated, judged and punished the enemy nations. He is not describing a heavenly or

²¹⁷Treves, op. cit., p. 150 as quoted by Bourke, op. cit., p. 194.

²¹⁸Bourke, op. cit., p. 193-194.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 195. See also S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, Oxford, Blackwell, 1956, p. 125-126.

²²⁰T. C. Vriezen, "Prophecy and Eschatology," in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 1, (Congress Volume, Copenhagen), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953, p. 224; G. Pidoux, "A propos de la Notion biblique du Temps", in Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1952, p. 120-125; N. H. Snaith, "Time in the Old Testament", in Promise and Fulfillment, F. F. Bruce, ed., Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1963, p. 108.

spiritual era which is part and parcel of the strict adherence to an eschatological belief. It is perhaps more correct to call the time which Bourke designates as "distant future," either "futuristic"²²¹ or "future hope"²²² rather than eschatological in the strict sense.

It is true that Joel describes the day of the Lord as the great Assize when God will judge the nations, after which will come the destruction of the Gentiles. But his vision of the future is not limited to a day of final judgment because beyond this judgment there will be a new era, an age of peace and prosperity when the rule of God over his people will be complete. The "end" envisioned here is the end of an historical era and not the "eschatological" end of the world.²²³

B. Textual Criticism

Joel continues to reflect on the day of the Lord in light of the recent event of Judah's conversion and the cessation of the locust plague. First of all, he takes from Ezekiel (Ez 39:29) the prophecy of an outpouring of the spirit of God on his nation as a sign of his benevolent presence among the people. He then comments on the effect of the day of the Lord for the other nations.

And I will give portents (môpet) in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood (dām) and fire (ʿēs) and columns of
smoke (tîmārôt ʿāsān).

²²¹Ahlström, op. cit., p. 73.

²²²Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 125.

²²³Russell, op. cit., p. 93.

The sun will be turned into darkness (hōšek)
 and the moon into blood (dām),
 before the day of Yahweh (yōm Yahweh) dawns
 that great (gādōl) and terrible (nōrā) day.
 (3:3-4)

The word for "portents" here does not imply "omen" as it is understood in divination, nor is it the usual word ʾōt which signifies the marvelous, but mōpet implying something amazing or stupendous, and often a sign of a future event. These stupendous signs: blood (dām), fire (ʾeš) and columns of smoke (tīmārōt ʿāšān) describe the presence of Yahweh coming in a theophany to bring blessings or punishment.²²⁴ The first person singular pronoun "I" (ʾani) announces that it is Yahweh himself speaking and it is he who will come in person to dole out punishment on those nations who have treated Israel so brutally.

To tie the second day to the first day of the Lord in the first part of his book, and to demonstrate that the second day of the Lord will be as real as the first one, Joel interpolates the same text from Isaiah 13 describing a "day" of darkness into both parts. The darkening of sun and moon are not phenomena of the day of Yahweh itself, but serve the same purpose as the locust plague in 1:10, that is, they are warnings that a day of doom is dawning. These cosmic changes are caused by the sinister, angry presence of Yahweh who is poised to inflict punishment on the nations when his patience

²²⁴Blood: as the Egyptian plague (Ex 7:17-24; Ps 78:44; 105:29), as punishment from Yahweh (Ez 5:17; 14:19; 16:38; 38:22); Fire: as a theophany (Ex 3:2; 13:21; 14:24; 19:18; 24:17; 40:38; Nb 9:15-16; etc.), as punishment from Yahweh (Ex 9:23-24; Lv 10:2-3 Dt. 9:3, etc.), Pillar of smoke: as a theophany (Is 4:5), as a punishment from Yahweh (Jd 20:40).

is exhausted. It won't be long now!

The actual description of the day of the Lord in this text is vague. It is only referred to as "great (gādôl) and terrible (nôra') day." The relationship of this phrase to previous yôm Yahweh texts (Zeph 1:10, 14; Mal 3:23) and its parallel in part one of Joel (2:11), however, identify the day with the doom and disaster closely connected to the curses which Yahweh sends down upon his enemies to punish them for rebellion and haughtiness.

All who call on the name (šēm) of Yahweh will be saved (yimmalet),
for on Mount Zion (hār sīyyôn) there will be some who have escaped (pēletah),
as Yahweh has said,
and in Jerusalem some survivors (šārid) whom Yahweh will call. (3:5)

The tone of the oracle changes from doom to salvation: the destruction of the nations will not touch Mount Zion; Yahweh will protect his people. J. M. P. Smith believes that verse 5 is from the hand of an editor, not from Joel's, because of the direct quotation from Obadiah 17 stating that every true worshipper of Yahweh would be safe on that great day.²²⁵ This observation is weak if one accepts that the author of Joel often quotes from the prophetic writings. Why would this citation come from an editor and the others not? No, one finds in this oracle aspects of disaster and happiness on the day of Yahweh parallel to those of the oracle of Obadiah 15-21. There will be an ideal time for Judah and Jerusalem after the judgment and punishment of the nations. Those who have called on

²²⁵J. M. P. Smith, Commentary on Joel, op. cit., p. 54.

the name of Yahweh will benefit from the day.²²⁶ Along with the malediction/benediction motif, the author maintains three characteristic traditions of the day of the Lord discussed above: 1) prophetic influence and borrowing (Is 13:10; Zeph 1:10, 14; Mal 3:23; Ob 17), 2) the curse (darkness, destruction) blessing, (living with Yahweh on Mount Zion), evidence of the relation to the Israelite Covenant (Lv 26:12) and to the international vassal treaties, and 3) the protection clauses for the faithful partner built into the covenant and treaties (call on the name of Yahweh).

As the text continues, Joel describes in detail the judgment and punishment of the nations. He introduces this section with a promise of restoration for Judah and Jerusalem (4:1), which will be kept when their enemies have been destroyed. In the text, all the enemy nations are assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat, a symbolic name meaning "decision."²²⁷ The author has probably no precise geographical location in mind for this valley of decision, although some have associated it with the Kidron Valley just outside Jerusalem.²²⁸ We hear for the first time why the nations are to be punished on the day of Yahweh: they are all put on trial and their sins, which all pertain to some abuse against Israel, her land or her people, are proclaimed (4:2-3).

²²⁶Supra, p. 140-141.

²²⁷Ahlström, op. cit., p. 76-81.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 78.

Joel then zeroes in on two specific countries which have been especially obnoxious toward Israel: Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon) and Philistia. They have sold Jews into slavery to the Greeks and carried away the silver and gold from the Temple treasury in Jerusalem.²²⁹ The announcement of retribution seems very appropriate here to the writer (4:7-8). The law of lex talionis is called down upon Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. This legal term was familiar to Israel from the Mosaic Law, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Ex 21:25; Lv 24:19-20; Dt 19:21). Other prophets had also pronounced words of exact retribution in the form of curses upon Yahweh's enemies: "To each he will pay his due, wrath to his enemies, reprisals on his foes" (Is 59:18); "This is the vengeance of Yahweh. Take revenge on her. Treat her as she has treated others" (Jer 50:15b, cf. Jer 50:29); "As you have done, so will it be done to you; your deed will recoil on your own head" (Ob 15).

West Semitic texts have been found, especially commemorative and funerary inscriptions which also contained curses comparable to those related to the lex talionis. From Zakir comes this note of warning:²³⁰

16 Whoever shall cast down [. . .] 17 [. . . of]
king of Hama [th and La-] 18 from this stele,

²²⁹Cannon, "Day of the Lord", op. cit., p. 40-41.

²³⁰Gervirtz, op. cit., p. 144-145.

May B⁴L SMYN (the Lord of heaven) and 'I[lu-]
 24 [we, and . . .] and SMS and SHR 25[and . . .]
 and the gods of heaven 26 [and the god]s of earth,
 and B⁴L^c [. . .] 27 [cast down/remove] the . . .
 and 28 [. . .] his . . .]

From a casket was translated this curse:²³¹

6 . . . When any sovereign or 7 any man who shall open the
 lid of this burial-place, if someone shall take away the
 casket of my burial-place, if someone shall carry it
 from this burial-place, may they not have a burial-place
 with the shades, nor be buried in a grave!

These enemies of Judah: Phoenicia and Philistia, will thus
 feel the wrath of Yahweh's justice, on his day, when he turns the
 tables. These nations then will have their own sons sold to foreign
 peoples by Judah, the very nation they humiliated (4:7-8).

In 4:9-12, the scene shifts back to the Valley of Jehoshaphat
 and the judgment and punishment of all the nations. Yahweh, himself,
 organizes a battle where he, as warrior, will lead his army (the Jews)
 against the enemies. Joel depends on his collection of prophetic
 oracles to describe the battle scene (Zech 14; Ez 38-39; Is 2:4) and
 the harvesting of the wicked (Is 17:5; 63:1-6). Yahweh's army corres-
 ponds to the army of locusts in the first part (2:1-11). The locust
 army then marched toward Jerusalem, the second army marches toward
 the Valley of Jehoshaphat. J. Bourke makes this interesting comparison:
 " . . . tandis que, dans la première section, les sauterelles (un
 phénomène agricole) avaient été décrites en termes militaires, comme
 une armée, dans la seconde section, l'armée des Gentils est décrite
 en termes agricoles, comme une récolte."²³²

²³¹Ibid., p. 147.

²³²Bourke, op. cit., p. 14.

Inserted into and combined with the judgment of the nations in the valley is the second yôm Yahweh text in part two of Joel (4:14-17). It, too, contains the dual theme of malediction/benediction. The malediction theme will be treated first.

Host on host in the valley of decision (hārûš).
 For the Day of the Lord is near (qārôb yôm Yahweh)
 in the valley of decision (hārûš),
 The sun and moon are darkened (qādar),
 and the stars withdraw their shining (nōgah).
 And the Lord roars from Zion,
 and utters his voice from Jerusalem,
 and the heavens and earth
 shake (rā'as). (4:14-16a)

Joel inserts the phrase "in the valley of decision" into the traditional description of the day of the Lord to connect the day with the battle against the nations; since "valley of decision" is another symbolic name for the place of judgment. The noun hārûš ("decision") comes from the root hrs which means "to cut,"²³³ thus it alludes to the harvest cutting above (4:13) in its relationship to the punishment of the wicked.

Joel describes the same astral phenomena with the curse language he used in 2:10: "sun and moon darkened" (qādar), "stars withdraw their shining" (nōgah), and "the earth quakes" (rā'as). The darkness and shaking in 2:10 were caused by the locust army advancing toward Jerusalem invading and destroying: here too, they are caused by Yahweh and his host (hāmôn)²³⁴ arriving in the valley of decision

²³³Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., p. 358.

²³⁴C. A. Keller, Les petits Prophètes: Osée, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, in Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament Vol. XIa, R. Martin Achard, ed., Neuchâtel, Delachaux & Niestlé, 1966, p. 151-152.

to punish and destroy the nations. This is another means Joel uses to unite the two parts of his book around the theme of the day of the Lord.

The traditional characteristics of the day of the Lord are found in this text: 1) Yahweh himself punishes (Is 13:3-4; Ez 13:8; Zeph 1:17; Mal 3:23), 2) the proximity of the "day" (Jl 2:1b; Ob 15; Zeph 1:14a), 3) the darkening of the heavens (Is 13:10; Am 5:18, 20; Jl 2:2a, 10; 3:4; Zeph 1:15b), and 4) the shaking of the heavens and earth (Is 13:13; Jl 2:10).

The roaring voice of Yahweh is full of anger and those who hear it will tremble with fright (Hos 11:10-11). The prophet Amos used these exact words, "The Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem" at the beginning of the section in which he describes Yahweh's judgment on the nations (Am 1:2); it is probably from Amos that Joel borrows the phrase.

The curses, described as cosmic cataclysms on the day of the Lord, will bring ruin on many peoples; only the people of God will be protected. Yahweh now directly addresses those who will survive his day, confirming that his covenant with Israel is intact and that Jerusalem will be forever holy:

But the Lord is a refuge (maḥāseḥ) to his people,
a stronghold (mā'ōz) to the people of Israel.

So you shall know that I am the Lord your God,
who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain,
and Jerusalem shall be holy (qōdeš)
and strangers (zār) shall never again pass through it. (4:16b-17)

Yahweh, the divine suzerain, remains faithful to his promises of protection when Israel, the vassal, is in a right relationship, in other words, a covenantal relationship to him. Like the yôm Yahweh oracle of Obadiah 15a, 16-21 in which Israel benefits from the disastrous day of the Lord on her enemies, this oracle contains benedictions stemming from the covenant.

Yahweh has been a protection for his people in the past against her enemies (Ex 23:22; 34:11) and against the plagues which affected the enemy (Ex 10:23; 12:21-23). He is still a refuge and stronghold for Judah and Jerusalem.

The phrase, "So you shall know that I am the Lord your God" is highly Deuteronomic in terminology and ideology. Yahweh became the God of the Hebrews (their suzerain) when he called Moses to lead them out of Egypt. (Ex 3:18). It was under this title: ʾānōkī Yahweh ʾēlōhukām that he became the Lord of the covenant (Ex 20:1). To reaffirm his protection of his people, Yahweh once again refers to his covenant title. Likewise in vassal treaties, especially those from Hatti, the suzerain, after introducing himself as the one imposing the treaty, often refers to that same title throughout the document whenever he lists the past and future relations between the vassal and himself. A Hittite treaty with Egypt bears out this resemblance:²³⁵

²³⁵Pritchard, op. cit., p. 529.

I, the Sun, [made you my vassal.] And if you,
[Aziras, protect the king of the Hatti land,
your master,] the king of the Hatti land, your
ma[ster, will protect you in the same way.]

This title, "I, the Sun," is repeated to remind the vassal of his allegiance.

It is in keeping with his covenant love²³⁶ that Yahweh performs these great wonders and mighty deeds for his people. By these they will know that he is their God. The verb "to know" (yāda^c), as a technical term, has a treaty background. H. B. Huffmon, in a short article, gives five uses of the word yāda^c in the vassal treaties.²³⁷ They are: 1) in reference to mutual legal recognition on the part of the suzerain and vassal; 2) a recognition of the treaty stipulations as binding; 3) the vassal's knowing the suzerain as his legitimate god; 4) in connection with the change of heart and the new covenant; and 5) a reference to Egypt's future conversion when she will "know" Yahweh. In the context of Joel it refers to the vassal's "knowing" the suzerain. Israel recognizes Yahweh as her (sole) legitimate God (cf. Hos 13:4; 8:2; 2:22). She also knows him in the sense of having experienced his love and goodness throughout her history and realizing that he will bless and protect her as long as she chooses to conform to the covenant and recognize that he, and no other god, is her Lord.

²³⁶W. L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1963, p. 78-87.

²³⁷H. B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew yada^c", in The Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Vol. 181, No. 1, 1966, p. 31-37.

Yahweh's presence in his temple on Mount Zion will make Jerusalem a holy city to be inhabited only by those He chooses. The city will be inviolable against all strangers who wish to profane it (Jer 31:40; Nah 2:1; Is 51:23; 52:1; Ob 17; Zk 9:8; 14:21). All this makes up an ideal picture which can only be possible after the defeat of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

J. Bourke believes that Joel has fused together in this verse two great traditions, the Deuteronomic and Priestly, which he calls the "Sēm-theology" and the "Kābôd-theology."²³⁸ The Sēm-theology teaches that the temple is holy because Yahweh's name dwells there (Dt 12:5),²³⁹ whereas the Kābôd-theology maintains that it is the "cloud" of the presence of Yahweh which fills the temple and makes it holy (Ex 40:34-35).²⁴⁰ That Joel had these two theologies in mind when he spoke of the day of the Lord is possible, but it is more likely that he was simply recalling a promise made by Yahweh to his people if they remained faithful to him, "I will set up my dwelling among you, and I will not cast you off. I will live in your midst; I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Lv 26:11-12).

Because Jerusalem is holy, those who live there will also be holy, ". . . and strangers shall never again pass through it" (Joel 4:17). This promises the consecration of the people of God, another reward for obeying Yahweh's commands: "Yahweh will make of you a

²³⁸Bourke, op. cit., p. 199-202.

²³⁹Ibid., p. 200.

²⁴⁰Bourke, loc. cit.

people consecrated to himself as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and follow his ways" (Dt 28:9).

The final verses of chapter four (vv. 18-21), one could say, summarize Joel's concept of the day of the Lord with its dual themes of punishment for the nations, and salvation and prosperity for Israel once her enemies are destroyed. The verses are associated with the previous oracles about the day of the Lord through the phrase, "And in that day . . ."

The author contrasts the glorious future of Judah with the destruction of the nations (represented here by Egypt and Edom) through the use of fertility/non-fertility images. The restored fertility of Judah's land is the antithesis of the locust drought in chapters one and two. The wine which was "cut off from the mouth" (1:5) during the drought, now drips to overflowing from the mountains. The cattle and sheep that had no pasture (1:18) can be seen grazing on hills covered with a rich verdure which make an abundance of milk possible both morning and evening. The shriveled crops (1:11-12, 17) are watered by rivers and fountains of life-giving water. In a land as arid as Palestine, it is no wonder that the greatest blessing which Yahweh can bestow on his people seems to be the fertility of their country.²⁴¹ Yahweh had promised it to them in the blessings of the covenant, if they remained faithful (Lv 26:3-5, 10; Dt 28:4-5, 8, 11-

²⁴¹F. C. Fensham, "An Ancient Tradition of the Fertility of Palestine", in Palestine Exploration Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2, 1966, p. 166-167; P. Reymond, L'au, sa Vie et sa Significance dans l'Ancien Testament in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. VI, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1958, p. 234-237.

