

interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

September 1983 Volume 11 Number 3

- 275 Barbara Tovey Shakespeare's Apology for Imitative Poetry: *The Tempest* and *The Republic*
- 317 Anne M. Cohler Montesquieu's Perception of his Audience for the *Spirit of the Laws*
- 333 A. Anthony Smith Ethics and Politics in the Work of Jürgen Habermas
- 353 Robert Sacks The Lion and the Ass: a Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Chapters 38 & 39)

Discussion

- 383 Thomas West Defending Socrates and Defending Politics: a Response to Stewart Umphrey

Book Review

- 399 Michael A. Gillespie Heidegger's "Being and Time" and the Possibility of Political Philosophy by Mark Blitz

Short Notices

- 401 Will Morrisey *Plato's "Phaedrus"* by Ronna Burger; *Aristotle on Political Reasoning* by Larry Arnhart; Rousseau's *Émile*—Introduction, Translation and Notes by Allan Bloom; Rousseau's *Reveries*—Translation, Preface, Notes and Interpretive Essay by Charles E. Butterworth; *The Political Philosophy of the Frankfurt School* by George Friedman
- 407 Robert L. Stone Index to *Interpretation*, Volumes 1–10

interpretation

Volume 11 number 3

Editor-in-Chief Hilail Gildin

Editors Seth G. Benardete • Hilail Gildin • Robert Horwitz
• Howard B. White (d.1974)

Consulting Editors John Hallowell • Wilhelm Hennis • Erich Hula •
Arnaldo Momigliano • Michael Oakeshott • Ellis
Sandoz • Leo Strauss (d.1973) • Kenneth W.
Thompson

Associate Editors Larry Arnhart • Patrick Coby • Christopher A. Colmo
• Maureen Feder • Joseph E. Goldberg • Pamela
Jensen • Will Morrisey • Bradford Wilson

Assistant Editors Marianne C. Grey • Laurette G. Hupman

Design & Production Martyn Hitchcock

annual
subscription rates individual \$13; institutional \$16; student (3-year
limit) \$7. INTERPRETATION appears three times a
year.

Address
for correspondence INTERPRETATION, Queens College, Flushing,
N.Y. 11367, U.S.A.

Authors submitting manuscripts for publication in
INTERPRETATION are requested to follow the *MLA
Style Sheet* and to send clear and readable copies
of their work.

Copyright 1983 • Interpretation

The Lion and the Ass: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Chapters 38 & 39)

ROBERT SACKS

St. John's College, Santa Fe

CHAPTER XXXVIII

I. AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THAT TIME, THAT JUDAH WENT DOWN FROM HIS BRETHREN, AND TURNED IN TO A CERTAIN ADULLAMITE, WHOSE NAME WAS HIRAH.

The words *at that time* strongly connect the following chapter with what preceded it. The last time they were used was in Chapter Twenty-one, Verse Twenty-two, after the birth of Isaac, where they introduced a second account of Abimelech. As we remember, Abimelech's actions at that point were not intelligible apart from his knowledge that Abraham had had a son.

Judah decided to leave his brothers. Unlike his father, he could no longer live with those men whom he had narrowly prevented from murdering their own brother.

At this point some clarity emerges concerning the difficulty raised by Gen. 37:2, in which Benjamin was totally ignored. Judah's decision to live apart from his brothers was repeated once more when the tribe of Judah decided to live apart from their brothers under King Rehoboam after Jeroboam's revolution, and we shall see the strange role which Benjamin played at that time in the commentary to Gen. 49:27.

Judah first went to Adullam where he had a friend named Hirah. This decision sets the stage for Chapter Thirty-eight. The city of Adullam was later captured by Joshua and given to the tribe of Judah (Josh. 12:15 and 15:35). We have often spoken of David's early days in Ziklag, but even prior to those days he had an earlier camp.