12), Interestingly the Matanni version of the treaty between Shubbiluliuma of Hatti and Mattiuaza of Mitanni includes a similar blessing of fertility.²⁴²

If we keep this treaty and oath with the Sun, Shubbiluliuma, etc., may the gods whose names we have called upon go with us, increase our number (widen us), guard us, strengthen us. As Lord, may Mattiuza go on ahead; under his protection may we enjoy abundant harvests, favor and honor may we see.

The valley of Shittim (v. 18b) is used symbolically by Joel, although the place-name can be found in the Old Testament (Josh 2:1; 3:1; Nb 25:1; 33:49; Mi 6:5). Ahlström believes the name is symbolically connected to Joshua 3:1 in which Shittim is the starting point for the holy wars and the conquest of the Promised Land; Joel's use of it would thus signify a new era for the people of his time,²⁴³ one which would announce the end of Egypt and Edom, and the beginning of eternal prosperity for Judah and Jerusalem.

In contrast to the fertility of Judah, Egypt and Edom receive as punishment the desolation of their land, a curse which, as we have seen, is a common one in the ancient Near East, later included in the curse lists of its treaties.²⁴⁴ Egypt and Edom, the two greatest enemies of Israel, have been singled out to receive a greater punishment than the other nations because of their inhumanity to Israel: Egypt the land of her slavery and Edom, her Brother-Traitor.

²⁴²Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 176, No. 2. Text KBo. I, No. 3 Reverse, lines 23-45.

²⁴³Ahlström, op. cit., p. 92; Keller, op. cit., p. 154.

²⁴⁴Supra, p. 110-114.

With her enemies destroyed, Yahweh's people will live in peace forever in their land and in their holy city: "but Judah shall be inhabited for ever, and Jerusalem to all generations (Jl 4:20). In Hebrew ‘ôlām ("forever") has the connotation of long duration, antiquity or futurity.²⁴⁵ N. Snaith expresses it as "a long duration, for a long time backward and a long time forwards. It can lead into the indefinite future. It involves continuing, continuing, continuing. The Golden Age is to be 'with no end.'"²⁴⁶ There is no question here of the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem as an end-time or eschaton. It is not the end of history but a continuation of the good times promised and given by Yahweh. "From generation to generation" (lêdôr wādôr) also refers to an indefinite period usually extending into the future, but also into the past.²⁴⁷ These words of perpetuity indicate a binding relationship between Yahweh and his people. The Lord has given his yassal (Israel) a land and a city that she shall inhabit from generation to generation. The fear of unfaithfulness will no longer exist because all the pagans will have been destroyed (cf. Dt 11:9, 31-32; 1 Ch 9:8; Jer 17:18; Ez 37:25).

The terms "forever" and "from generation to generation" are

²⁴⁵Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., p. 761.

²⁴⁶Snaith, op. cit., p. 180.

²⁴⁷J. L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1965, p. 301.

legal terms²⁴⁸ found in the protection clauses of the ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties. They refer to the protection which the overlord gives to the vassal, his wife, his children, his grandchildren, his house and his country. One such text comes from the archives of the royal palace of Ugarit. It is an accord between Shuppiluliuma of Hatti and Neqmadu of Ugarit enumerating the territorial borders of the two countries. It states: "Ainsi, Suppiluliumas, Grand-roi, roi du Hatti, le héros, ces frontières, villes, montagnes, à Niqmadu, roi de l'Ugarit, les a attribuées par sceau, ainsi qu'à ses fils et fils de ses fils, à jamais!"²⁴⁹ The word "forever" is there and the enumerating of the sons which follows concretizes the meaning of the term "from generation to generation." Hittite treaties also contain this protection clause. In a treaty between Shuppiluliuma and Mattiwaza of the Hurri country there is this blessing clause: "May you Mattiwaza, your sons and your sons' sons (descended) from the daughter of the Great King of the Hatti land, and (you), the Hurrians, exercise kingship forever. May the throne of your father persist, may the Mitanni country persist."²⁵⁰ In reality, it is the kingship of Mattiwaza that is to last forever through his sons' occupying of the throne; and as long as he is king, the land of Mitanni will last in

²⁴⁸S. E. Loewenstamm, "From this Time Forth and Evermore" in *Tarbiz*, Vol. 32, 1962/63, p. 313-316; Weinfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 104-105.

²⁴⁹J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais royal d'Ugarit*, in *Mission de Ras Shamra*, Tome IX, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1956, p. 51, 17.340, 10¹.

²⁵⁰Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

its present borders and its people will be safe under the protection of the king of Hatti.

In conclusion, several points of reference can be made. Joel describes, in identical terms, the day of Yahweh in both parts of his book: sun and moon darkened (2:10; 3:4; 4:15), great and terrible day (2:11; 3:4), nearness of the day (1:15; 3:4; 4:14). The "day" retains its emphasis of doom and destruction but its meaning has been extended to include all the nations, particularly those which will be more harshly punished because of their inhumanity to Israel. This idea corresponds to the yôm Yahweh texts in Isaiah 13:6-13 and Obadiah 15a, 16-21. The dual aspect of malediction/benediction appears here as elsewhere in the yôm Yahweh tradition (Ob 15a, 16-21; Mal 3:22, 23-24). The terminology which Joel uses to express these curses and promises comes from the legal world of the Israelite covenant, boundary stones and that of the international treaties. Lastly, the second part of Joel contains the prophetic concept that the day of the Lord is the day on which Yahweh himself will come to bring punishment in the form of curses upon his enemies.

IX. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER TWO

Such are the Old Testament texts which contain expressis verbis the phrase yôm Yahweh. This chapter has tried to investigate these texts to determine the meaning of the day of the Lord as the prophets proclaimed it. Sufficient evidence has been found to warrant the following general conclusions which will serve as basic premises underlying the proposed definition of the day of the Lord: a day

on which the curses of the covenant will fall upon unfaithful Israel and upon the nations for their hostility toward Yahweh and his chosen people, Israel.²⁵¹

1. All eight yôm Yahweh texts are in the context of prophetic doom oracles. Five of them are against Israel/Judah (Am 5:18-20; Zeph 1:7, 14-18; Ez 13:1-16; Mal 3:22, 23-24 and Jl 1:14-15; 2:1b-2a, 10-11) and three against foreign nations: Babylon (Is 13:6-13), Edom (Ob 15a, 16-21), and all nations in general (Jl 3:3-5; 4:14-17), but especially Phoenicia, Philistia, Edom and Egypt. From such a context, one can initially deduce that the day of Yahweh will bring punishment.

2. The nations to be punished are enemies of Yahweh: that is, they have provoked his anger by their sins against him. Israel is accused of imperfect worship (Amos, Zephaniah, Jl 1-2; cf. Dt 5:7-10; 16:21-17:1 and the whole Deuteronomic Code chs 12-26), social injustice (Amos, Zephaniah, Malachi; cf. Dt 15:7-11; 24:17; 25:13-16), false prophetism (Ezekiel; cf. Dt 16:18-20; 29:19-20) and divorce (Malachi; cf. Dt 5:18, 21). The only accusation against the nations is their inhuman treatment of Israel (Is 13:11; Ob 10-14; Jl 4:2-3, 19), but an enemy of Israel is an enemy of Yahweh Himself. (Ex 23:22).

3. Because these nations are enemies of Yahweh, it is Yahweh himself who will come to inflict the punishment (Am 5:17; Zeph 1:12, 17; Is 13:11, 12, 13, 17; Ez 13:8, 9, 13, 15; Mal 3:24; Ob 2; Joel 2:11; 3:3; 4:2). Yahweh will occasionally use worldly elements as his

²⁵¹This was the definition proposed at the conclusion of chapter one of this paper as a basis of investigation. Supra, p. 51.

instruments of punishment: locusts (Jl 1-2), luminaries (Am 5:18-20; Is 13:10; Jl 4:15), other nations (Medes, Is 13:17; Israel, Ob 17-18; Jl 4:8).

4. All the crimes Israel committed against Yahweh are sins against his covenant. Conclusion number two above gives the covenantal text beside the sin with reference to the law which has been broken. To further illustrate this point, the prophetic authors use Deuteronomical language in their descriptions of the day of the Lord: such highly covenantal terms as yāda^c, šûb, besed, tôrāh, etc.

5. Israel's punishment is to come in the form of covenant curses. The prophets proclaim that she has broken the covenant by her sins, and therefore that she is to be punished by the law of the covenant. Some of the Deuteronomic curses such as darkness (Dt 28:28-29), devastation (Dt 28:29b, 51-52), war (Dt 28:49-52), unburied corpses (Dt 28:26), locusts (Dt 28:38), infertility (Dt 28:18, 39-40) and exile (Dt 28:36-41, 63-65) are invoked by the prophets in these yôm Yahweh texts to warn Israel of her impending fate.

6. The punishment of the nations will also come in the form of curses, but only those which are regarded as part and parcel of the common curse-material of the ancient Near East and which can be used against any adversary.²⁵² Originally oral, these curses are written on grave stones, boundary stones and in contracts and treaties as deterrents to a breach of the accompanying oath. Isaiah, Obadiah and Joel draw from these curses to describe the punishment of Babylon,

²⁵²Fensham, "Possible Origin", op. cit., p. 94-95.

Edom and the nations. Found in their yôm Yahweh texts are the following: darkness, terror, devastation, war, infertility, earthquakes, retribution. Copies of such legal texts as treaties, stele, memorial and kudurru stones, tomb inscriptions etc., have been unearthed in Egypt, Syria, Hatti, Assyria, Babylon and Phoenicia, and they contain parallel curses.

7. The curse language of the yôm Yahweh texts of the prophets is identical to that of the Deuteronomical and legal language of the covenant and the Near Eastern texts. This indicates that the yôm Yahweh terminology is legal rather than cultic or military. Notwithstanding, military and cultic imagery is also used in these texts for comparison and emphasis.

8. In three of the texts: Malachi, Joel and Obadiah, there exists a dual aspect to the day of the Lord: malediction/benediction. Benediction is not one of the characteristics of the "day," but rather a consequence of the defeat of the wicked. Israel is always the beneficiary of the blessings. The benediction terminology also comes from the legal language and originates in the covenant blessings (Dt 28:1-14; Lv 26:3-13) and the international treaties in which the overlord promises blessings in return for the loyalty of his vassal.

9. The common characteristics of the day of the Lord as revealed in these eight yôm Yahweh texts are: punishment, doom, proximity of the day, a great and terrible day, anger of Yahweh, curses (especially darkness and destruction), the prophet as messenger of Yahweh's word, and Yahweh himself as principal inflicter of the curse-punishments.

As a result of this research, the following statements seem conclusive: 1) the origin of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament prophetic yôm Yahweh texts lies within the legal world of the Israelite covenant and international legal texts such as treaties, memorial stones, boundary stones and tomb inscriptions; 2) the day of the Lord is defined as a day of doom on which Yahweh will punish his enemies; and 3) the prophetic concept of the day of the Lord is that of a day on which the curses of the covenant will come upon Israel because of her breach of the covenant, or a day on which curses will fall upon the nations because of their inhumane treatment of Israel.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPOSED ORIGIN AND DEFINITION: FURTHER EXPANSION AND DISCUSSION

We have reached the end of our examination of the sixteen texts which mention expressis verbis the term yôm Yahweh.¹ In light of this investigation, conclusions² have emerged which appear to bring into focus a possible solution to the many-faceted problem of the origin and definition of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament. The term yôm Yahweh was found only in the prophetic literature; therefore, it was there our research began, and remained throughout, as the focal point of all other Biblical and extra-Biblical argumentation. Some prophetic oracles contained more than one mention of yôm Yahweh so we were able to narrow our examination to eight basic day of the Lord texts.³

But we must further expand this investigation in two directions: outwardly, to include the minor variant forms of the term yôm Yahweh in order to determine their relationship to the sixteen classic day of the Lord texts; and inwardly, to reevaluate the major theories in

¹Is 13:6, 9; Ez 13:5; Jl 1:15; 2:1-11; 3:4; 4:14; Am 5:18 (twice), 20; Ob 15; Zeph 1:7, 14 (twice) and Mal 3:23.

²Supra. p. 182-186.

³Is 13:6-13; Ez 13:1-16; Jl 1:14-15; 2:1b-2a, 10-11; Jl 3:3-5; 4:14-17; Am 5:18-20; Ob 15a, 16-21; Zeph 1:14-16; and Mal 3:22, 23-24.

light of our conclusions concerning the origin and definition of the concept of the day of the Lord.

The first part of this chapter will briefly treat those texts which have a minor variant form of the phrase yôm Yahweh and are considered to be authentic yôm Yahweh texts by some authors.⁴ The purpose of this examination is to determine if the context, terminology, descriptions and characteristics of the day of the Lord in these variant form texts are identical to those from which we concluded our investigation in chapter two on the sixteen classic texts. If the results are affirmative then there is a stronger confirmation of our proposed definition of the day of the Lord: a day of Yahweh's visitation and his execution of curses on his enemies; and the proposed origin: from the legal world of the ancient Near East in general and the covenant in particular.

The validity of these two propositions will be borne out when they are evaluated and discussed in relationship to the popular

⁴These texts are: Is 2:12; 22:5; 34:8; Jer 46:10; Lam 2:22; Ez 7:19; 30:3; Zech 14:1. The authors are: L. Cerny, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, Prague, V. Praze, 1948, 112 p.; M. Delcor, "Jour de Yahvé", in Catholicisme: hier, aujourd'hui, demain, Vol. 25, No. 6, 1965, p. 1054-1058; A. J. Everson, "The Days of Yahweh", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 93, No. 3, 1974, p. 330, n. 6; J. Gray, "The Day of Yahweh in Cultic Experience and Eschatological Prospect", in Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok, Vol. 39, Uppsala, 1974, p. 6; G. von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh", in The Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1959, p. 97; M. Weiss, "The Origin of the Day of the Lord - Reconsidered", in The Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 37, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1961, pp. 42-45.

theories which were previously researched and critiqued in chapter one. The second part of chapter three will make this comparison, will discuss further the argumentation and will evaluate the results.

I. MINOR VARIATION TEXTS APPRAISED

There are eight minor variant forms of the term yôm Yahweh which are frequently cited by scholars who have done work on the study of the concept of the day of the Lord, and who have considered them as authentic yôm Yahweh texts. These forms are: yôm lēYahweh (a day of Yahweh) in Is 2:12; Ez 30:3 and Zech 14:1; yôm mēhumāh lēYahweh (a day of Yahweh's vengeance) in Is 22:5; yôm nāqām lēYahweh (the day of Yahweh's vengeance) in Is 34:8; wēhayyôm hahū' la'ādōnāy Yahweh šēbā' t (day of the Lord God of Hosts) in Jer 46:10; yôm ʿap. Yahweh (the day of Yahweh's wrath) in Lam 2:22; and ʿebrat Yahweh (the day of Yahweh's anger) in Ez 7:19. Other minor variant forms are also used by one or more of these scholars to support their theses⁵ but there is a danger that the modified variant forms become so vague they can be considered as alternatives rather than remaining stable components of a concept.

To have excluded these texts from my study in no way excludes them as un-authentic yôm Yahweh texts. Other scholars' use of them demonstrates their importance in determining a valid understanding of the concept of the day of the Lord. The quest now is to apply the conclusions attained in chapter two to these texts not with a

⁵Cerny, op. cit., p. 20-21 (Is 61:1-3); Everson, op. cit., p. 329-337 (Lm 1:1-2; ch 2; Is 61:1-3; 63:1-6 and Zech 1:1-2:3); Weiss, op. cit., p. 44 (Is 23:5).

lengthy exegesis of these passages, but rather with a spot check of comparison.

A. Day of Doom

There is no question that the predominant atmosphere which surrounds the prophetic day of the Lord,⁶ as demonstrated in the sixteen classic texts, is that of doom.⁷ This impression is further confirmed in the variant passages as well. The day is described as "a great and terrible day" or "a day of terror" (Mal 3:23; Jl 2:11; 3:4; Is 2:10b; 22:5; Jer 46:5; Ez 30:4); "a dark day of Yahweh's anger" (Is 3:2; Lm 2:1, 3, 21, 22. Cf. Is 13:9, 13; Zeph 1:18; 2:2; 3:8; Ez 13:13, 15); a day that is near and coming fast (Ez 30:3; Cf. Zeph 1:7, 14; Is 13:6; Ob 15; Jl 1:13; 2:1; 4:14); bringing devastation in its wake (Jer 46:10; Is 34:10; Ez 7:15-16; Lm 2; Cf. Is 13:6, 9, 12; Zeph 1:15; Ez 13:12, 14; Ob 18); there will be lamenting and gnashing of teeth (Jer 46:12; Ez 30:2; Is 22:4; Ez 7:27; Cf. Is 13:6; Am 5:18; Zeph 1:11; Ez 13:3; Jl 1:13). Nations, people and nature will be brought low by a God who is along exalted (Ez 7:20-24; Lm 2:1, 2; Is 2:9, 11, 12-17; Cf. Is 13:11). Even when there is a dual aspect

⁶These minor variant texts are also found within the prophetic literature. The only possible exception would be the book of Lamentations, but most scholars believe that the author was the prophet Jeremiah or one of his disciples living in the critical period of the destruction of Jerusalem. G. Wood, "Lamentations", in The Jerome Biblical Commentary I R. Brown, R. E. Murphy and J. A. Fitzmyer, eds., Englewood, Prentice-Hall, 1968, p. 609-610. The Septuagint also places the book of Lamentations within the Prophetic canon.

⁷Cerny, op. cit., p. 53-54; Gray, op. cit., p. 31.

of the day of Yahweh, malediction/benediction, doom prevails as the dominant feature (Jl 3:305; 4:14-17; Mal 3:22, 23-24; Zech 14:1-3, 12-14). In the mind of the prophet there must be destruction before there can be construction, total defeat of the nations before the absolute reign of Yahweh over Israel.

This notion of doom remains substantially the same throughout the whole prophetic period whenever there is explicit mention of a day of Yahweh. The only variation is the nation that has been placed under God's judgment within the historical framework of the particular prophet. In the previous oracles Babylon, Edom, and in the later book of Joel, all the nations together, are singled out for a day of doom. In the oracles where the variant forms of yôm Yahweh are found we see Edom again along with Egypt and the nations put on the prophetic chopping block.

Edom was a perennial thorn in the side of Israel and the prophets delighted in predicting or telling about her destruction (Is 63:1; Jer 49:7-22; Ez 25:12-14; Am 1:11-12; Ob). The Isaian prophet of Is 34:1-17 was no exception. His exilic oracle⁸ spells out the doom of Edom: "For the Lord has a day of vengeance" (v. 8); "Their land shall be soaked with blood, and their soil made rich with fat" (v. 7); "And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into brimstone" (v. 9). She is doomed never to rise again,

⁸This text, although coming from First Isaiah, is considered exilic due to its identical literary style to the exilic material in Is 40-66 and Ez 38-39. M. Pope, "Isaiah 34 in relation to Is 35, 40-66", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 71, No. 2; p. 235-243.

becoming a wasteland forever, a home for the desert animals (vv. 13-17).

A day of the Lord (yôm lēYahweh) for Egypt is described as doom and destruction by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Israel and her prophets had never forgotten (or forgiven?) the land of Egypt which had enslaved them and refused to let them go from its midst which resulted in the Exodus ordeal (Ex 1:11, 14; 7:14; 14:6-10). Jeremiah's introduction to the oracle (46:1-2) definitely states what the day of Yahweh means for him. It is the day when Neco of Egypt was defeated at Carchemish under the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar (603 B.C.). The prophet gloats over their doom: "They are panic stricken:" (v. 5); ". . . terror on every side:" (v. 5); "The sword shall devour and be sated and drink its fill of blood" (v. 10).

Neco's defeat at Carchemish did not totally destroy the power of Egypt, and so, sixteen years later, seven months before the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.),⁹ Ezekiel takes up the rallying cry and predicts another "day of Yahweh" for Egypt (Ez 30:1-19) which will not only destroy the whole nation but affect also those neighboring lands of Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia and Libya who are in league with her. The destruction will again come from Nebuchadnezzar who is thrusting his world campaign into the Southern lands. This time there will be

⁹W. H. Boulton, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: An Exposition, Birmingham, The Christodelphia, 1962, p. 131-132; A. W. Blackwood, Ezekiel, Prophecy of Hope, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1965, p. 193; J. Plessis, Les Prophéties d'Ezéchiél contre Egypte, Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1912, p. 28; W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary, in The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1970, p. 415-419.

total destruction; Egypt will be laid waste and her cities ruined (vv. 7-8). ". . . anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt's doom; for lo, it comes:" (v. 9). "I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it . . ." (v. 12).

We also find in this series of texts important references in oracles against Israel which confirm that the day of Yahweh is one of doom. Israel, too, will have a day of Yahweh, a day of doom not unlike that of the other nations. "Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the Lord." (Is 2:10, 19); "For the Lord God of Hosts has a day of tumult and trampling and confusion in the valley of vision, a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains." (Is 22:5); "The sword is without, pestilence and famine are within," (Ez 7:15); ". . . horror covers them" (Ez 7:18); ". . . and on the day of anger of the Lord none escaped or survived" (Lam 2:22). Even though the second part of the book of Zechariah¹⁰ envisions a future restoration of Israel, there are within its chapters individual oracles of doom. One of them (Zech 14:1-2) is against Israel, whereas all other mention of destruction in chapter fourteen

¹⁰ Chapters 9-14 of this book are often referred to as Deutero-Zechariah. Other scholars subdivide the book again assigning a third author, Trito-Zechariah, for chapters 12-14 and reducing Deutero-Zechariah's influence to chapters 9-11. P. R. Ackroyd, "Zechariah", in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, M. Black and H. H. Rowley, eds., New York, Nelson, 1963, p. 646-655; R. C. Denton, Introduction and Exegesis of the Book of Zechariah, in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 6, G.A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 1110; O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 442; G. Stuhlmueller, "Zechariah" in The Jerome Biblical Commentary I, R. Brown, R. E. Murphy and J. A. Fitzmeyer, eds., Englewood, Prentice-Hall, 1968, p. 390.

refers to the nations (Zech 14:3, 12-14, 16-20). It is within this oracle against Israel that we find the phrase

Behold a day of the Lord is coming, when the spoils taken from you will be divided in the midst of you (qereb).. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. (Zech 14:1-2).

It is interesting to note, however, that those who maintain that this is a yôm Yahweh text apply it to the nations rather than to Israel, although, placed as it is, it is clearly within a context of doom for Israel. The term yôm leYahweh is within the short section devoted to the destruction of Jerusalem by the nations (vv. 1-2). Just above there is reference of Israel's being refined in a fire for purification (13:8) so she can once more be Yahweh's people (v. 9). The instruments of refining are elaborated in chapter 14: the nations. In Hebrew the word qereb can have the sense of "in the midst of" or "from among" both indicating that something is to be taken away from and given to others.¹¹

The doom is there; it is not a pretty picture. From the descriptive imagery of all these texts containing both the original form of yôm Yahweh and its minor variants, can we not conclude that when the prophets spoke specifically of a day of Yahweh, they always envisioned doom?

¹¹F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 899.

B. Yahweh's Day

The doom will come from Yahweh himself. It is the day when he acts to pass judgment and inflict punishment on his enemies.¹² All other agents (nations, nature, cosmos, disease) are merely his instruments of destruction. The offense is against Yahweh and Yahweh himself will avenge it (Jer 46:10; Is 34:8) in his anger (Is 34:2; Lam 2:1, 3, 6, 21, 22). He will judge his enemies and punish them to show that he is the Lord (Ez 7:27). It is by plague (Zech 14:12), earthquake (Is 2:11, 19, 22) or war (Is 22:5-7; 34:1-6; Jer 46:3; Lam 2:4ff; Ez 7:15, 24; 30:4-5, 7-8; Zech 14:1-21) that Israel and the nations will feel Yahweh's avenging hand. The slaughter and devastation will be so complete that the prophets invoke the image of a holocaust sacrifice where the entire victim is burned and its blood spilled over the altar.¹³ The lands of Egypt and Edom are the victims placed on Yahweh's altar of sacrifice to be completely consumed so they will never rear their heads against Israel again (Jer 46:10; Is 34:5-7; Cf. Zeph 1:7-8; Ez 39:17-20).

These texts imply a theophany and a theophany of Yahweh on his day. But is there a common denominator found in them which reveals to us a title under which he acts? We must keep in mind the doom element, the judgment and punishment components and the kinds of punishment.

¹²These will be discussed in more detail below.

¹³R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions, Vol. I. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1965, p. 415-417, 427.

1. Does Yahweh come on his day to bring doom and disaster as a "Holy Warrior", one who wages a "Holy War?"¹⁴ This may be true in some cases, especially in those oracles addressed to foreign nations (Is 34:1-17; Jer 46:2-12 and Ez 30:1-5. Cf. Is 13:6-13; Ob 15a, 16-21 and Jl chs 3 and 4) which are very heavily seeded with war imagery in the holy war tradition against Israel, even those having war imagery (Zeph 1:16 only; Is 22:1-8; Ez 7; 15-27; Zech 14:1-2; Lam 2:1-22). Never in the holy war tradition are there found such battles waged against Yahweh's holy one, Israel.¹⁵ There are also day of the Lord texts which have no war imagery in them at all¹⁶ (Am 5:18-20; Is 2:6-19; Zeph 1:7, 14-15; Ez 13:1-16; Mal 3:22, 23-24 and Jl chs. 1 and 2).

2. Is Yahweh's Day to be presided over by a "furious, demonic deity" as suggested by Černý?¹⁷ Manifested will be a God of anger, yes (Zeph 1:15, 18; Ez 13:13, 15; Is 13:9, 13; Is 34:2; Lam 2:6, 21, 22), but Yahweh's anger has nothing Satanic about it. It is the manifesta-

¹⁴As endorsed by von Rad, op. cit., p. 97-108; R. Klein, "The Day of the Lord", in Concordia, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1968, p. 517-525; K. D. Schunck, "Der 'Tag Jahwes' in der Verkündigung der Propheten", in Kairos, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1969, p. 14-21; and Everson, op. cit., p. 337, who interprets all the disasters as alternate kinds of warfare available to Yahweh.

¹⁵G. von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel; Zurich, Zwingli-Verlag, 1951, p. 6-12, where he explains the theology of the holy war.

¹⁶In Joel 1-2 war imagery is there only as a parallel not as the description of the real battle or invasion.

¹⁷Černý, op. cit., p. 54-55.

tion of God's displeasure against injustice.¹⁸ There can never be any question of despotic caprice in God's striking out in blind rage. Supreme power which is sinister in its intentions is no truly integral element in Yahweh's divine nature.¹⁹

3. Was the day of Yahweh the moment of his epiphany as king in the liturgy of the autumnal feast of Booths²⁰ or New Year's Day²¹ to impose his judgments? That Yahweh would come on his day as king to impose his justice (mīšpat) there was no doubt, but the consequence of his judgments, as we have seen, were not favorable to those on whom they were pronounced. Now, the feast of Booths was the Israelite joyful feast par excellence.²² Those who defended a rōš haššanāh feast as one of the great Israelite feasts of the year²³

¹⁸W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1961, p. 259, 261.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 262-263.

²⁰Gray, op. cit., p. 15.

²¹S. Mowinckel, "Jahwes dag" in Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 59, No. 1, 1958, p. 1-56; S. Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II: Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie, Kristiania, J. Dybwad, 1922, p. 229-247; J. Morgenstern, "Amos studies I", in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 11, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1936, p. 19-44; "Amos Studies II", in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 12, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1937, p. 1-53; "Amos Studies III", in Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 15, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1940, p. 59-304; R. Largetment and H. Lemaitre, "Le Jour de Yahweh dans le Contexte oriental." in Sacra Pagina, J. Coppens, ed., Paris, Gembloux, 1959, p. 259-266.

²²de Vaux, op. cit., p. 495-496.

²³Morgenstern. Amos Studies II, op. cit., p. 27; Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. 303.

also describe it as a joyful time when the šōpār was sounded and hymns of praise were sung. To associate the yôm Yahweh oracles as we find them in the prophetic writings, strongly imbued with disaster and suffering, with the joyous feasts of Booths and New Year, either in their origins or ceremonial integration is to minimize their message of doom. On the contrary, the prophets denounced joyful liturgical ceremonies as an abhorrence to Yahweh (Am 4:4-5; 5:21-24; Is 1:11; 48:1; Jer 6:20; Mi 6:6-8; Hos 8:12-13). "I hate, I despise your feasts . . . Take away from me the noise of your songs, to the melody of your harps I will not listen" (Am 5:21, 23).

4. Do we find in these texts Yahweh appearing on his day as a world destroyer ready to annihilate the whole earth in a nature catastrophe?²⁴ In most of the yôm Yahweh texts only one nation is visualized: either Edom (Ob 15, 16-21; Is 34:1-17), Babylon (Is 13; 1-16), Egypt (Ez 30:1-5; Jer 46:2-12) or Israel for the most part. The prophecies of Joel 4 describe only the defeat of the nations who have been cruel to Israel (Phoenicia, Philistia, Egypt and Edom, Jl 4:4, 19). Zechariah extends the defeat to "all nations" in 14:2, yet later specifies only those "that wage war against Jerusalem" (14:12). And even here there will be survivors among these nations who "shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts" (14:16).

If none of these images of Yahweh conforms completely to all the yôm Yahweh texts, is there another one? I have proposed that there

²⁴H. Gressmann, Der Ursprung der jüdisch-israelitischen Eschatologie, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905, p. 142-158.

is. Based on F. C. Fensham's short article on the day of the Lord²⁵ and the research done in chapter two of this paper, there is reason to believe that when Yahweh appears on this day it will be as a suzerain Lord come to judge and punish his enemies. All yōm Yahweh texts come under this jurisdiction. Those texts which speak of chastisement and punishment for Israel are all concerned with Yahweh's anger against his chosen vassal who has sinned against the Lord with whom she had formed a covenant, and is now his enemy because she has broken that covenant. Similar expressions about sinning and treaty-breaking can be found in the treaty world of the ancient Near East, but they have one difference: in the extra-Biblical treaties there is the warning, whereas, in the prophetic texts the sin has already occurred and Yahweh is acting or has acted. These parallels are as follows:

1. I will slaughter them all . . . each for his sin.
(Ez 7:17; cf. Zech 13:1; Am 3:2; Zeph 1:17;
Lv 26:24).

If you sin against this treaty . . . may they
slaughter you, your women, your brothers,
your sons and daughters like kids.²⁶

2. For I have rebelled against his orders (Lam 1:18;
cf. Dt 17:26).

²⁵F. C. Fensham, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," in Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, "Papers read at the 9th meeting in Stellenbosch," Potchefstroom, Herald Beperk, 1966, p. 90-97.

²⁶"The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon" in J. B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton, University Press, 1969, p. 539, Par. 58, line 513 and p. 540, line 96A.

He hath no respect for thine oath, he hath transgress'd thy command, devising(?) oppression.²⁷

3. They bow down before the works of their hands. (Is 2:8; Cf. Dt 27:15)

If you swear the oath of loyalty to another king or lord - 28

4. Because you have uttered delusions and seen lies, therefore behold, I am against you, says the Lord God. (Ez 13:8; Cf. Dt 29:19-20).

If you do not always offer complete truth to the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal . . .²⁹

5. But you did not look to him who did it, or have regard for him who planned it long ago. (Is 22:11; Cf. Dt 28:63)

If you do not seek to do what is good for him, if you act wrongly toward him.³⁰

6. Turn to Yahweh your God again. (Jl 2:13; Cf. Dt 4:30)

He rebelled against my father, but submitted again to my father.³¹

As a suzerain Lord, and by virtue of his covenant, Yahweh promises to protect and fight for his vassal against those nations who attack her or take advantage of her:

²⁷R. C. Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson, "The Excavations on the Temple of Nabû at Nineveh", in Archaeologia, Vol. 79, No. 2 1929, p. 133, Col. V, line 20.

²⁸Pritchard, op. cit., p. 535, Par. 5, line 72.

²⁹Ibid., p. 535, Par. 8, line 92.

³⁰Ibid., p. 536, Par. 21, lines 31-32.

³¹Ibid., p. 203, Par. 2. Treaty between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub of Amurru.

But if you hearken attentively to his voice
and do all that I say, then I will be an
enemy to your enemies and an adversary to
your adversaries. (Ex 23:22)

In a treaty between Hatti and Wilusa the suzerain Muwattallis
guarantees the safety of his vassal Alakšanduš:

Wie er dir Feind (ist),
ebenso (ist) er auch der Sonne Feind.³²

In reality the prophets are assuring Israel that Yahweh has not
abandoned her and will come to protect her against her enemies: "a
day of revenge on his enemies" (Jer 46:10); "They (Egypt) gave no
more support than a reed to the House of Israel" (Ez 29:6); "The
year of revenge for the defender of Israel" (Is 34:8). Comparable
are the texts of Ob 7:10 and Jl 4:2.

The day of the Lord, then, will be the day when Yahweh appears
as suzerain Lord to punish his vassal, Israel for infidelity to the
covenant, or to take revenge on a nation for its inhumane treatment
of Israel.

C. Day of Judgment and Punishment

1. Israel as Enemy.

Yahweh's reckoning with Israel, his errant vassal, is described
by the prophets as an execution of his righteous judgment, not unlike

³²J. Friedrich, Staatsverträge des Hatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache, in Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Agyptischen Gesellschaft, Vol. 34, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs' Buchhandlung, 1930, p. 58-59, Par. 7, line B8.

that of the treaty overlord. In the international treaties it is the suzerain who judges if the vassal is guilty of a breach of the covenant. This judgment takes the form of a rîb in which the overlord sends a messenger to accuse the vassal of infidelity, warns him it will be in his best interest to repledge his allegiance and confronts him with punishment if he does not conform to the mandate.³³ The prophets, as messengers, in these yôm Yahweh oracles, are trying to drive home to the hearts and conscience of Israel the inevitability of the approaching disaster.

In the minor variation texts directed against Israel (Is 2:12; Lam 2:22; Ez 7:19; Is 22:5; Zech 14:1) we have seen that Israel has alienated herself from Yahweh with her sinning. She preferred to trust in her own prowess and that of other nations rather than depend on Yahweh. The wife has become the prostitute (Hos 1-3); the sown seed,

³³J. Blenkinsopp, "The Prophetic Reproach", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 90, No. 2, 1971, p. 267-278; B. Gemser, "The Rib-or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality", in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 3, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1955, p. 120-127; J. Harvey, Le Plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la Rupture de l'Alliance: Étude d'une Formule littéraire de l'ancien Testament, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1967, 186 p.; J. Harvey, "'Le Rîb-Pattern' "Réquisitoire prophétique sur la Rupture de l'Alliance", in Biblica, Tome, 43, Fasc. 2, 1962, p. 172-196; H. B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 78, No. 2, 1959, p. 285-195; T. Raftt, "The Prophetic Summons to Repentance", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 83, No. 1, 1971, p. 30-49; H. E. von Waldow, Der traditionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund der prophetischen Gerichtsreden in Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Band 85, Berlin, A. Töpelmann, 1963, 53 p.

brambles (Hos 10:4); the chosen vine, sour grapes (Is 5); and the vassal, a rebel against his Lord (Lam 1:20; Hos 13:16). The chosen one whom Yahweh had delivered from Egypt has become an enemy of her Savior.