One day evil spirits came to King Saul and David was sent for to charm them away with his harp, but Saul heaved a javelin at him. David escaped to the priest Ahimelech, who gave him the sword of Goliath, and from there he fled to Adullam where the dissident first rallied around him (I Sam. 22:1).

David's last great act of battle came very late. The old man was faint, and his soldiers risked their lives to cross through the lines in order to get their king a single cup of water from a well in the town of his birth, Bethlehem. In the commentary to Gen. 14:4 we have already discussed the dignity with which he poured the water out as a libation. All this took place in the city of Adullam, which is never mentioned again. Judah's friend is from the city which holds together the active life of his most famous descendant, David.

2. AND JUDAH SAW THERE A DAUGHTER OF A CERTAIN CANAANITE, WHOSE NAME WAS SHUAH; AND HE TOOK HER, AND WENT IN UNTO HER.
3. AND SHE CONCEIVED, AND BARE A SON; AND HE CALLED HIS NAME ER.
4. AND SHE CONCEIVED AGAIN, AND BARE A SON; AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME ONAN.
5. AND SHE YET AGAIN CONCEIVED, AND BARE A SON; AND CALLED HIS NAME SHELAH: AND HE WAS AT CHEZIB, WHEN SHE BARE HIM.

Chezib, or Achzib, will also become a city in the tribe of Judah.

6. AND JUDAH TOOK A WIFE FOR ER HIS FORSTBORN, WHOSE NAME WAS TAMAR.
7. AND ER, JUDAH'S FIRSTBORN, WAS WICKED IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD; AND THE LORD SLEW HIM.
8. AND JUDAH SAID UNTO ONAN, GO IN UNTO THY BROTHER'S WIFE, AND MARRY HER, AND RAISE UP SEED TO THY BROTHER.
9. AND ONAN KNEW THAT THE SEED WOULD NOT BE HIS; AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN HE WENT IN UNTO HIS BROTHER'S WIFE, THAT HE SPILLED IT ON THE GROUND, LEST THAT HE SHOULD GIVE SEED TO HIS BROTHER.
10. AND THE THING WHICH HE DID DISPLEASED THE LORD: WHEREFORE HE SLEW HIM ALSO.

The laws concerning Leverite marriage are given in Deut. 22:5–9. According to these laws it was the duty of a man to raise up a seed for his dead brother. The reason for this law is more than the desire for the immortality of the individual family. It is closely related to the Jubilee Year which has played such an important role in the book. The particular kind of political freedom envisaged by Moses presupposes the direct inheritance of each parcel of land from father to son in order that the distinction between the rich and the poor, which causes most peoples to be divided into two camps, not cause strife in Israel.

Onan's actions were displeasing to God for two reasons. It was an attack on his fundamental political duty. Personal immortality through procreation of his own name replaced communal immortality which was to have been ensured by the Jubilee Year (see commentary to Gen. 15:9). In addition, his act was a conversion of seed into chaos (see commentary to Gen. 34:11).

The subject of Leverite marriage will come up again in the Book of Ruth, which will play an important role in the present chapter, as we shall see in the commentary to Verse Twenty-seven.

11. THEN SAID JUDAH TO TAMAR HIS DAUGHTER IN LAW, REMAIN A WIDOW AT THY FATHER'S HOUSE, TILL SHELAH MY SON BE GROWN: FOR HE SAID LEST PERADVENTURE HE DIE ALSO, AS HIS BRETHREN DID. AND TAMAR WENT AND DWELT IN HER FATHER'S HOUSE.