These oracles against Israel cover a period of almost five hundred years and include material from four different prophets, indicating that Israel's fidelity to the covenant was not one of the stable elements of her tradition, so the threat of punishment had to be revived each time there was a breach of the covenant.

Isaiah's first audience (Is 2:6-19) came from a Judah enjoying prosperity at the end of King Uzziah's reign (781-740 B. C.). There was freedom from foreign domination, good foreign trade (vv. 6-7), and peace and affluence within her extended borders (v. 7).³⁴ With the rise of material wealth, however, there was a drop in spiritual fervor. Yahweh was no longer considered the source of her blessings; instead pagan gods (v. 8) and human pride (v. 9) were given credit for her prosperity and peace. Her people had become Yahweh's enemies because they had turned away from their Lord and set themselves up as an independent entity apart from their only mainstay. As Yahweh alone was to be exalted on that day (v. 17) the pride of Israel had to be punished.

Isaiah's second audience was no better (Is 22:1-8)! There

³⁴J. Bright, A History of Israel, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1959, p. 239-241.

is an interesting parallel in a Hittite suzerain treaty where the vassal also considers the well being and peace of his country due to the protection which he enjoyed under the suzerain Shubbilumma of Hatti: "If we keep this treaty and oath with the Sun, Shubbilumma . . . as lord, may Mattiuaza go on ahead; under his protection may we enjoy abundant harvests; favor and honor may we see."³⁵ When the besieged city of Jerusalem was finally granted a respite in 701 B.C. as Sennacherib unexpectedly lifted the blockade and returned to Assyria (2 K 19:35-37; Is 37:36-38),³⁶ the inhabitants responded with wild rejoicing, frivolous conduct, feasting and drinking (Is 22:1, 2, 12) as though the victory, if one can call it that, was of their own military skill and bravery. The prophet rebuked them with doom in the midst of their merriment. They had not defeated the enemy, but rather become themselves the enemy of Yahweh for refusing to pay homage and coming to him with tears of thanksgiving and repentance (Is 12:22) for the Lord's deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria's clutches. Yahweh had been forgotten while human pride was exalted.

The author of the book of Lamentations, sitting on the smouldering ruins of Jerusalem, mourning over the devastation of Judah and the deportation of his kinsmen to Babylon (587 B.C.), represents well the affliction of the nation. The people, the city and the land have all felt the heavy hand of judgment and punishment

³⁵D. D. Luckenbill, "Hittite Treaties and Letters", in The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1921, p. 176, No. 2, Text KBo. I, No. 3.

³⁶Bright, op. cit., p. 271.

which Yahweh let fall on his enemies (Lam 2:5); those who rebelled against his covenant (Lam 1:18, 20).³⁷

With the approaching army of Babylon Ezekiel perceives no hope of salvation for Jerusalem (Ez 7:15-27, 587 B.C.). She is doomed and Yahweh will be there to inflict the disasters (Ez 6:10): Judah has rebelled against her God (3:26) and deserted him (6:9). She will be treated as any other pagan enemy of Yahweh: disaster, destruction and defeat.³⁸

All nations are seen as Yahweh's enemies in Zechariah 14: 1-21, including Judah, as we shall see. Judah cheered and interpreted Alexander the Great's conquests (336-323 B.C.) as those of Yahweh himself. Her people saw Alexander as Yahweh's "messiah" freeing Judah from Persian domination and making Jerusalem the center of his kingdom. This was not unlike the messianic hopes of Deutero-Isaiah toward Cyrus in 540 B.C. But the dream faded when the great conqueror founded an Egyptian seaport, Alexandria, and made it his capital. Israel once more became a subdued people drawn into the Hellenistic

³⁷B. Albrectson, Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations with a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text, Lund, CWK Gleerup, 1963, 258, p.; T. J. Meek, Introduction and Exegesis of the Book of Lamentations, in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 6, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 3-38.

³⁸Eichrodt, Ezekiel, op. cit., p. 415-419; J. Steinmann, Le Prophète Ezéchiel et les Débuts de l'Exil, in Lectio Divina, Tome 13, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1953, 324 p.; W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, in Biblischer Kommentar-Altes Testament, Band 13, Neukirchen, Neukirchner Verlag, 1969, 1430 p.

world.³⁹ The author of this chapter (Trito-Zechariah, after 323 B.C.) after the death of Alexander looks into the future when Yahweh will come to destroy all the nations (or at least the ones he mentions) now considered as enemies to Judah and Yahweh.⁴⁰ But before Judah and Jerusalem can delight in this time of continuous light (14:6) and security (14:11) they must pass through a "day of the Lord" (14:1), a day when these same nations will battle against them, defeat them and take them into exile (14:1-2; Cf. also Zech 12:11-14). The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem must be cleansed of their sin and impurity (13:1, 3) before they can reign with Yahweh over the nations. The nations, however, will act as Yahweh's agent of purification. The sin and impurity mentioned above had resulted in a broken covenant with Yahweh and it will only be after this refining period that Yahweh will be able to say, "'these are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'" (Zech 13:9).

In these yôm Yahweh texts we have seen that Israel became Yahweh's enemy when she broke the covenant. She is judged within the context of the covenant and must be punished for her infraction.

³⁹StuhlmueLLer, op. cit., p. 391; N. G. L. Hammond, A History of Greece to 322 B.C., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 613.

⁴⁰StuhlmueLLer, op. cit., p. 397-398; Denton, op. cit., p. 1053-1114. Zechariah 9-14 does not present a coherent picture of the day of Yahweh, but rather a series of abrupt and fragmentary sketches of special features of that day which are not easily brought together into a harmonious view.

2. The Nations as Enemy

Punishment for the nations came under Yahweh's jurisdiction when they trampled on the rights, personhood and land of his chosen people, Israel.⁴¹ Any nation which attacked, enslaved or gained control of Israel was not only Israel's enemy but also Yahweh's (Ex 23:22). As her covenant overlord, Yahweh had promised to protect Israel from those intruding nations: "The enemies that rise against you, Yahweh will conquer for your sake" (Dt 28:7; Cf. Lv 26:7), but only, of course, if Israel remained faithful.⁴² In the series of minor variation texts of yôm Yahweh there are three oracles against foreign nations. What was their "sin" against Israel that they became her enemy?

Egypt has always been a menace to Israel, as far back as from the oppressive days of the Hebrews before Moses, and all through her history who, for example, could forget the Pharaoh of the Exodus? Prior to the oracle of Jer 46:2-12,⁴³ the Judean king Josiah had been

⁴¹The Biblical writers theologically interpreted the nations' attacks on Israel in two ways: 1) justly, because she had sinned against Yahweh; 2) unjustly, as an enemy attack against Yahweh's people. The same battle could be interpreted both ways in different historical perspectives. For example: the attack and fall of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 B.C. by Babylon was viewed by the prophets and the people as a just sentence for their sins. Yet, almost fifty years later, at the end of the exilic period when Persia was extending her boundaries and engulfing Babylon, the exilic prophet urged the Persian invaders to destroy Babylon for the injustice she had committed in destroying Jerusalem in 587 B.C. (Is 13:6-13).

⁴²For international treaties parallel to this protection clause see Supra., p. 144-145.

⁴³J. Bright, Jeremiah, in The Anchor Bible, Vol. 21, Garden City, Doubleday, 1965, p. 307-309.

killed at Megiddo by the army of King Neco of Egypt (609-593 B.C.) and Judah had become vassal of Egypt burdened by heavy tribute.⁴⁴ Four years later the prophet Jeremiah in a resounding oracle of doom sees Neco's defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon as Yahweh's revenge on his enemy (605 B.C.).⁴⁵ Ezekiel was especially hard on Egypt with a series of seven successive oracles of doom directed against her.⁴⁶ The yôm Yahweh oracle in which we are interested (Ez 30:1-19) was written before the final destruction of Egypt in 568 B. C. possibly seven months before the fall of Jerusalem.⁴⁷ Egypt is accused of having failed to give "no more support than a reed to the House of Israel" (Ez 30:6). If Egypt is not an ally, she becomes an enemy.

In Isaiah 34:1-17 Edom is the symbol for all the enemies of Yahweh. All nations and their inhabitants are to hear the prophet's word. All enemies of Yahweh are destined for similar destruction, an event of hērem or total destruction for a designated area.⁴⁸ Yahweh

⁴⁴Bright, History, op. cit., p. 304.

⁴⁵Bright, Jeremiah, op. cit., p. 308; J. P. Hyatt, Introduction and Exegesis of the Book of Jeremiah, in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 5, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon, 1956, p. 1104-1105; J. G. Snaith, "Literary Criticism and Historical Investigation in Jeremiah Chapter XLVI", in The Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1971, p. 23-25.

⁴⁶Ez 29:1-16; 29:17-21; 30:1-19, 20-26; 31:1-8; 32:1-16 and 32:17-32.

⁴⁷Boulton, op. cit., p. 131; Plessis, op. cit., p. 27-28.

⁴⁸J. Muilenburg, "The Literary Character of Isaiah 34", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 59, No. 3, 1940, p. 339-365.

is depicted as the triumphant Divine Warrior in this text against Edom.⁴⁹ Its exact historical circumstance is debatable,⁵⁰ but leans heavily toward the 587 B.C. date⁵¹ when Edom participated in Jerusalem's defeat and then helped to plunder the city. Even though Edom is depicted as the symbol for the destruction of all Yahweh's enemies, one must not see this destruction as a world-wide cataclysmic event, but rather as the kind of event which is to come probably at different times upon various nations.⁵²

The conclusions that were drawn from the yôm Yahweh texts, in chapter two, namely, that the day of Yahweh is a day of doom when Yahweh himself comes as suzerain Lord to either punish Israel, his unfaithful vassal, or destroy her enemies when she is faithful to the covenant, can thus be applied to the minor variation texts of yôm Yahweh and similar conclusions drawn.

49p. D. Miller, "El the Warrior", in The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 60, No. 4, 1967, p. 428-429; P. D. Miller, "God the Warrior", in Interpretation, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1965, p. 39-46.

50Postulated dates are: 710 B.C. when Sargon came against Ashdod to put down a conspiracy which involved both Edom and Judah and Edom quickly submitted to Sargon and escaped destruction; 710 B.C. when Sennacherib campaigned against Jerusalem and Hezekiah, and Edom again escaped; or in 587 B.C. when Jerusalem fell and Edom helped plunder the city.

51Pope, op. cit., p. 235-243.

52As against R. B. Y. Scott, Introduction and Exegesis of the Book of Isaiah in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 5, G. A. Buttrick, ed., New York, Abingdon Press, 1956, p. 357-358 and E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, p. 19-39, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969, p. 431, who see this oracle of Edom's destruction as one of the many nations to be destroyed at the end time.

Both Israel and the nations are judged enemies of Yahweh, therefore both are to receive the same type of punishment. It is this punishment which will be considered in the next section.

D. Day of Curses

1. Covenant Curses on Israel.

In chapter two we saw close parallelism between the punishment meted out to Israel and the curses of the covenant. It is also in this curse material that we find the strongest link to the international treaties: the curses which the suzerain called down upon the vassal if he broke the treaty correspond to the covenant curses of Dt 28 and Lv 26 and to the punishment which the prophets portray as coming upon Israel for her breach of the covenant. This same association comes through in the minor variation texts pertaining to Israel considered as authentic yôm Yahweh texts.

a. Abasement

Yahweh had brought Israel out of slavery from Egypt and given her freedom and dignity among the nations. Her continuance in that status implied obedience to the covenant, whereas disobedience would return to her . . . former condition of oppression, mortification and weakness. Such were the Deuteronomic curses: "and you shall come lower and lower . . ." (Dt 28:43); "He (the sojourner) shall be at the head and you shall be at the tail" (Dt 28:44); ". . . and I will break the pride of your power . . ." (Lv 26:19) and "oppressed and crushed continually . . ." (Dt 28:33). Isaiah draws on these curses

to warn Israel that her breach of the covenant would not go unpunished.

So man is humbled,
and men are brought low-
forgive them not:

.....

The haughty looks of man shall be
brought low,
and the pride of men shall be
humbled;
and the Lord alone will be exalted
in that day. (Is. 2:9, 11. Cf. v. 17)

The author of the book of Lamentations mourns over a city
devastated and brought low experiencing the horrors of one cursed
by Yahweh:

He has cast down (šalak) from heaven to earth
the splendor of Israel;
he has not remembered (lô zākar) his footstool
in the day of his anger (šap:).
(Lam 2:1b, c)

he brought down to the ground
in dishonor
the kingdom and its rulers.
(Lam 2:2c)

The law is no more
(Lam 2:9b)

There is much covenant terminology here: "cast down," "not remembered"
and "law."⁵³

Ezekiel is also explicit in his warning in covenantal terms:
"I will put an end to their proud might . . . and according to their
own judgments I will judge (šapat) them; and they shall know (yada^c)

⁵³M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School,
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 347-348.

that I am the Lord" (Ez 7:24, 27b. Cf. Dt 4:39-40).⁵⁴

In itself, abasement is a curse; so also are the instruments which Yahweh uses to bring Israel low: earthquake (Is 2:10, 19, 21, 22. Cf. Is 13:13 and Jl 2:10),⁵⁵ and war with all its horrendous after effects (Is 22:1-8; Ez 7:15-27; Zech 14:1-2 and Lam 2:1-22).⁵⁶ War is one of the more popular curses in Scripture and these texts often describe the day of Yahweh as a day of battle.

b. War and Related Curses

Even though war is a very prominent curse, we must see it as only one of the many descriptions of the day of Yahweh because there are texts with no relationship at all to war or a battle (Is 2: 6-9. Cf. Am 5:18-20; Jl Chs. 1-2; Ez 13:1-6; Mal 3:22, 23-24 in Zeph 1:7, 14-16 war is only one of the many curses described). But this makes it no less important. The covenant curses in Deuteronomy and Leviticus themselves dwell heavily on war as a punishment for Israel if she breaks the covenant, especially Dt 28:47-57 which portrays in detail the horrors of war and the anguish associated with it. Parallels between the yôm Yahweh texts and the covenant curses are easily noticeable. Israel will be defeated in battle (Is 22:2; Zech 14:2; Cf. Dt 28:52; 48:52; Lv 26:26, 31-33); men will be slain by the sword (Lam 2:4; Is 22:3; Ez 7:15. Cf. Dt 28:26; Lv 25:34);

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 337-357..

⁵⁵Supra., p. 121-122, 159-160.

⁵⁶Eating children, famine, plague, limp hands, quaking knees, etc.

those who are not slain will flee before the enemy (Is 22:3; Ez 7:16. Cf. Dt 28:25, 36-38) with limp hands, quaking knees, and red-shamed faces (Ez 7:18. Cf. Dt 28:65; Lv 26:36, 38; Is 13:7-8). Those not killed or who are unable to escape will be captured by the enemy (Is 22:3; Cf. Dt 28:36) and taken into exile (Zech 14:2; Lam 2:9. Cf. Dt 28:32, 36). Destruction will be everywhere caused by fire and pillage (Lam 2:5). With all the food gone, the people will resort to eating the flesh of their sons and daughters (Lam 2:20. Cf. Dt 28:53-57; Lv 26:29) and famine will abound (Ez 7:15, 16, 19, Cf. Dt 28:17-19). Other nations seeing that Israel has been destroyed and brought low will make of her a laughing stock as they pass by (Lam 2:3, 15-16, 17b. Cf. Dt 28:16-17, 26, 37).

War being the primary means by which a suzerain king brings his vassal back into submission, the international treaties abound with military curses. One has only to go to the treaties from Assyria, Syria and Hatti to find lists of curse material heavily imbued with war imagery:⁵⁷ "May Ishtar . . . break your bow in a heavy battle;" "May Gula put weariness in your heart;"⁵⁸ "May they eat the flesh

⁵⁷Pritchard, op. cit., p. 531-541, 538-541; Luckenbill, op. cit., p. 161-201; F. C. Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 75, No. 2, 1963, p. 155-175; F. C. Fensham, "Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1962, p. 1-9.

⁵⁸Pritchard, op. cit., p. 538, Par. 48, line 453 and Par. 52, line 461.

of their sons and daughters," etc., etc.⁵⁹

c. Darkness

The curse of darkness which appears often in the texts where the simple form of yôm Yahweh is found (Am 5:18-20; Zeph 1:15; Is 13:10)⁶⁰ re-appears in these variation texts only once, in Lamentations. Although the entire chapter two of Lamentations (the whole book in fact) describes the city of Jerusalem in the aftermath of a military invasion and defeat, the imagery of darkness in 2:1 is not caused by the dust and smoke of the battle, for that has settled by now.

How the Lord in his anger
has set the daughter of Zion under
a cloud!
He has cast down from heaven to
earth
the splendour of Israel;
he has not remembered his footstool
in the day of his anger.

(Lam 2:1)

This text contains no hint of war, but only the curses of darkness and abasement. The darkness "under a cloud" is caused by Yahweh's anger. The author of this dirge again uses this image in 3:2, 5: " ... he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light;" and " ... he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago." Military curses and related hardships may constitute the bulk of the punishments in Lamentations but darkness is important as a

⁵⁹Hillers, op. cit., p. 62.

⁶⁰Supra., p. 58-61, 85, 86, 117.

curse in its own right. In the Deuteronomic curse list it also has no connection with war (Dt 28:29-29).

d. Earthquake.