12. AND IN PROCESS OF TIME THE DAUGHTER OF SHUAH JUDAH'S WIFE DIED; AND JUDAH WAS COMFORTED, AND WENT UP UNTO THE SHEEPSHEARERS TO TIMNATH, HE AND HIS FRIEND HIRAH THE ADULLAMITE.
13. AND IT WAS TOLD TAMAR, SAYING, BEHOLD THY FATHER IN LAW GOETH UP TO TIMNATH TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP.
14. AND SHE PUT HER WIDOW'S GARMENTS OFF FROM HER, AND COVERED HER WITH A VAIL, AND WRAPPED HERSELF, AND SAT IN AN OPEN PLACE, WHICH IS BY THE WAY TO TIMNATH; FOR SHE SAW THAT SHELAH WAS GROWN, AND SHE WAS NOT GIVEN UNTO HIM TO WIFE.
15. WHEN JUDAH SAW HER, HE THOUGHT HER TO BE AN HARLOT; BECAUSE SHE HAD COVERED HER FACE.

By refusing to allow the marriage between Shelah and Tamar, Judah also rejects the Jubilee Year. In other words he no longer sees the possibility of that kind of unity among the people. Partly based on his earlier experience with his brothers, and partly based on the experience of his own son, he sees that kind of unity as being fatal, given the ways of men. The present chapter will contain the education of Judah who, as we have seen before, was wiser than he was pious.

The subject of harlots as opposed to concubines forms a curious thread which reveals the tension that necessarily exists under law. Harlotry is illegal in Israel and is punishable by death (Deut. 22:21). Throughout the books of the Prophets and even in the Torah itself harlotry is the symbol of leaving the ways of God. Harlotry was used both symbolically and literally since it is often understood to be the literal means by which the people could be enticed into the ways of other gods (see Ex. 34:15,16 and Num. 25:1). Concubines, on the other hand, are legal, and therein lies the problem.

Now that we have stated the law, we must consider the individual cases which appear in the text. The first harlot whom we meet is that wonderful woman, Rahab, of whom we shall speak at great length in the commentary to Gen. 38:26. The next time the subject occurs is when we meet the whoreson, Jephthah, a strange man but one whose final fate we can surely pity (see commentary to Gen. 33:12 and Judg. Chap. 12). In comparison with his wife, Delilah, the harlot Samson met did him little harm (Judg. 16:1). The two harlots who both claimed the child in the famous case judged by Solomon also moved the reader—the one more than the other, to be sure, but even though the first harlot is willing to see the child killed rather than admit her lie, the mere fact that she wanted the child mitigates her crime to some extent.

Concubines on the other hand always present difficulties. Abraham's concubine, Keturah, was the mother of the Midianites (Gen. 25:2). Amalek, the internal enemy of Israel, was the son of a concubine (Gen. 36:12 and commentary). Abimelech, not the friend of Abraham, but the son of Gideon who was the first to proclaim himself king in Israel, was also the son of a concubine

(Judg. 8:31). The grave difficulties which that led to were described in the commentaries to Gen. 32:28 and 34:8. When Abner left Ishbosheth it was because he had been accused of sleeping with Saul's concubine, and when Absalom took possession of Jerusalem he finalized the capture by sleeping with his father's concubine.

The Old Testament is not unaware of the fact that the illegal is often more wholesome than the barely legal, and yet, if political independence is to be maintained such things can be appreciated only by private men.

16. AND HE TURNED UNTO HER BY THE WAY, AND SAID, GO TO, I PRAY THEE, LET ME COME IN UNTO THEE; (FOR HE KNEW NOT THAT SHE WAS HIS DAUGHTER IN LAW.) AND SHE SAID, WHAT WILT THOU GIVE ME, THAT THOU MAYEST COME IN UNTO ME?
17. AND HE SAID, I WILL SEND THEE A KID FROM THE FLOCK. AND SHE SAID, WILT THOU GIVE ME A PLEDGE, TILL THOU SEND IT?
18. AND HE SAID, WHAT PLEDGE SHALL I GIVE THEE? AND SHE SAID THY SIGNET, AND THY BRACELETS, AND THY STAFF THAT IS IN THINE HAND. AND HE GAVE IT HER, AND CAME IN UNTO HER, AND SHE CONCEIVED BY HIM.
19. AND SHE AROSE, AND WENT AWAY, AND LAID BY HER VAIL FROM HER AND PUT ON THE GARMENTS OF HER WIDOWHOOD.
20. AND JUDAH SENT THE KID BY THE HAND OF HIS FRIEND THE ADULLAMITE, TO RECEIVE HIS PLEDGE FROM THE WOMAN'S HAND: BUT HE FOUND HER NOT.
21. THEN HE ASKED THE MEN OF THAT PLACE, SAYING, WHERE IS THE HARLOT, THAT WAS OPENLY BY THE WAY SIDE? AND THEY SAID, THERE WAS NO HARLOT IN THIS PLACE.
22. AND HE RETURNED TO JUDAH AND SAID, I CANNOT FIND HER; AND ALSO THE MEN OF THE PLACE SAID, THAT THERE WAS NO HARLOT IN THIS PLACE.
23. AND JUDAH SAID, LET HER TAKE IT TO HER, LEST WE BE SHAMED: BEHOLD, I SENT THIS KID, AND THOU HAS NOT FOUND HER.
24. AND IT CAME TO PASS ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER, THAT IT WAS TOLD JUDAH, SAYING TAMAR THY DAUGHTER IN LAW HATH PLAYED THE HARLOT; AND ALSO, BEHOLD SHE IS WITH CHILD BY WHOREDOM. AND JUDAH SAID, BRING HER FORTH, AND LET HER BE BURNT.
25. WHEN SHE WAS BROUGHT FORTH, SHE SENT TO HER FATHER IN LAW SAYING, BY THE MAN WHOSE THESE ARE, AM I WITH CHILD: AND SHE SAID, RECOGNIZE I PRAY THEE, WHOSE ARE THESE, THE SIGNET, AND BRACELETS, AND STAFF.

Recognize I pray thee: these words jar Judah's memory and cut more deeply than even Tamar had expected. He had heard them spoken once before. That was the time when his brothers brought Joseph's coat to his father, Jacob. They

presented the coat to Jacob and said *Recognize I pray you whether it be thy son's coat or no* (Gen. 37:32). Tamar now uses these same words to Judah, forcing him to reflect upon his own actions toward her and in consequence upon the whole of his feelings with regard to the possibility of political unity. By bringing back the past and placing him in his father's position, her words force him to *recognize* the wisdom which Jacob displayed at the end of the last chapter. At this point Judah realizes that he cannot separate himself but must learn to teach his brothers and to lead them. Eventually it will be he and not Joseph who will be forced to accept the duties of the first born. He has finally *recognized* the wisdom which Jacob displayed at the end of the last chapter. Now we can begin to understand why Judah's friend is an Adullamite and what this chapter has to do with David.

26. AND JUDAH RECOGNIZED THEM, AND SAID, SHE HATH BEEN MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN I; BECAUSE THAT I GAVE HER NOT TO SHELAH MY SON. AND HE KNEW HER AGAIN NO MORE.

27. AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE TIME OF HER TRAVAIL, THAT, BEHOLD, TWINS WERE IN HER WOMB.

28. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN SHE TRAVAILED, THAT THE ONE PUT OUT HIS HAND: AND THE MIDWIFE TOOK AND BOUND UPON HIS HAND A SCARLET THREAD, SAYING, THIS CAME OUT FIRST.

29. AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE DREW BACK HIS HAND, THAT, BEHOLD, HIS BROTHER CAME OUT: AND SHE SAID, HOW HAS THOU BROKEN FORTH? THIS BREACH BE UPON THEE: THEREFORE HIS NAME WAS CALLED PEREZ.

30. AND AFTERWARD CAME OUT HIS BROTHER, THAT HAD THE SCARLET THREAD UPON HIS HAND: AND HIS NAME WAS CALLED ZARAH.

The events which bear light on these verses are so complicated and intertwined that one barely knows how or where to begin. We shall have to pick up threads, and let them drop—only to be picked up again later.