Reminiscent of the doom oracles of Isaiah 13:13 and Jl 2:10; 4:16,⁶¹ the oracle of Is 2:6-22 describes Yahweh's punishment of Israel as an earthquake. There is a triple announcement, almost like a liturgical refrain ". . . when he rises to make the earth quake" (vv. 10, 19, 22).⁶² It is the only form of punishment mentioned in the text and can definitely be seen to refer to the traditional form of a divine theophany (Hag 2:6-7; 2 S 22:8; Ps 77:18; etc.) but there is also an allusion according to the tradition to an earthquake sent by Yahweh to punish, as we saw above in Isaiah and Joel (Cf. Jl 5:4; Jer 8:16; Nah 1:5). Deuteronomy and Leviticus do not include earthquakes in their catalogue of curses but if we go to Is 24 we find a close interconnection with covenant, sin and curses.⁶³

The earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their
guilt. (vv. 5-6)

⁶¹Supra., p. 121-122, 159-160.

⁶²Some scholars also see the felling of trees resulting from a great storm coming in from the East (cf. Is 30:28-30); Young, op. cit., p. 124-134, and O. Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary, in The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1972, p. 36.

⁶³H. C. Brichto, The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible in The Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, Vol. XIII, Philadelphia, SBL, 1963, p. 34-36.

Following this judgment of guilt the remainder of the chapter describes the curses which "devour the land." One of these curses is an earthquake.

For the windows of heaven are
opened,
and the foundations of the earth
tremble.
The earth is utterly broken,
the earth is rent assunder,
the earth is violently shaken.
The earth staggers like a drunken
man,
it sways like a hut;
its transgression lies heavy upon it,
and it falls, and will not rise again.
(vv. 18-20)

The remaining curses, destruction (in all its forms), famine, plague and mourning have been correlated with the war and the related curses above (pp. 212-214). Even though they are distinct curses in their own right, they often come into operation as the natural result of invasion and war.⁶⁴

2. General Curses on the Nations

One must agree with Fensham⁶⁵ when he says

. . . it would be impossible to accept that the curses directed against foreign enemies are to be regarded as curses against unfaithfulness and thus breach of promise. There is no contractual agreement between enemies and thus no oath of the gods to break. Curses directed against an enemy, are to be regarded as part and parcel of common curse-material which can be used against any adversary or transgressor.

⁶⁴Fensham, "Possible Origin," op. cit., p. 95.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 94-95.

But the prophetic use of oracles against the nations, which drew heavily from this stock of common curse-material against adversaries, remains, however, within the Israelite covenantal context. Yahweh as Suzerain Lord must, under the protection clause of the covenant, come to the aid of his vassal Israel when she is attacked or plundered by her enemies (Dt 28:7; Ez 23:20-33).⁶⁶ The covenant, in this respect, is similar to the legal treaties from Hatti.⁶⁷

The curses against the nations by and large take the form of a military invasion and its after effects because the normal reaction to enemy invasion is a counter-attack with troops and chariots. J. Hayes remarks, "The usage of oracles against and denunciations of one's enemies is found in the OT as part of the preparation and execution of warfare."⁶⁸

von Rad is wise in using Is 13, Is 34, Ez 7, and Jl 2 "to provide a more secure foundation for our examination"⁶⁹ of the holy war as the origin of the concept of the day of the Lord, because three out of the four texts are oracles against the nations and highly imbued with war imagery. Those texts in which there is little or no hint of war the German scholar shrugs off as "not sufficiently

⁶⁶F. C. Fensham, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1963, p. 138-140, 140-143.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 133-138.

⁶⁸J. H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 87, No. 1, 1968, p. 81, n. 1.

⁶⁹von Rad, "Origins," op. cit., p. 99.

unequivocal to be used as a starting-point for our examination" (Am 5:18-20);⁷⁰ he builds his case on one war curse out of many (Zeph 1:11),⁷¹ or argues that they are presupposed in some sense a warlike event (Jl 1-2; Mal 3:24; Ez 13).⁷²

In the three yôm Yahweh texts under consideration that are directed against the nations (Jer 46:2-12; Ez 30:1-5; Is 34:1-17) there is strong war imagery. Yahweh is fighting for Israel; the sword is forever an overhanging menace (Jer 46:10; Ez 30:4, 6, 11; Is 34:5-6) with men fleeing (Jer 46:5, 6) and stenching corpses scattered throughout the land (Is 34:3; Jer 46:6). The city is destroyed by Yahweh (Ez 30:8; Is 34:2) and left burning (Ez 30:8; Is 34:9, 10). Once destroyed, it is cursed into barrenness, nevermore to be fertile or green but habitable only for the desert animals (Is 34:11-15; Cf. Is 13:21-22).

Although I have emphasized the importance of war imagery in these oracles against the nations, there are still non-military curses in these texts: skies roll up like a scroll (Is 34:4), streams turned into pitch (Is 34:9), land is barren (Is 34:10-15), people are dismayed (Jer 46:5), terror is on every side (Jer 46:5), there comes a day of vengeance (Jer 46:10). These non-military curses may or may not, as we have seen, be always related to war imagery but the prophets invoke them in these texts to add to the devastating effect of the battle.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 98.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 102-103.

⁷²Ibid., p. 102, 103, 106.

E. Day of Malediction/Benediction

The day of the Lord as proclaimed by the prophets in all the texts we have examined is primarily one of doom. W. Eichrodt summarizes well the fate of Israel:⁷³

What, however, gives the prophetic message of doom its urgent and irrevocable quality is that it seeks to give an explicit picture of the final frightful blow with which Yahweh dispatches his faithless people. Because Israel has been singled above all other nations for the divine favour, she must also endure a special severity of divine judgment. All the scourges of nature, all the horrors of war, all the powers of death and the underworld must combine to root out the infamous nation from the earth. Yahweh brings his whole world-controlling power to bear to ensure that not one single sinner shall escape him. And the people's hope that in the judgment they will be the remnant who are spared is twisted with bitter mockery into its opposite, and the miserable lot of the remnant is made to testify to the completeness of the destruction.

But a remnant there will be: A miserable lot, as portrayed in the book of Lamentations, but alive nevertheless, to await the termination of their sentence and the hope of a new covenant. At the end of the book the fallen, dying nation sees some hope for survival. It has been struck so low, there is nothing left for Yahweh to do but be merciful.

But thou, O Lord, dost reign for
ever;
thy throne endures to all
generations.
Why dost thou forget us for ever,
why dost thou so long forsake us?

⁷³Eichrodt, Theology, op. cit., p. 465-466.

Restore us to thyself, O Lord, that
 we may be restored:
 Renew our days as of old:
 (Lam 5:19-21)

The punishment of your iniquity, O
 daughter of Zion, is
 accomplished,
 he will keep you in exile no longer
 (Lam 4:22)

Chapters 1-5 of Isaiah contain many oracles of doom against Israel, one of which we have seen, is a variation text of yôm Yahweh (2:6-19), but there are also three small oracles of salvation: 2:1-5; 4:2-3, 4-5. Hope of salvation is proclaimed only after Israel has paid for her sin by punishment and been forgiven.

When the Lord shall have washed away
 the filth of the daughters of Zion and
 cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem
 from its midst by a spirit of judgment
 and by a spirit of burning.
 (Is 4:4)

The oracle against Israel in Is 22:1-8 is couched in the larger section of oracles against the nations (Chs. 13-23). Placed in this context Israel is warned that her fate, because of her sins, will be just as horrendous as that of the nations. But, unlike the nations, Israel will be ransomed, consoled and brought back from exile.

. . . The Lord will raise his hand once more
 to ransom the remnant of his people,

.

I give thanks to you, Yahweh,
 you were angry with me
 but your anger is appeased
 and you have given us consolation (Is 11:11; 12:1)

The sins of Israel are great in the eyes of Ezekiel but after the sword, plague, famine (7:15-18) and exile there will be a new covenant, "Then they shall be my people and I will be their God" (11:20).

Zechariah sees a new and glorious Jerusalem after Israel has been purged of her sins and the nations defeated.

I will put this third into the
fire,
and refine them as one refines silver,
and test them as gold is tested
(Zech 13:9)

And Jerusalem will be raised higher, though still
in the same place.

.

The ban will be lifted; Jerusalem will be safe
to live in.
(Zech 14:11)

Yahweh had made a covenant with Israel and even when she continued to be unfaithful to her pledge, God could not abandon her or allow her to be annihilated. His love was too strong.

Can a woman forget her sucking
child,
that she should have no compassion
on the son of her womb?
Even these may forget,
yet, I will not forget you. (Is 49:15)

The prophetic portrayal of salvation (Heilsschilderung)⁷⁴ revived

⁷⁴C. Westermann, "The Way of the Promise through the Old Testament", in The Old Testament and Christian Faith, B. W. Anderson, ed., New York, Harper and Row, 1963, p. 200-204; F. C. Fensham, "Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible", in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1967, p. 305-322; W. Vogels, La Promesse royale de Yahweh: Préparatoire à l'Alliance, Ottawa, Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1970, 181 p.

the only hope left: the one created by the covenant and its relation to God and his promises.

The prophetic malediction/benediction concept in the oracles against the nations need not be pursued further. It is unmistakably clear that the defeat of the nation(s) would automatically be a boon for Israel. The harassment, tribute and domination that occurred while the enemy held sway over Israel would come to an end. Free from such burdens Israel could rise in power and prestige among the nations, but only because Yahweh, the suzerain Lord, had fought for and protected her, placing her in such a privileged position.

In this first section we have briefly examined eight prophetic texts which contain closely related forms of the term yôm Yahweh, and are considered authentic yôm Yahweh texts by authors in the day of the Lord literature, and applied to them the conclusions arrived at in chapter two by an exegesis of the sixteen texts containing expressis verbis the term yôm Yahweh. By comparing the context, descriptions and terminology of these texts with the original sixteen, we found recurring with a certain regularity the same basic notions of the day of the Lord: a day of doom, of terror, of Yahweh's theophany, of judgment and punishment, of vengeance on enemies, of broken covenants and of defeat of the goyim. Again we found that the descriptions and phraseology of the punishments in these texts were identical to the covenant curses in Dt 28 and Lv 26 and to the curse material of the ancient Near Eastern legal texts, especially the international treaties from Hatti, Syria, Egypt and Assyria. This brings us to affirm more substantially that the prophets acquired their descrip-

tion of the day of the Lord from a legal milieu rather than a mythic, cultic or military one, and that, the day of the Lord can be seen as a day of curses to be inflicted by Yahweh upon his enemies.

II. MAJOR THEORIES RE-APPRAISED

There is no doubt that the investigations concerning the day of the Lord presented by the proponents of each of the three major schools of thought (mythic, cultic and historical) are valid and have made some new contributions of their own to the understanding and origin of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament. The purpose of this section is to determine if the thesis presented by this paper: that the day of the Lord is the day on which Yahweh inflicts curses upon his enemies and that the curse language surrounding it was borrowed by the prophets from an ancient Near Eastern and covenantal milieu, is equally valid. This will be studied by comparing it with the popular theories.

A. Mythical School

The two scholars whose names have been associated with the mythical school, as we have seen are Herman Gunkel⁷⁵ and Hugo Gressman.⁷⁶ Because Gunkel's research and his two main conclusions

⁷⁵H. Gunkel, Genesis: übersetzt und erklärt, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902, 440 p.; Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen I. und Ap Joh 12, Göttingen Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895, xiv-431 p.

⁷⁶Gressmann, op. cit., p. 142-158.

(1. Hebrew eschatology uses Babylonian mythical material, and 2. its picture of an eschatological world is given in terms of the creation story) are not applied either directly or indirectly by him to the yôm Yahweh controversy, he has not been given a thorough coverage in this paper. He is mentioned because he certainly fits into the category of the mythical school and because Gressmann's theory of the origin of eschatology and his division of the history of eschatology into four epochs are based on Gunkel's study.

Some basic concepts concerning the day of the Lord which Gressman affirms are familiar ones which came through to me as I worked on the yôm Yahweh texts. He states that the main atmosphere of the day is Unheil⁷⁷ and that the day can not only be thought of as "ein Tag der Schlacht oder des Sturmes, sondern auch des Erdbebens, des Feuers, der Überflutung, des Gewitters, der Finsternis, der Seuchen, der wilden Tiere, des Schreckens und der Rauches."⁷⁸ When he discusses the third or "prophetische Stufe der Unheilseschatologie,"⁷⁹ he determines that the day is near⁸⁰ for Israel as well as for the nations.⁸¹ Gressmann also observes that Yahweh's wrath against Israel is closely related to her sins.⁸² And last in this series, he notices that both doom and salvation are present in the prophetic writings.⁸³

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 145.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 143

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 152-156.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 152.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 153-154.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., p. 156.

Gressmann's other conclusions, however, become shaky and tenuous when they are exposed and compared with a more critical study of the authentic yôm Yahweh texts. His failure to restrict his study to just the authentic yôm Yahweh texts and his eagerness to associate an evolution of the history of the day of the Lord with Gunkel's evolution of the history of eschatology have resulted in the rejection of his conclusions by this writer.

We cannot affirm as Gressmann does, that each time we meet the expression "day of the Lord," it always refers to the future.⁸⁴ We have shown within this study that when the prophetic authors of Is 22:1-14; Jer 46:2-12; Lam ch. 2 and possibly Ez 13 describe the day of the Lord the destruction has already come about. All of the above texts are considered authentic yôm Yahweh texts but Gressmann fails to use them in his study (intentionally? unintentionally?) thus hindering an objective approach to the problem.

Gressmann's thesis that the concept of the day of the Lord can be seen as a world catastrophe is sustained only by the limitations of the evidence in Zeph chs. 1-2, Jer 4:23-31; Am 8:9, Is ch. 2, Hos 4:3 and Is 28:14-21 which he selects as referring to universal destruction. This seems dangerously like a selection of evidence, especially since he has chosen some non-yôm Yahweh texts and avoided others. To apologize for the small number of texts containing a description of world catastrophe in the prophets he explains that the fully developed theory of a mythical world catastrophe was already in

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 144.

fragmentary form when it got to the prophets and that is why the idea is not uniform and clear, not even in the texts he uses.⁸⁵

Has this study verified Gressmann's contention that the prophets proclaimed a world conflagration on the day of Yahweh? On the contrary. We have shown that every yôm Yahweh oracle was spoken within a specific historical context about a specific historical event either past, imminent ("Near is the day!") or in a more remote future.⁸⁶ The broad historical time perspective of the prophets who wrote about the day of the Lord (8th to 4th centuries) tends to affirm that not all of them referred to the same historical day of Yahweh, although the fall of Jerusalem seemed to be a popular one. Thus we must see the proclamation of the day of the Lord within an historical context rather than as a future all powerful eschatological catastrophe of world conflagration at the Endzeit.

More important, perhaps, is to challenge Gressmann's theory, (via Gunkel) that the day of the Lord is eschatological and its origin lies in a mythical weal/woe eschatology coming from Babylon. This theory is based on the assumption that the Babylonians believed in the sun's millennial encirclement of the earth and that each cycle was regarded as a period of weal or woe.⁸⁷ This would have become the basis of the disaster/restoration elements of the prophetic eschatology.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 145-147. This is why he has to go to non-yôm Yahweh texts to prove his theory.

⁸⁶Everson, op. cit., p. 330-331.

⁸⁷Gressmann, op. cit., p. 142-158.

The question now is: Was the origin of the prophetic concept of the day of the Lord in Hebrew eschatology which in turn had its origin in this mythical concept of a world catastrophe when the sun returned to its primeval genesis?⁸⁸

The definition of Hebrew eschatology is, as we have seen, varied: from a strict interpretation which pertains only to an end time (ʾāḥārīt)⁸⁹ to a broad "catch-phrase" for all that which pertains to Israel's hope or her future.⁹⁰ Others maintain that eschatology evolved in stages.⁹¹ Whichever definition one embraces there is always contained in the essence of the term "eschatology" the presence of hope, the future (imminent or remote) and the promise of improved conditions in the life of Israel. The eschatological vision is an Israelite phenomenon which has not really been found outside Israel because "it is a religious certainty which springs immediately from the Israelitic faith in God as rooted in the history

⁸⁸Gunkel, Genesis, op. cit., p. 242.

⁸⁹G. Hölscher, Die Ursprünge der jüdischen Eschatologie im Vorträge der theologischen Konferenz zu Giessen, 41 Folge, Giessen, Alfred Töpelmann, 1925 as quoted by G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 114; S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1956, p. 125-154; G. Fohrer, Ezechiel, in Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Band 13, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1955, p. XIX, 216.

⁹⁰von Rad, Theology II, op. cit., p. 144; Eichrodt, Theology, op. cit., p. 386.

⁹¹T. C. Vriezen, "Prophecy and Eschatology, in the Congress Volume Copenhagen of the Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 1, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953, p. 203-204, 223-229; J. Gray, op. cit., p. 8, n. 5.

of its salvation."⁹² Israel's election and faith in the promises of Yahweh to Abraham, concretized in the blessings of the covenant gave her this unique hope which was possible because Israel knew her God as an active God who would not abandon his people but go on working in history: "You are my people, I am your God."

One must question whether eschatology was a characteristic of Babylonian belief. Mowinckel's examination of Babylonian texts yields no such evidence.⁹³ Babylon's concept of time, on the contrary, bears evidence against her attaining a notion of eschatology. The ancient peoples lived in circular time, a world of created things, the movement of the earth and the cycle of seasons.⁹⁴ Eschatology was something they could not attain because "their world history was looked upon as consisting of an infinite chain of cyclic periods of which the beginning and the end were always practically the same."⁹⁵ Of all these ancient peoples, Israel alone had the notion of the duration of time as a horizontal movement because of her encounter

⁹²Vriezen, op. cit., p. 229. See also, T. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958, p. 369-371; E. Sellin, Der alttestamentliche Prophetismus II - Alter, Wesen und Ursprung der alttestamentliche Eschatologie, Leipzig, Deichert, 1912, p. 191.

⁹³Mowinckel, Cometh, op. cit., p. 127, n. 3 and the literature cited there.

⁹⁴G. Pidoux, "A Propos de la Notion biblique du Temps" in Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1952, p. 120-125; N. Snaith, "Time in the Old Testament", in Promise and Fulfillment, F. F. Bruce, ed., Edinburg, T. & T. Clark, 1963, p. 175-186.