We can pick up the first thread at the end of the Book of Ruth. *Perez*, who by force became the chosen son, was the great-grandfather of Amminadab, Aaron's father-in-law. But his relation to the Levites was only tangential, and we must continue on our way. Amminadab was the great-grandfather of Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. Perez took the royal line by force, but had he not done so the line of kingship would have fallen on the shoulders of the only Zarachite mentioned in the Bible. That was Achan, the man who stole the Babylonian garment during the attack on Ai and caused us to wonder if the New Way could ever be established among men.

The next thread which we must pick up is the scarlet thread itself, since it was such a scarlet thread that Rahab the harlot hung from her window to avoid being captured during the siege of Jericho. Now Jericho will play an important role in our story, so we must backtrack a bit and give its history from the beginning.

The Children of Israel were camped on the other side of the Jordan across from Jericho, when the forces of Balak attacked (Num. 22:1). While we have spoken of the war with Balak and Balaam many times, it should be added that after the battle the men were counted and it was discovered that Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb were the only men left alive who had come out of Egypt. Since Joshua and Caleb were to reach the Promised Land, nothing remained but the deaths of Moses and Aaron before Israel could cross the river (Num. 26:3,63).

After the deaths of Moses and Aaron (see commentary to Gen. 49:8) the river was crossed and Joshua sent spies to the city of Jericho. Their presence became known to the king, who sent soldiers to capture them, but their lives were saved by the harlot named Rahab, who became a follower of the New Way (Josh. Chap. 2).

As is commonly known, the battle for Jericho was the most dramatic battle ever fought in the Bible. It was fought neither with gun nor spear but with the trumpets of Jubilee. And thus it was that the Biblical love of *freedom* won the battle. After the fall of Jericho, Joshua made a serious proclamation which has no parallel in the works of the author. He proclaimed a curse upon any man who would ever rebuild the city of Jericho (Josh. 6:26).

Jericho was not mentioned very often after its destruction, but it turns up every once in a while in order that we might not forget about it. In the time of King David, Jericho still lay in ruins, wild and forlorn. David once sent a mission to Hanun, King of the Ammonites, with a message of condolence over the death of his father, but Hanun, having been convinced by his counselors that David intended harm, shaved the beards of David's men and sent them back in shame. When they arrived, David advised them to stay at Jericho until their beards grew back (II Sam. 10:5 and commentary to Gen. 32:24).

During the reign of Ahab, the son of Omri, an otherwise unknown man named Hiel rebuilt the city of Jericho. The whole story is told in one simple verse: *In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Joshua the son of Nun* (I Kings 16:34). The death of Hiel's sons was the first time the curse was fulfilled. While Hiel must have suffered, this verse is surely not sufficient to account for the great tension which is built up when a curse hangs in suspension for close to six hundred years. We must continue the search.

It will take us down a very long road. We will be forced to consider the last two chapters of the Second Book of Kings in detail, and then we will find it necessary to go back over them again with even greater care.

In the commentary to Gen. 20:7 we spoke of the last glorious days of the state under King Josiah. At that time, we discovered that the glory was to have been the final burst of light before the fall of the state, but Hulda the prophetess

announced that the state would continue for a few more years so that Josiah would not be forced to witness the fall of Jerusalem (II Kings 22:14–20). But now we must consider those latter days as described in Second Kings, Chapter Twenty-four, because that is where the scarlet thread has led us.

In his days Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. (II Kings 24:1)

Babylon—we have almost turned full cycle. The name has only come up once since the days in which they built the great Tower which led to the dispersion of man (Gen. 11:9). King Hezekiah once made the mistake of inviting the men of Babylon to see the city which he had restored, and now those same men had come to tear it down (II Kings 20:12–17).

When Shalmanesser, King of Assyria, conquered the north, he brought some men from Babylon, which was then under his rule, to live in Samaria, but at that time the imposition seemed minor. Now, here they were again, the descendants of *Nimrod, the mighty hunter* (Gen. 10:9). The five kings whom Abram chased out of the land had finally returned.

Let us return to the analysis on the twenty-fourth chapter of Second Kings.

2. And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by His servants the Prophets. 3. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that He did: 4. And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon. (II Kings 24:2–4)

The first revolution against Nebuchadnezzar was successful, but all of Israel's enemies, now servants of Nebuchadnezzar, attacked again. There was Syria, *the whip*, and Moab, *the brother*; but among the attackers was a name that had not been mentioned since the days of Abraham. The first to attack were the Chaldeans, who had only been mentioned once since Abraham and his father, Terah, left them even before God first spoke to Abram (Gen. 11:28).

5. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 6. So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 7. And the King of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the King of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the King of Egypt. (II Kings 24:5–7)

In Verse Five the author mentions a book called *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*. At this point the author presents himself as a redactor who has written his work based on earlier works. However, according to his own account he did not feel under any obligation to repeat everything contained in the older ac-

counts. This will be of some importance later when we discuss the relation between the author and his source material.

The irony of Verse Seven is closely connected to the author's view of historical events. The first part of Verse Seven makes it seem as if freedom had finally been gained from Israel's most ancient enemy, Egypt, but the end of the verse reveals its high price. The next chapter continues as follows:

1. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3. And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 4. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the King's garden: (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about:) and the King went the way toward the plain. 5. And the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the King, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. (II Kings 25:1-5)

When the city was captured it was the Chaldeans who pursued the king, and as we shall see in Verse Ten it was they who actually broke through the walls of Jerusalem. We have returned to the beginning. The Chaldeans were only mentioned once since Abram left the city of Ur. The passage reads as follows:

7. And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? (Gen. 15:7-8)

Chapter Fifteen began with Abraham's fears that Eliezer of Damascus, his servant, would inherit the New Way. God's answer came in the form of a vision in which Abraham saw the inevitability of war. The author connects the beginning with the end in order to reveal that the end was already included in the beginning. The attempt to spread the New Way via brothers was doomed to failure even before it had started.

6. So they took the King, and brought him up to the King of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

In Verse Six the curse which Joshua proclaimed upon the man who would rebuild Jericho was fulfilled. His people's last independent king was captured, the monarchy destroyed, and freedom as it is understood by the book was gone. And who was this man that dared go against the curse? A nobody, a little man named Hiel from Bethel, the city of Jeroboam's altar.

7. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon. 8. And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of

the guard, a servant of the King of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9. And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the King's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. 10. And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city and the fugitives that fell away to the King of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away. 12. But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. 13. And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord, and the bases, and the brazen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldeans break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. 14. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. 15. And the firepans, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. 17. The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work. 18. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: 19. And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the King's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city: 20. And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the King of Babylon to Riblah: 21. And the King of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land. 22. And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. (II Kings 25:7–22)

Gedaliah's grandfather, Shaphan, is one of the men who was behind Hezekiah's reformation, but Gedaliah himself seems to be portrayed by the author as a collaborator, who for personal glory was willing to sell himself to the Babylonian conquerers.

23. And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the King of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 24. And Gedaliah sware to them and to their men, and said unto them, fear not to be the servants of the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the King of Babylon; and it shall be well with you. (II Kings 25:23–24)

Gedaliah tried to persuade Israel to give in. He seems to lack any particle of the spirit that made Caleb willing to stand up to the giants.

25. *But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldeans that were with him at Mizpah.* (II Kings 25:25)

One of the king's family showed the nobility of Caleb and was willing to rid the world of a man like Gedaliah. Mizpah, the scene of the murder, had been Israel's capital until she decided to have a king, and now the king's descendants have struck their last blow in that city.