⁹⁵Vriezen, Outline, op. cit., p. 371.

with a God who had invaded her circular time with his divine saving actions leading her forward with the promise of future deeds on her behalf if she remained faithful to him.

Let us return now to the relationship of the concept of the day of the Lord as proclaimed by the prophets to Israelite eschatology. The yôm Yahweh oracles against Israel, in themselves, do not correspond to the broad definition of eschatology because they contain neither hope nor promise of an improved condition of Israel's ravished land and accursed people. Even less are they eschatological in the strict sense of referring to an "end-time" for the reason given above: they all take place within an historical framework. The oracles against the nations could indirectly be considered eschatological in the wide meaning of the term for Israel would benefit by the nations' defeat. There is equally hope of future relief from oppression and promise of better times and improved conditions (political, social and religious). But when the narrow definition of eschatology is applied to these oracles, the term itself can no longer be applied. It is within history that these nations are to be subdued and it is within history that Israel will benefit. Even Joel 3-4, which refers to a great day of new wine and complete restoration for Israel (4:18, 20), and Zachariah 14, which describes a glorified Israel and Jerusalem after the defeat of the nations (vv. 6-11), do not expect an end of time or an existence hors histoire. The earthly fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem will still be restored (Jl 4:1) and the nations will still be punished if they (the nations) fail to keep the feast of Tabernacles (Zach 14:18-19).

We might also ask with Černý⁹⁶ such questions as: Did this complete eschatological system which Gressmann explains ever exist outside his own mind? If it did exist in Israel, wouldn't the prophets have known about it? etc., etc. Because of the many suppositions in the lack of evidence for Gressmann's theory that the day of the Lord as proclaimed by the prophets originated in a mythical-eschatological milieu and was described in terms of one big world catastrophe, one must look elsewhere for answers.

Cannot these answers about the origin and description of the day of the Lord be more reasonably explained in terms of judgment and punishment within a covenantal context in legal and juridical language as we have shown in chapter two? The prophets' main concern in their oracles is Israel's relationship to her God and her observance or non-observance of the covenant stipulations. Hence, the judgment of Israel's actions and the weal or woe which result came from the covenant formulary. The prophets describe this day of judgment as a day of the Lord, a day on which Yahweh is to send the curses of the covenant upon Israel for her sins (oracles against Israel), and blessings upon her when He invokes the general curses upon her enemies (oracles against the nations) when she is faithful.

B. Cultic School

Can the cultic school, represented by S. Mowinckel⁹⁷ and

⁹⁶Černý, op. cit., p. 41.

⁹⁷Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. 229-247.

J. Morgenstern⁹⁸ give us a satisfactory answer to the original meaning and form of the day of Yahweh in an annual New Year's festival? Both scholars base their theory of the origin of the day of the Lord on the existence of a New Year's festival in Israel. Mowinckel traces the origin and cultic ceremony of the Israelite New Year's festival back to the akitu festival in Babylon. The central idea was the annual re-enthronement of the earthly king and of Marduk the chief god as the heavenly king.⁹⁹ Mowinckel places these mythical concepts to Yahweh in an historical perspective related to an Israelite enthronement feast. Instead of Marduk, Yahweh is enthroned and Jérusalem becomes the holy city in the place of Babylon. The principal role of the enthroned Yahweh on New Year's day at the festival is to proclaim the blessings of the coming year for Israel and to purge her from her past sins.¹⁰⁰

Morgenstern, in his study, traces the origin of the New Year's festival way back to the mythical struggle of Yahweh over the tôhû and the bôhû at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:1)¹⁰¹ which seems not unlike Marduk's victory over Tiamat, of Baal's over Mot. In other words, we had the struggle of good over evil on this first

⁹⁸Morgenstern, Amos Studies I, op. cit., p. 19-44; Amos Studies II, op. cit., p. 1-63; Amos Studies III, op. cit., p. 59-304.

⁹⁹R. Labat, Le Caractère religieux de la Royauté assyro-babylonienne, Paris, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1939, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien II, op. cit., p. 232.

¹⁰¹Morgenstern, Amos Studies III, op. cit., p. 284-285.

New Year's day. Morgenstern as well as Mowinckel, historicizes the myth into a feast on which Yahweh enters the temple each year to pronounce judgment upon Israel and shape the fortunes and destiny of his people for the new year just beginning.¹⁰² Hopefully, the day would be favorable to Israel.

Both theories have some common elements: a cultic celebration, Yahweh enthroned as king pronouncing judgment, the mythical origin historicized and the joy which permeates the celebration.

Mowinckel makes the sweeping statement that this enthronement feast is the day of the Lord but when he finds only fragmentary allusions to the feast in the prophetic texts, he refers the readers to the enthronement psalms. Morgenstern connects the prophetic day of the Lord in Amos 5:18-20 with the New Year's festival when he assumes that Amos delivered his oracle during the cultic celebration of this feast at Bethel in the year 752 or 751 B.C.¹⁰³ Amos' message of doom, he says, is directed toward Israel for her sins against the covenant and will come about in the next new year's day. The principal form of punishment on the day of Yahweh, according to Morgenstern, is the earthquake which he finds in Is 13:13; 24:18; Jer 4:24, Ez 38:18-23 and Jl 2:10ff. This he also connects with the cultic feast of the New Year's celebration because he believes that there was a great earthquake on the day of yôm Kippur (final day of the

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Morgenstern, Amos Studies I, op. cit., p. 139.

celebration) when Uzziah was struck with leprosy for his sins.¹⁰⁴

The main critique against the origin of the day of the Lord in a cultic ceremony, especially on the New Year's festival, as we have seen, is the credibility of such a feast in Israel's tradition.¹⁰⁵ Even assuming that the feast did exist, there still remains the problem of the prophetic texts' non-association with feast and joyful celebrations. The prophets accused their contemporaries of exaggerated care for feasts, and threatened that Yahweh would stop all feasts of joy:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your
solmn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt
offerings and cereal offerings,
I will not accept them,
and the peace offerings of your
fatted beasts
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of
your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will
not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an
ever-flowing stream.
(Am 5:21-24)

The same denunciation of feasts can be found in Am 4:4-5; Is 1:11; 48:1; Jer 6:20; Mi 6:6-8 and Hos 8:12-13.

It would be contradictory to place the origin of the prophetic concept of the day of the Lord within a cultic context which the

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵de Vaux, op. cit., p. 502-504; R.-E. Langevin, "Sur l'Origine du 'Jour de Yahvé'", in Sciences Ecclésiastiques, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1966, p. 361.

prophets denounce. To associate the day of the Lord with a joyful festival such as the proposed New Year's day feast when all the yôm Yahweh texts speak of doom and terror appears equally inconsistent.

One must not jump to the conclusion, however, that the prophets were rejecting the cult per se¹⁰⁶ but only its abuse as practiced by the priests, the cultic prophets and the people; a cult divorced from righteousness and obedience to Yahweh. According to R. E. Clements the true knowledge of Yahweh in the Law (tôrâh) was normally to be found in the cult and the prophets who were ministers of the covenant belonged in the context of cultic institutions.¹⁰⁷ The covenant relationship to Yahweh was affirmed through the cult. Clements goes on to add: "The cult and the priesthood had failed in their obligation to teach the true knowledge of Yahweh, so Amos and the other prophets of judgment, found it necessary to attack the patterns of worship which they found."¹⁰⁸ The prophets were convinced that the authentic word of God came from them, not from the teaching of the priests and prophets at the shrines. They could not align themselves with worship at the sanctuaries because they had to preach about what the relationship of Israel to Yahweh really meant and about

¹⁰⁶W. Brueggemann, Tradition for Crisis: A Study of Hosea, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1968, p. 98, 101; C. F. Whitley, The Prophetic Achievement, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1963, p. 63.

¹⁰⁷R. E. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, in Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 43, London, SCM Press, 1965, p. 99, 86-102; D. J. McCarthy, Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972, p. 30-31.

¹⁰⁸Clements, op. cit., p. 97.

the judgment which was about to fall upon the people. Clements states that after the exile, prophecy returned again to its ancient home in the cultic life of the nation.¹⁰⁹

Yet, I believe that it was at these "denounced" cultic celebrations that the prophets proclaimed the day of the Lord. These oracles were spoken to the nation of Israel, that is to all the people, and not just to the king, priests and cultic prophets because all had sinned.¹¹⁰ To go where the people gathered was to go to their cultic festivities. We must assume that the oracles proclaimed against the nations were also proclaimed to Israelite audiences; they were to benefit from them.

There were many feasts during the year in Israel's tradition at which the prophets could have proclaimed their yôm Yahweh oracles. Israel had three great annual feasts of pilgrimage at the temple site (and we must suppose that the people of the Northern Kingdom celebrated them at the two shrines of Bethel and Dan) on which the people gathered together to celebrate Passover (pesah), Booths (sukkôt) and Weeks (šebû'ôt).¹¹¹ These were joyous feasts and would have blended in well with the words of Amos, "The day of the Lord is darkness not

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 102.

¹¹⁰The one exception would be Ezekiel's oracle against the false prophets (13:1-16). Because these were cultic prophets (empty visions, lying predictions and for money), this oracle also was given at the temple in Jerusalem, and possibly within a cultic ceremony when these prophets usually delivered their oracles of peace.

¹¹¹de Vaux, op. cit., p. 484-502.

light . . . I hate, despise your feasts and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies" (Am 5:20-24).

There was also in Israel's early history a prescribed feast day for the reading of the law to the people on the feast of Booths.

And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose, you shall read the law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."

(Dt 31:10-13)

The purpose of this recitation was so the covenant would be "known" (yāda[†] and "kept" (šamar),¹¹² This order can be traced back to the ancient Near Eastern treaties in which orders were given that the treaties be preserved in the form of copies made on clay tablets to be kept by the contracting parties and laid at the feet of the major deities of the lands in question.¹¹³ To make sure that the contents of the treaty were "known" and "kept," the treaty was to be recited in front of the vassal and his people at a specific time of

¹¹²K. Baltzer, The Covenant Formulary: in Old Testament, Jewish and Early Christian Writings, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1971, p. 84-88; von Rad, Theology II, op. cit., p. 193.

¹¹³Baltzer, op. cit., p. 18.

the year.¹¹⁴ The Hittite treaty between Mowattalliš of Hatti and Alakšanduš of Wiluša contains explicit orders concerning the regular reading of the treaty formulary.¹¹⁵ /

- 13 Die Tafel ferner, die ich dir, Ala[kšanduš
ausgestellt] habe
- 14 die solle [man] das Jahr für Jahr 3 mal
vor [lese] n,
- 15 und du Alakšanduš sollst sie kennen.

and again in a treaty with Mitanni the order is given.¹¹⁶

In the land of Mitanni, also (a duplicate)
is deposited before Tešub, the Lord of the
Kur [i]juni of Kahat. Repeatedly may it be
recited before the king of the land of
Mitanni and before the people of the land
of Harri.

In addition to the text of Dt 31:10-13 in which we read that the covenant is to be read every seven years¹¹⁷ there are other passages which indicate that the covenant must be published and read periodically: Dt 26:1-11; Josh 8:30-35 and Dt 6:20-25. Other texts reveal

¹¹⁴Ibid. Treaty ceremonies were generally conducted in the presence of a large group of people including men, women and children representing all classes of the population: scribes, diviners, priests, physicians and augurs. See Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 101.

¹¹⁵Friedrich, op. cit., p. 77, F5, Par. 19, Col. iii, lines 73-75.

¹¹⁶Baltzer, op. cit., p. 84.

¹¹⁷G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition", in The Biblical Archeologist, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1954, p. 67, does not specify how often one allows for periodic reading. A. Weiser, The Psalms: A Commentary, in The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1962, p. 23-53, explains most of the psalms within a covenant-renewal ceremony which he contends took place every year. On covenant renewal in general see Hillers, op. cit., p. 84-85, and Baltzer, op. cit., p. 60-62.

that, in fact, Israel did read the covenant on the feast of Booths (Neh 8:1-18), when a king ascended the throne (I S 12; II Ch 21:6; II Ch 23; 2K 11:20) and when the covenant had been broken (Ex 34; 2 K 22-23; 2 Ch 29:5-11; Ezr 9:10; Neh 9-10).¹¹⁸

K. Baltzer sees a close corollary between the covenant recitation and the covenant formulary.¹¹⁹ He gets the nature of the material read during the recitation of the covenant on the Feast of Booths from the details of what was recited at the time of the Mishna:¹²⁰ Dt:1:1-6:3; 6:4-6; 11:13ff; 14:22ff; 26:12ff and portions of the blessings and curses from Dt 27-28. If this be so, what better time to tell Israel (at Bethel) and Judah (at the Temple) that the curses they had just heard are going to come upon them because they have broken the covenant that has just been read to them by the presiding officer (priest, cultic prophet or king).

If you do not obey the voice of the Lord . . .
the Lord will smite you with madness and
confusion of mind: and you shall grope
at noonday as the blind grope in darkness
(Dt 28:15, 28)

To this the prophet could add in admonition:

I shall bring distress on men, so they shall walk
like the blind, because they have sinned against
the Lord. (Zeph 1:17)

¹¹⁸Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 39-61; W. Harrelson, "Worship in Early Israel: account of the Covenant Renewal Ceremony in Joshua XXIV", in *Biblical Research*, Vol. 3, 1958, p. 1-14.

¹¹⁹Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

The oracles against the nations, H. G. Reventlow argues, formed part of the ritual of the covenant festival.¹²¹ I do not agree with him that they were an integral part of the festival,¹²² but like the oracles against Israel, they could have been delivered to the assembly after the reading of the blessings because they were for the benefit of Israel who would prosper with the downfall of her enemies.

If you obey I will set you high above all
the nations of the earth. (Dt 28:1)

For behold, in those days and at that time,
... I will gather all the nations and bring
them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and
I will enter into judgment with them there,
on account of my people and my heritage
Israel. (Jl 3:1)

The Lord will cause your enemies who rise
against you to be defeated before you.
(Dt 28:7)

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the
splendour and pride of the Chaldeans, will
be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God over-
threw them. (Is 13:19)

Another cultic assembly during which the yôm Yahweh oracles could possibly have been delivered is at a penitential liturgy on the occasion of a catastrophe (Pss 74, 79). The author of the

¹²¹H. G. Reventlow, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, in Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Band 80, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962, p. 65;
G. E. Wright, "The Nations in Hebrew Prophecy", in Encounter, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1965, p. 235.

¹²²See objection to this theory in Hayes, op. cit., p. 89.

Lamentations may have uttered his dirge (Lam 2) to the Jewish remnant left in Jerusalem during a penitential liturgy which was still performed on the site of the ruined temple (Jer 41:5). The day of the Lord in Joel 1-2 is proclaimed within a penitential ceremony, "Gird on sackcloth and lament, O priests . . . Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God" (Jl 1:13a, 14a).

There can be no doubt that the prophetic proclamations of the day of the Lord had affinities with the Israelite liturgical life. It was at the liturgical assemblies that the prophets spoke their oracles as we have seen above. Also apparent are the allusions to the liturgy and cultic ceremonies, albeit in a negative way: Am 5:21-24; Zeph 1:7; Is 13:3; Jer 46:10; Is 34:5-7; Jl 1:14; 2:15-16. This therefore, leads us to believe that the liturgy was the Sitz-im-Leben for the yôm Yahweh oracles but not their origin. It was the prophets and not the cult which made known the true will of Yahweh. In the form of their oracles and in their understanding of Yahwism, they condemned the cult for its failure to preserve the true knowledge of Yahweh.

In conclusion to this section on the cultic school we can say that Mowinckle and Morgenstern¹²³ are correct in establishing a relationship between the day of the Lord oracles and the liturgy but not in their concept of the day as a cultic event nor as the origin

¹²³Gray, op. cit., p. 7.

of the description or concept of the day. The prophets' condemnation of the cult as it was practiced in their day forces us to look elsewhere for the prophetic origin and understanding of the day of the Lord: in the direction of the legal sanctions of the covenant and the international treaties, examined in chapter two of this study. This provides an explanation for the critical tone of the prophets' oracles, not only against the cult but the social and religious abuses as well. Israel sinned against Yahweh and the covenant; she broke the covenant. Therefore, the curses which a breach of the covenant implies, are invoked. Invoked also are the general curses against an enemy upon those nations which have in any way attacked or looted Israel. All the descriptions of the day of the Lord, as we have seen, contain legal terminology and above all, curse language.

c. Historical School

The main consensus of the scholars in this school is that the concept of the day of the Lord is unequivocally an Israelite concept arising from Israel's own historical tradition. Opinions differ, however, when they come to assess from which historical tradition the prophets obtained their descriptions and concept of the day of the Lord as proclaimed in the yôm Yahweh oracles. J. M. P. Smith opts for an ideological source for Israel's position as the chosen nation and her hope of a glorious future with Yahweh at the head of her armies to give victory over all her enemies.¹²⁴ Černý's idea

¹²⁴J. M. P. Smith, "The Day of Yahweh", in The American Journal of Theology, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1901, p. 505-533.

of the origin is based on the person of Yahweh, and on Israel's concept of him as a "furious, demonic deity" who brings about "fateful" days.¹²⁵ von Rad's popular theory of the holy war as the source of the prophetic origin and description of the day of the Lord is most widely accepted.¹²⁶ The foundation of the concept as a day of visitation and execution of curses is put forth by F. C. Fensham, the last author cited under the historical school.¹²⁷ We must briefly re-examine these theories and re-evaluate them in light of the conclusions of this study in chapter two.