26. *And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.* 27. *And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin King of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach King of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin King of Judah out of prison; 28. And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; 29. And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. 30. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the King, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.* (II Kings 25:26-30)

In the last verses the author's intention becomes clear. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach came to power and *did lift up the head of Jehoiachin*. At the end of the story those words which had played such a great role in the Book of Genesis appear again. In the commentary to Gen. 18:24 we discussed the symbolism of the word *lifted* and showed that it meant to preserve something on a higher plane. The book ends with a promise of hope even after the great defeat.

Even though we may respect Ishmael, the times were not right for action. It was a time for waiting. Perhaps it would take another forty or four hundred years. In the meantime, Gedaliah and his people could only wait.

Our author's story reveals a great deal about the nature of the fall. However, from an historical point of view, it is not quite accurate. In this chapter, we are able to do what modern Biblical critics would have liked to have done for the whole Bible but for which there are no means. In this particular case, the original source from which the author took his material is fully available, and a careful comparison of the two texts will reveal to us something of the nature of the author's art. For purposes of easier comparison we shall place the texts in parallel columns.

The reader will note that the parallel passages are more in agreement than would appear from the King James translation. Presumably this is due to the fact that different men translated the passages for the King James Bible.

II Kings 24

18. Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he

Jeremiah 52

1. Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he

II Kings 24

reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

19. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

20. For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and in Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

II Kings 25

1. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his army, against Jerusalem, and he pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

3. In the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

4. Then the city was broken up,

Jeremiah 52

reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

3. For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 52

4. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, and all his army, against Jerusalem, and they pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

5. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

6. In the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

7. Then the city was broken up,

Jeremiah 39

1. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month,

came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

2. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month,

the city was broken up.

3. And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergalsharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechin, chief prince, Nergalsharezer, chief soothsayer, with the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

4. And it came to pass, that when Zedekiah king of

II Kings 25

and all the men of war fled

by night, by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; now the Chaldeans were by the city round about: he went by the way of the plain.

5. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plain of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him.

6. And they caught the king, and they carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah;

and they gave judgment upon him.

7. And they killed the sons of Zedekiah

before his eyes:

and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains,

and carried him to Babylon.

8. In the fifth month, in the seventh day of the month, which was in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard,

Jeremiah 52

and all the men of war, and they fled and went out of the city

by night, by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden: now the Chaldeans were by the city round about: they went by the way of the plain.

8. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plain of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him.

9. And they caught the king, and they carried him up unto the king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the land of Hamath; and he gave judgments upon him.

10. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah

before his eyes: he also slew the princes of Judah in Riblah.

11. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and the king of Babylon carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

12. In the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard,

Jeremiah 39

Judah saw them and all the men of war, then they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden; by the gate betwixt the two walls:

he left by the way of the plain.

5. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plain of Jericho.

And they took him and they carried him up unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the land of Hamath, and he gave judgments upon him.

6. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: and the king of Babylon slew all the princes of Judah.

7. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains

to carry him to Babylon.

II Kings 25

servant of the king of
Babylon, unto Jerusalem.

9. And they burned the
house of the Lord, and
the king's house, and all
the houses of Jerusalem,
and all the houses of the
great he burned with fire.

10. And all the army of
the Chaldeans, of the cap-
tain of the guard,

brake down the walls of
Jerusalem.

11. Then Nebuzaradan
the captain of the guard
carried away captive

the residue of the
people that remained in the
city, and those that fell
away, that fell
to the king of Babylon,
and the rest of the
multitude.

12. But
the captain of the guard
left certain of the people

for the
vineyards and for the
fields.

II Kings 25

13. Also the pillars of brass that were
in the house of the Lord, and the bases,
and the brazen sea that was in the house of
the Lord, the Chaldeans brake, and carried
the brass of them to Babylon.

14. And the caldrons also and the
shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls,
and the spoons, and all the vessels of
brass wherewith they ministered took they
away.

Jeremiah 52

who served before the king
of Babylon, unto
Jerusalem.