One cannot deny that J. M. P. Smith is correct when he states that Israel had in her tradition a strong sense of hope, of longing for a future period of great glory and prosperity in which all her enemies were to be defeated. We know from Amos' words in 5:18, 20 that this was uppermost in Israelite minds even as he spoke his oracle of doom, "It is darkness and not light." Israel's hope, however, came not from the general ideological background of the Semites, as Smith explains it,¹²⁸ but wholly from her own tradition of the covenant which was quite unlike that of any other nation, Semitic or non-Semitic. Obedience to the covenant assured Israel of Yahweh's protection and of victory in war, "The Lord will cause your enemies

¹²⁵Cerny, op. cit., p. 53-80.

¹²⁶von Rad, "Origin" op. cit., p. 97-108.

¹²⁷Fensham, "Possible Origin", op. cit.; p. 90-97.

¹²⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 505-507.

who rise against you to be defeated before you" (Dt 28:7). Interestingly, Smith sees the defeat of Israel's enemies as her "mission" to the nations to enlarge Yahweh's authority.¹²⁹ But Israel had no mission to the nations until the time of the exile with the preaching of Deutero-Isaiah and then it was to be a mission of "witness" rather than one of military campaigns.¹³⁰ The defeat of Israel's enemies was pure "grace" on the part of Yahweh who was being faithful to his covenant promises. On the other side of the coin, there were the promises of punishment (curses) if Israel failed to keep the stipulations of the covenant as she had promised. When Amos therefore spoke his yôm Yahweh oracle of doom he was not transforming Israel's conception of hope, as Smith suggests, ¹³¹ but shifting the emphasis from the blessings of the covenant to its curses. The prosperity, land expansion, and political supremacy, the very things in which Smith says that Israel's hopes lay, were to be her downfall. Israel had gone too far along in her downward path to be able to return. No longer was Yahweh getting the credit for his blessings, but Israel was attributing them to her own glory and prestige. Yahweh would withdraw those blessings and send the curses. The very origin in which Smith places the concept of the day of the Lord is condemned by Amos and the other prophets after him: hope in a glorious future.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 510.

¹³⁰N. K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations: An Introduction to the Old Testament, New York, Harper and Row, 1959, p. 18-19.

¹³¹Smith, op. cit., p. 515

Amos' concept of the day of doom was not a new doctrine, nor did it come about because of a change in Israel's understanding of Yahweh (justice in punishing Israel) as Smith supposes,¹³² but rather from her history. Israel's hope of conquering Canaan with Yahweh as her warrior God faded from time to time when she sinned, and Yahweh caused her to suffer a military loss rather than a victory (Jg 2:3, 11-15; 3:7-8; 4:1-2, etc.). But with Israel's repentance and conversion, Yahweh once again raised up a Judge and fought on the side of his people (Jg 3:9-10; 4:23; 6:8, etc.). It was the same "blessing/curse" parallel which Amos presented to his audience, not as the familiar "victory/defeat" but as "light/darkness." Israel had sinned; instead of, "You shall walk with head held high" (Lv 26:13), she would experience, "You will grope your way at noontide like a blind man groping in the dark." (Dt 28:29). The covenant, especially in its curse terminology and theology, was the source from which Amos and his successors drew for their description and definition of the day of the Lord.

Both Smith¹³³ and von Rad¹³⁴ define the day of Yahweh as a day of battle. The former bases his theory on the descriptions of the day which he finds in the triumphal battles of Israel over the nations during the pre-prophetic period, while the latter traces these

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid., p. 515-520.

¹³⁴von Rad, "Origin," op. cit., p. 134.

descriptions back to the tradition of Israel's holy wars. In reality, both are saying the same thing: the day of Yahweh will be a day of battle on which the nations will be defeated (oracles against the nations), but it will also be a day of battle for Israel because Yahweh is going to turn against his people for their sins and destroy them with military might (oracles against Israel). von Rad's theory would be more credible if the term yôm Yahweh could be found only in those oracles against the nations, that is, those against whom the holy war was directed. Smith and von Rad both fail to adequately explain the absence of war imagery in these oracles: Am 5:18-20; Ez 13:1-16; Mal 3:22, 23-24 and Joel 1-2. They tactfully skirt the issue by 1) interpreting all other descriptions of the day (darkness, abasement, locusts, etc.) as implicit war imagery,¹³⁵ or 2) by reverting to other texts which are highly saturated with military language (Nahum, Habakkuk, Ez 34:12; 39:8ff, etc.).¹³⁶ This does not solve the problem.

If, however, one views the day of Yahweh as a day of curses hurled against his enemies, Israel and/or the nations, then the complexity of the multiple descriptions is resolved by regarding war as only one, a major one certainly, of the curses which are invoked as punishment. We have repeatedly seen the close connection in terminology and description between the yôm Yahweh oracles, and the curses of the covenant and the international treaties.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 103-105.

¹³⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 515.

L. Černý argues that "doom," the prominent feature of the day of the Lord,¹³⁷ originates in Israel's concept of Yahweh as a "furious, demonic deity," a "furious, fearful and zealous God" who re-appears in this character throughout the whole Hebrew tradition in his theophanies and his battles.¹³⁸ He is a God who decrees the fate of every individual Israelite as well as that of her enemies (battles).¹³⁹ Israel, Černý says, received her concept of an angry, destructive God from an ancient stock of ideas common to all nations of the ancient Near East, that is, to those nations who lived according to the same or similar social and cultural patterns. They all drew on this material, he claims, for their own mythical and literary purposes.¹⁴⁰ Černý turns to Assyrian triumphal songs and Ugaritic myths bearing divine destructive exploits and theophoric names similar to those found in the Song of Deborah (Jg ch. 5) and Isaiah's triumphal satire on the death of the king of Babylon (ch. 13).¹⁴¹ One cannot deny that mortals deemed divine anger as a prerogative of the gods, and Yahweh was no exception. But very often the anger of these mythical and foreign gods erupts irrationally and appears unmotivated.¹⁴² In Israel, this idea of divine anger was rejected. The anger of Yahweh was always associated with his righteousness, his judgments, his holiness and his covenant.¹⁴³ It is in this light that we must inter-

¹³⁷Černý, op. cit., Appendix I.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 54-55.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 60-64.

¹⁴²Pritchard, op. cit., p. 61, lines 37-40.

¹⁴³A. Heschel, The Prophets, New York, Harper and

pret the "anger" motif in the yôm Yahweh oracles (Is 13:9, 13; Lam 2: 1, 2, 3, 6, 21, 22; Ez 7:19, 38; 13:13; Zeph 1:15, 18; 2:2, 3).

Eichrodt, in his Introduction,¹⁴⁴ comments that anger is not the normal attitude of Yahweh but emerges only when an injustice has been committed either against Yahweh (idolatry) or his people (social, legal or political). Černý acknowledges this injustice when he explains the historical and social causes of the day of the Lord. The prophets deplored the abuse of riches and prosperity which led to social unrighteousness and religious unfaithfulness.¹⁴⁵ The prophets, Černý states, understood this corruption in terms of the religious and moral obligations on both partners in the covenant.¹⁴⁶ Israel had failed in her obligations, whereas Yahweh had kept and fulfilled his promises of protection and salvation. The coming catastrophe, therefore, depended on Yahweh's righteousness and the corruption of the nation. From this point, Černý connects the day of the Lord to eschatology and reverts to the already much discussed pre-prophetic concept of the expectation of a day decreed by Yahweh on which he would shape the fate of his nation, on which future life would be secured forever. Already Černý has taken us out of the realm of the yôm Yahweh

Row, 1963, p. 286, states that anger in Yahweh is not an expression of irrational, sudden and instinctive excitement but a free and deliberate reaction of his justice.

¹⁴⁴Eichrodt, Theology I, op. cit., p. 266-277.

¹⁴⁵Černý, op. cit., p. 85-92.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 92.

oracles as proclaimed by the prophets, especially those against Israel. That Israel believed there would be such a day of bliss cannot be doubted; whether she called it a day of Yahweh is immaterial. This does not solve the problem of where the prophets got their images of a day of doom and destruction for Israel, and for the nations.

To contend, as Cerny does, that Israel got her image of an angry God coming in smoke, fire, earthquake, etc., to destroy his enemies from her ancient Near Eastern milieu is undoubtedly correct. But since Abraham's day, a covenant had united Yahweh to this patriarch and his posterity forever (Gen 15 and 17). With Moses, Yahweh recalled his covenant with Abraham (Ex 2:24), saved his descendents from Egypt and placed moral sanctions upon the nation, setting before Israel life and prosperity or death and disaster:

If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.

(Dt 30:16-18)

Because of this unique relationship between Israel and her God, her conduct would forever be judged on her faithfulness or unfaithfulness to this covenant. With R. E. Clements one must agree, "It is to this tradition of a covenant code of conduct that the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries appealed when they accused their

nation of disloyalty to Yahweh, and of disregard of his revealed demands."¹⁴⁷ If the accusation came from the covenant, the punishments must also come from the covenant; these were inherent in the covenant curses. The prophets, in their yôm Yahweh oracles, interpreted the curses of the covenant in a new way, by identifying them with the day of the Lord. Their descriptions of an angry God coming in smoke, fire, earthquakes, war, etc., correspond to, as we have seen, the curses of the covenant (Lv 26; Dt 28) promised to those who no longer serve Yahweh by obeying his commandments. The horrible character of Yahweh's theophanies and battles which Cerny contended were inherent in Israel's history are re-interpreted and crystalized in the covenant, and apply only to those who break the covenant or attack and plunder the covenant people. And it is from this covenantal context that the prophets draw their descriptions of doom and punishment on the day of Yahweh, not from the earlier tradition, as Cerny concludes in his study.

It was with F. C. Fensham's statement of the possibility that the real background of the concept of the day of the Lord might lie in the covenant curses that the present study began.¹⁴⁸ It would be redundant to comment anew on Fensham's theory since the incorporation, expansion and feasibility of his observations have been evident throughout this research. His identification of similarities between the descriptions of the day of the Lord and the

¹⁴⁷Clements, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁴⁸Fensham, "Possible Origin" op. cit., p. 90-97.

covenant curses has been thoroughly substantiated in the exegesis of the yôm Yahweh texts in chapter two of this study.

The second section of chapter three has shown that previous studies on the concept of the day of the Lord have added various and interesting insights into the origin and definition of the day, but problems still remain to be solved. Can the concept be equated with eschatology when there is no mention of the future in some of the texts (Gressmann and Černý)? Is a cultic day of the Lord compatible with the prophetic condemnation of liturgical abuses (Mowinckle and Morgenstern)? Does one assume a holy war origin even though military descriptions are absent from some of the texts (von Rad)? Can a holy war be waged against Israel (von Rad)? Did Amos' doom concept of the day of the Lord serve only as an unhappy interlude within the larger context of the joyful victorious day on which Israel would fulfill her mission to the nations (Smith)? These questions are either answered by or become obsolete within a legal covenantal interpretation of the origin and concept of the day of the Lord.

Eschatology loses its importance when a legal sanction exists within history or is already passed. The curses to come and those already inflicted are simultaneous with the judgment. The cult can no longer be relied on to act as a conduit of assured blessings so the prophets turn it into a courtroom for sentences of doom. Military sanctions, including the holy war against the nations, viewed in their correct perspective within the blessings and curses of the covenant, can account for a partial understanding of the concept of the day of the Lord. Military imagery is only one of the curse sentences,

albeit an important one, inflicted on Yahweh's enemies. 'Amos' day of doom and those of his successors, must not be seen as tunnels of darkness between two great periods of Israel's victory over her enemies. There had always been a threat of doom (curses) throughout Israel's national history, legalized within her covenant code, and to be administered if and when the covenant was broken.¹⁴⁹ During the intense periods of the nation's unfaithfulness to Yahweh, the prophets warned, threatened, accused and reminded Israel that she had broken the covenant and had to be punished with the disciplinary sanctions of the covenant, the curses. The execution of the curses, the prophets called "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." They also proclaimed a "day of the Lord," for the nations which would be a day of judgment and sentencing with "curse" punishments for the enemy who would attack, molest or harass. These punishments came from the traditional ancient Near Eastern curse list, which was invoked for vengeance on one's persecutor.

From the evidence gleaned and this comparative study, it seems reasonable to conclude that the origin and meaning of the day of the Lord as expressed in the yôm Yahweh oracles, lies in the concept of a day of judgment and curses for Yahweh's enemies.

III. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER THREE

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the validity of a legal and covenantal origin to the day of the Lord, a validity arises

¹⁴⁹Fensham, "Covenant Promise," op. cit., p. 305-322.

from the textual exegesis of the sixteen prophetic oracles which mention expressis verbis the Hebrew term yōm Yahweh analysed in chapter two of this study. To avoid the danger of remaining too confined within a narrow range of texts (16) and of being accused of failing to consider the minor variant forms of the term included in studies by other scholars on the subject, I have conducted a comparative study of the exegetical conclusions of the basic sixteen texts with these variant forms texts. An examination in chapter one of this study of the previous theories on the subject of the day of the Lord revealed unanswered questions and inadequate solutions for a suitable interpretation of the origin and definition of the term yōm Yahweh in the prophetic writings. Does the "curse" theory, suggested by F. C. Fensham and researched in this study, provide the right key to help unlock the centuries old mystery which surrounds the prophetic message about the day of the Lord? The conclusions from chapter two seem to confirm that position. After further analysis and discussion of the minor variant forms of the term yōm Yahweh and the previous studies the following conclusions have been reached in this chapter:

1. The concept of the day of the Lord in these texts is uniquely a prophetic notion.
2. Doom is the predominant atmosphere which surrounds the day with no escape for those condemned.
3. It has been determined with more certainty that the terminology (legal), descriptions (curses) and characteristics (doom, punishment, nearness, fury) of the day of the Lord are identical in all texts thus indicating a common origin of the notion.

4. Analogous terminology, descriptions and characteristics of the day of the Lord have been found in the covenant code and the international treaties of the ancient Near East arguing for a legal origin of the concept.

5. Israel's unique relationship with her God in a 'covenant union resembles that of a sovereign lord's with his vassal in the areas of fidelity, protection and punishments.

6. The Sitz-im-Leben of the day of the Lord is in the cult.

7. Eschatology is not a common characteristic of the day of the Lord, neither in its future, universal or "end-time" aspects. The day can be past, present or future; it names a specific nation or nations for punishment and is always within an historical time period.

8. Military and holy war imagery are often utilized to describe the day of the Lord but they cannot be found in all the yôm Yahweh texts thus discouraging a military origin for the concept.

9. Curse material is present in all the yôm Yahweh texts, thus substantiating the claim that the original background of the day of the Lord is a day of Yahweh's visitation and execution of curses on his enemies.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Before work on the texts themselves could commence it was necessary to examine the research on the term yôm Yahweh in the scholarly world to ascertain which theories had been advanced on the subject. There had to be a method of selection to obtain a minimum, yet representative number of theories in the whole field of yôm Yahweh research.

Many interesting observations surfaced in the initial stage of the research: 1) There was only one major published work on the topic, Cerny's monograph, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems; 2) all other material was scattered either in various scholarly periodicals or in chapters and sections of books devoted to other Old Testament subjects; 3) three schools of thought dominated the history of the research: mythical, cultic and historical; 4) von Rad's holy war theory with or without alterations had met with the most approval in the scholarly world; 4) the majority of the authors traced an evolution of the concept from an early pre-prophetic notion, through the prophets of doom right up to an eschatological understanding of the term at the end of the Old Testament period.

The already existing categories of the three schools of thought served as a point of departure for selecting representative

authors and theories of the concept of the day of the Lord. The first person who tried to systematically resolve the problem of the day of the Lord was H. Gressmann at the turn of the century, so he automatically headed the list as a candidate for a representative study. Myth, he said, was the origin of yôm Yahweh and eschatology its vehicle of evolution. The two representatives of the cultic school, Mowinckel and Morgenstern both deserved coverage for their unique association of the day of the Lord with a proposed Israelite new Year's festival. The historical school category had far more representatives but the four chosen were based on: the major work on the subject (Černy), the most popular theory (von Rad), one of the older historical theories (Smith) and the intriguing "curse" theory of F. C. Fensham which spawned the present work. Armed with this survey material from the preliminary chapter, work on the texts themselves could begin.

For the purpose of this study, only those biblical texts which mentioned expressis verbis the term yôm Yahweh were given a thorough exegesis. The reasoning for this methodology was two-fold: 1) to narrow the extent of the material within a workable range of research and 2) to avoid adulterating the pristine sense of the term (if there were one) with the varied meanings and multiple mention of a "day" in the Old Testament. This facilitated obtaining a meaningful answer for the origin and definition of the day of the Lord.

The sixteen texts which contained the term yôm Yahweh were found only in the prophetic literature, hence the definition of the day of the Lord would be uniquely a prophetic one. This in itself again narrowed our research context to a singular literary form, the

prophetic oracle. The context became even more restricted when all the oracles containing this term were found to be "doom" oracles.

With the closer study of these texts, patterns of similarity started to emerge in descriptions, terminology and theology. This seemed to indicate that all the prophets drew their images of the concept from the same historical-traditional source. After having surveyed the other theories and done an exegesis of the texts, I found that the theory which best interprets and resolves the patterns of similarity in all the texts is the "curse" theory of Fensham derived from a covenantal source in Israel's legal code as it is set forth in the book of Deuteronomy. More and more scholars, I saw, were discovering the great influx of covenantal ideas on the prophets. The post-exilic prophets also, as we have seen in the yôm Yahweh oracles from them, continued this ethical demand. The idea of the covenant with God is present in the oldest documents of the Pentateuch, and therefore, prophets knew of the religious covenant and its curses. Although the word for "covenant" (berith) is not found within the yôm Yahweh oracles, the complex ideas and terminology associated with the covenant is present. In noting that the prophets were very sparing of the word "covenant" (Isaiah, nine times; Jeremiah, twenty-two times; Ezekiel, eighteen times; Malachi, six times; Hosea, five times; Amos, once; Obadiah, once; and Zechariah, twice) we have offered this reasoning: that the word "covenant" had been appropriated for the pact between Yahweh and the kings, the rival covenant. All of Israel had sinned hence the prophets announced the inevitable approach of judgment and punishment through the Sinai covenant, the

... pact between Yahweh and all his people.

In chapter three we stressed the importance of the cult as the Sitz-im-Leben of the covenant but we also saw in this study that the terminology, imagery and understanding of the yôm Yahweh oracles come from the legal aspect of the covenant rather than the cultic. The legal dimension of the covenant strongly resembles the legal international covenants (treaties) of the ancient Near East. Recent studies have substantiated this relationship between the two contract types in form and terminology. That Israel and the prophets were aware of such treaty forms cannot be denied. In her own political arena, Israel had covenant/treaties with other peoples: the Midianites (Ex 18:1-12), the inhabitants of Canaan (Ex 23:32; 34:12, 15; Dt 7:2; Jg 2:2), the Gibeonites (Jos 9), Tyre (1 K 5:15-26; Am 1:9), the Aramaeans (1 K 15:19 - 2 Ch 16:3; 1 K 20:34), Assyria (Hos 12:2), Egypt (Is 31:1) and Babylon (Ez 17:13-18; Is 47:8). The legal and profane treaty relationship between a suzerain lord and his vassal(s) became the form which Israel used for her legal and religious covenant relationship with Yahweh. The prophetic proclamation of the day of the Lord takes on a new aspect when viewed against the background of the covenant and the Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties as we have shown in this study. The threats of divine punishment against Israel described in the yôm Yahweh texts can best be understood as the results of a covenant breach. The threats of divine punishment against the nations described in the yôm Yahweh texts can best be understood as the result of Yahweh's covenantal protection for Israel against her (and Yahweh's) enemies. That divine punishment consisted in the

curses of the covenant upon Israel and the general curses upon Israel's enemy, the nations. The day of Yahweh was to be a day of doom, all darkness and no light.

Why is it that we have the term yôm Yahweh only within a destructive context? Could it be that this precedent set by Amos and the pre-exilic prophets came to be incorporated into the mainstream of Israel's prophetic tradition? Its prophetic use within such a long historical time-span (8th to 4th centuries B.C.) tends to corroborate this theory. If the term were used as such, we have no way of knowing its pre-prophetic definition before Amos either in a Biblical or extra-Biblical context. We can assume, and rightly so, that Israel at the time of Amos, because of Yahweh's past salvific actions and blessings toward his chosen people, always expected to be the recipient of divine graces regardless of their behavior. They felt safe on the mountains of Samaria (Am 6:1) and secure within the temple precincts (Jer 7:4). Amos and his successors shocked their listeners out of this complacent bliss with their ominous message: "You have broken the covenant with your unfaithfulness. No more will you receive the blessings of the covenant, only its curses."

Let us end on a note of optimism and hope. There was never any question in the minds of the prophets that the day of Yahweh, the day of curses, would not last forever: "But his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime" (Ps 30:5). Conversion and purification were the fruit of the yôm Yahweh punishments for infidelity. Only now could Israel look forward for a new day on which God would intervene to reactivate his election traditions. The

"Blessings-infidelity-punishment-conversion-blessings" syndrome had always been a hallmark of Israel's on-again/off-again relationship with her God. The one stable component was Yahweh's hēsed, his everlasting covenantal love eternalized by his oath to make of Israel a people consecrated to himself (Dt 28:9) for the sake of his great name, Yahweh (I S 12:22).

For a brief moment I forsook you,
but with great compassion (rahōm) I will
gather you.
In overflowing wrath for a moment
I hid my face from you,
but with everlasting love (hēsed) I will have
compassion (rahōm) on you,
says the Lord, your Redeemer.

(Is 54:7-8)

I will heal their faithlessness;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.
(Hos 14:5)

To summarize in a simple and synthetic form the final result of our investigation about the origin and meaning of the day of Yahweh let us let Zephaniah, one of those prophets who spoke so strongly about yōm Yahweh, once more raise his voice in admonition and hope.

Israel had an obligation to obey Yahweh:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord;
and you shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul, and with
all your might. And these words which I
command you this day shall be upon your heart.
(Dt 6:4-5)

She broke that covenant by refusing to obey Yahweh and his commandments.

. . . . those who have turned back from
 following the Lord,
 who do not seek the Lord or
 inquire of him. (Zeph 1:6)

Yahweh's anger blazed out in indignation and justice to punish the
 rebels on the great day of Yahweh with the curses of that same covenant.

The great day of the Lord is near,

.
 A day of wrath is that day,
 a day of distress and anguish,
 A day of ruin and devastation,
 a day of darkness and gloom,
 a day of clouds and thick darkness,
 a day of trumpet blasts and battle cry
 against the fortified cities
 and against the lofty battlements.

(Zeph 1:14a, 15-16)

Punishment will bring repentance.

For I will leave in the midst of you
 a people humble and lowly.
 They shall seek refuge in the name of
 the Lord,
 those who are left in Israel

(Zeph 3:12-13)

There will be a time of covenant renewal with the remnant of Israel.

On that day it shall be said to
 Jerusalem:
 Do not fear, O Zion;

.

The Lord you God is in your
midst,

.....

he will rejoice over you with
gladness;
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud
singing
as on a day of festival.

(Zeph 3:16-17)

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Carmignac, Jean, "Les Dangers de l'Eschatologie", in New Testament Studies, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1971, p. 365-390.

A discussion of the history of eschatology and the various interpretations which have been given to the term by authors since its inception in 1804.

-----, "La Notion d'Eschatologie dans la Bible et à Qumran", in Revue de Qumran, Vol. 7, No. 25, Fasc., 1, 1969, p. 17-31.

The author studies the notion of eschatology in the Bible by comparing the word eschaton found in the scrolls at Qumran with the Biblical text. He concluded that in both the word was used to mean only an undetermined future time, not an end time.

Carniti, Cecilia, "L'Espressione 'il Giorno di Jhwh': Origine di Evoluzione Semantica", in Bibbia e Oriente, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1970, p. 11-25.

A brief study on the evolution of the term yôm Yahweh from a pre-prophetic salvation concept through a post exilic eschatological notion.

Causse, Antonin, "Le Jour de Jahvé et la Fête de l'Avènement de Jahvé", in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuse, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1923, p. 262-268.

This is a critique of Mowinckel's theory of the origin of the day of the Lord connected with the enthronement of Yahweh. The author disagrees with Mowinckel.

✓ Cerny, Ladislav, The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems, Prague, V. Praze, 1948, viii-112 p.

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Clifford, Richard J., "The Use of hōy in the Prophets", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1966, p. 458-464.

An examination of the word hōy in the Old Testament. The author concludes that hōy originally was a funerary cry but the prophets developed it into a curse-formula.

Clements, Roland Ernest, Prophecy and Covenant in Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 43, London, SCM Press, 1965, 135 p.

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Comiskey, John P. "The Day of Yahweh-Divine Judgment unto Wrath or Mercy?", in The Bible Today, No. 32, November, 1967, p. 2214-2220.

The day of the Lord is presented as the occasion of an eschatological conflict.

Condamin, Albert, "L'Unité d'Abdias", in Revue Biblique, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1900, p. 261-268.

The author shows the unity of the book through poetic form.

Cooke, George Albert, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel in The International Critical Commentary, Edingurgh, T. & T. Clark, 1951, 2 Vols. in 1.

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✓ Couturier, Fernand, "Le 'Jour de Yahvé' dans l'Ancient Testament", in Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1954, p. 193-217.

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Yahweh's wars are seen as a means toward fulfilling his promises of the Covenant - a response to faith by Israel.

Cross, Jr., Frank Moore, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult", in Biblical Motifs, A. Altmann, ed., Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 11-30.

A critic of G. von Rad's theory that Israel's wars were wars of conquest. The author traces the motif of Yahweh as the Divine Warrior who leads the earthly and the cosmic armies in victorious warfare.

Deissler, Alfons, "Malachie", dans La Sainte Bible, Tome II, L. Pirot et A. Clamer, ed., Paris, Letouzey et Ané, 1964, p. 623-662.
A good critical study of the book of Malachi.

Delcor, Matthias, "Jour de Yahve", in Catholicisme: hier, aujourd'hui, demain, Vol. 26, No. 6, 1965, p. 1054-1058.

A brief historical overview of the notion of the day of Yahweh. The author sees its origin in a military context.

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The author uses the covenant as the key theological concept of the Old Testament.

Elinor, Robert, D., "End and Beginning", in The Journal of Bible and Religion, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1963, p. 9-16.

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The author traces the origin of the tradition of Palestinian fertility to a middle Bronze Age period. Fertile Palestine becomes one of the promises of the Covenant to Abraham.

-----, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1963, p. 133-143.

A study of the parallel between the Hittite treaty protection promised by the great king to his vassal against enemies, and the promise of Yahweh in the Old Testament to protect Israel against foreign foes.

-----, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru-Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah", in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 75, No. 2, p. 155-175.

The author shows a close connection between certain curses of the ancient Near East and various prophetic maledictions. In this short survey he uses Amos and Isaiah as prime examples but he does not exclude the other prophets.

-----, "Covenant Promise and Expectation in the Bible", in Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1967, p. 305-322.

This article concludes that the history of the Old Testament is essentially a history of covenants.

-----, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant", in Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright, H. Goedicke, ed., Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 121-135.

An important study showing the correlation between international treaties and the covenant in their legal use of the term "father and son".

-----, "Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament," in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1962, p. 1-9.

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-----, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," in Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, "Papers read at the 9th meeting in Stellenbosch," Potchefstroom, Herald Beperk, 1966, p. 90-97.

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One of the few studies that insists that the prophecy of Malachi is not eschatological, but rather a dialogue of questions and answers between Yahweh and Israel.

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This book contains the Aramaic text, an English translation and commentary on the three Aramaic stelae found at Sefire. All three of them were treaty texts.

Fohrer, Georg, Ezechiel, mit einem Beitrag von Kurt Galling, in Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Heft 13, Tübingen, J. B. C. Mohr, 1955, xxx-263 pp.

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A very brief summary of three characteristics of the day of the Lord: fear, war and apocalyptic.

Gelin, Albert, "Jours de Yahvé et Jour de Yahvé", in Lumière et Vie, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 39-52.

The author distinguishes between historical days of Yahweh and the Day of Yahweh at the end time.

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This study traces the origin of the prophetic rīb where God summons and accuses his people to the normal legal controversies held at the city gates and the law courts.

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Gray, George Buchanan, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, in The International Critical Commentary, Vol. XX, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1912, 472 p.

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Gray, John, "The Day of Yahweh in Cultic Experience and Eschatological Prospect", in Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok, Vol. 39, Uppsala, Lundequist, 1974, p. 5-37.

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Gressmann, Hugo, Der Ursprung der jüdisch-israelitischen Eschatologie, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905, viii-378 p.

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-----, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen I und Ap Joh 12. Mit Beiträgen von H. Zimmern, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895, xiv-431 p.

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This study is a reaction to von Rad's theory of the holy war as the origin of the day of the Lord. By developing the concept in Israel's history the author has concluded that the origin of the day of the Lord is in the theophany of Yahweh.

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To answer the question as to the function of the nation's oracles in the prophets, the author, by a systematic study, concludes that the function is judgment on the nations and salvation for Israel.

Heintz, Jean-Georges, "Oracles prophétiques et 'Guerre sainte' selon les Archives royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament", in Vetus Testamentum Supplement, Vol. 17, Congress Volume, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1969, p. 112-138.

A study of holy war terminology in a prophetic context.

-----, "Aux origines d'une expression biblique: ŪMŪŠŪ QERBŪ, in A. R. M., x/6,8?" in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1971, p. 528-540.

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Héléwa, Fr. Jean, "Trois solutions au problème de l'origine du concept du Jour de Yahvé", in Ephemerides Carmeliticae, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1964, p. 3-36.

One can find in this article a résumé of three studies about the day of Yahweh: Gressmann, Mowinckel and von Rad. The author then offers his own solution; a dual origin of the concept: holy war and the covenant.

Heschel, Abraham J., The Prophets, New York, Harper and Row, 1963, 518 p.

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Hillers, Delbert R., Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1969, xii-194 p.

An excellent study of covenants in light of extra-Biblical sources.

-----, "A Note on Some Treaty Terminology in the Old Testament", in The Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Vol. 176, No. 4, 1964, p. 46-47.

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The author traces the use of the mourning cry in various literatures of the ancient Near East and then compares it to the use of the cry in Israel.

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Kapelrud, Arvid Schou, Central Ideas in Amos, in Skrifter utg. av det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, Vol. II, Oslo, H. Aschehoug, 1956, 96 p.

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-----, "God as Destroyer in the Preaching of Amos and in the Ancient Near East", in The Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 71, No. 1, p. 33-41.

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A critical study of the book of Joel stressing the unity and cultic implications of the book.

-----, The Message of the Prophet Zephaniah: Morphology and Ideas, Oslo, Universitetsforlag, 1975, 116 p.

A morphological approach to the study of Zephaniah with an emphasis on the central ideas of other prophets in the Old Testament, especially Amos. The author sees the Sitz-im-Leben of the day of the Lord in a New Year's Festival.

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Leeuwen, C. van, "The Prophecy of the yôm Yahweh in Amos 5:18-20", in Oudtestamentische Studien, Vol. 19, A. S. van der Woude, ed., Leiden, Brill, 1974, p. 113-134.

The best single exegesis done on the yôm Yahweh text in Amos. Highly recommended.

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The article is in Hebrew but there is an English summary. The author traces this phrase "From this time forth and evermore" to legal terminology in the documents from Elephantine and Ugarit.

Luckenbill, Daniel D., "Hittite Treaties and Letters", in The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1921, p. 161-211.

Translation of documents from a small part of the archives from Boghazkoy. Those presented here are mostly vassal treaties which were useful for this study to compare with the Israelite Covenant.

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A review article of L. Perlitt's book Bundestheologie im Alten Testament. The author disagrees with Perlitt's understanding of berith as an obligation rather than a covenant.

-----, "Covenant in the Old Testament: The Present State of Inquiry", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1965, p. 217-240.

A review article tracing the history of the work done on the concept of covenant up to the time of his writing.

-----, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel", in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1965, p. 144-147.

The author studies the Hebrew concept of Israel as Yahweh's son as identical to the Deuteronomical conception of covenant.

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-----, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East, Pittsburg, The Biblical Colloquium, 1955, 50 p. also in The Biblical Archaeologist, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1954, p. 50-76. and E. F. Campbell and D. N. Freedman, eds., The Biblical Archaeologist Reader 3, New York, Doubleday, 1970, p. 3-53.

A discussion of the peculiar character of Israelite law with an emphasis on apodictic laws. Israelite laws and covenants are compared with those of the ancient Near East. The many reprints of this article show its importance in the study of Israelite covenants.

Miller, Patrick D. "Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War", in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1968, p. 100-107.

A comparative study of the holy wars in Israel and the cosmic wars of the ancient Near Eastern myths. The prophetic oracles cited are those which call Israel to war against the nations.

-----, "El the Warrior", in The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 60, No. 4, 1967, p. 428-429.

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-----, "God the Warrior", in Interpretation, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1965, p. 39-46.

The author traces the image of God as Divine Warrior in the Old Testament. "As warrior his rule and sovereignty over Israel is understood as the commander of her armies. Closely allied is the ancient institution of holy war in Israel.

-----, Holy War and Cosmic War in Early Israel, doctoral thesis presented to the Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass. 1963, 130 p.

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The author studies four periods of eschatology in Israelite history: pre-eschatology, proto-eschatology, actual eschatology and transcendental eschatology.

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A study of Yahweh as a warrior who protects and fights for Israel, from the exodus to a final apocalyptic battle against Satan.

ABSTRACT OF

The Day of Yahweh: A Study of the Concept yôm Yahweh in the Old Testament¹

Three schools of thought have dominated the study of the concept of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament: the mythical, the cultic, and the historical. Although the historical school has received more attention in the Biblical literature than the others, there is still divergence as to the Israelite institution in which the concept originated and acquired its definition.

Each of the three major schools of thought was analyzed with representative works from each division, concentrating on the dominant theories found in the current literature on the subject of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament. This survey resulted in seven representative studies and five dominant theories which were proposed as the source of Israel's concept of the day of the Lord: the eschatological (H. Gressmann, L. Černý), the military (von Rad), the theophanic (J. M. P. Smith), the cultic (S. Mowinckel, J. Morgenstern) and the legal (F. C. Fensham).

This study sought to determine the origin and definition of the concept of the day of the Lord in the Old Testament following the

¹Sister Mary Timothy McHatten, doctoral dissertation presented to the School of Religious Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, December, 1978, vii-285 p.

rationale of the historical school and the exegetical method of investigation employed in Biblical research.

As a control method, only those texts in the Old Testament which contained explicitly the phrase yôm Yahweh were selected to determine if there were similar literary, textual, and historical variables which would point to a common origin of the concept in these texts. Sixteen prophetic texts were found to contain the phrase yôm Yahweh. Research of each text began with an historical background and then went into a textual criticism paralleled with extra-Biblical texts of the legal world of the ancient Near East.

From this investigation it was found that the terminology, imagery, literary forms and function of the yôm Yahweh texts were identical to those of the curse material in the Mosaic Covenant and the legal milieu of the ancient Near East, especially in the international treaties. This led us to uphold the theory of F. C. Fensham that the origin of the day of the Lord, as proclaimed by the prophets in the yôm Yahweh oracles, came from a legal background and can be defined as a day of Yahweh's visitation and his execution of curses on his enemies.