13. And they burned
the house of the Lord, and
the king's house, and all
the houses of Jerusalem,
and all the houses of the
great he burned with fire.

14. And all the army of
the Chaldeans, that were
with the captain of the
guard,

brake down all the walls of
Jerusalem round about.

15. Then Nebuzar-
adan the captain of the
guard carried away captive
certain of the poor of the
people, and

the residue of the people
that remained in the city,
and those that fell away,
that fell
to the king of Babylon,
and the rest of the
multitude.

16. But Nebuzar-adan
the captain of the
guard left certain of the
people

for the
vineyards and for the
fields.

Jeremiah 52

17. Also the pillars of brass that were
in the house of the Lord, and the bases,
and the brazen sea that was in the house of
the Lord, the Chaldeans brake, and carried
all the brass of them to Babylon.

18. And the caldrons also and the
shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls,
and the spoons, and all the vessels of
brass wherewith they ministered took they
away.

19. And the bases,

Jeremiah 39

8. The Chaldeans
burned
the king's house, and the
houses of the people,

with fire;
and they

brake down the walls of
Jerusalem.

9. Then Nebuzaradan
the captain of the guard of
Babylon carried away

the residue of the
people that remained in the
city, and those that fell

to him,
and the rest of the people
that remained.

10. But Nebuzar-adan,
the captain of the
guard, left of the poor of
the people, which had
nothing, in the land of Ju-
dah, and gave them
vineyards and fields at the
same time.

II Kings 25

15. And the firepans, and the bowls,

that which was of gold as gold, and that which was of silver as silver, took the captain of the guard away.

16. The two pillars, one sea,

and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17. The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits,

and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter was three cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like these.

18. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door.

19. And he took also out of the city an officer who had the charge of the men of war; and five of them that were near the king's prison, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land: and three score men of the people of the land, that were found in the city.

20. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.

21. And the king of Babylon smote them and put them to death in Riblah, in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.

Jeremiah 52

and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups;

that which was of gold as gold, and that which was of silver as silver, took the captain of the guard away.

20. The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brazen bowls that were under the bases, which King Solomon had made for the house of the Lord: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

21. And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a cord of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow.

22. And a chapter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chapter was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like these.

23. And there were ninety and six pomegranates on each side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about.

24. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door.

25. And he took also out of the city an officer who had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's prison, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host who mustered the people of the land: and three score men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city.

26. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.

27. And the king of Babylon smote them and put them to death in Riblah, in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.

28. This is the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in

II Kings 25

22. And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

23. Now when all the captains of the forces, they and the men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah

governor,

there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

24. And Gedaliah

swore unto them and to their men, and he said to them, Do not fear the servants of the Chaldeans: Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon and it will be well with you.

Jeremiah 52

the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty.

29. In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons.

30. In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.

Jeremiah 40

7. Now when all the captains of the forces which were in the field, even they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam

governor of the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon:

8. Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

9. And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan swore unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon and it will be well with you.

10. As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken.

11. Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the

II Kings 25

25. Now it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah that he died, and the Jews

Jeremiah 40

countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan;

12. Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.

13. Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,

14. And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

15. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?

16. But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

Jeremiah 41

1. Now it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

2. Then rose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the land.

3. And Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah

II Kings 25

and the Chaldeans that were with him at Mizpah.

Jeremiah 41

at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.

4. And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it,

5. That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.

6. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

7. And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.

8. But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

9. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with them that were slain.

10. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

11. But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, heard of all the evil

II Kings 25

26. And then arose
 all the people,
 both small and great
 and the soldiers,
 and came to Egypt;
 for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

27. And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah in the twelfth month in the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him forth out of prison,

Jeremiah 41

that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,

12. Then they took all the men, and sent to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon.

13. Now it came to pass, that when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad.

14. So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.

15. But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

16. Then took Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the officers whom he had brought against Gibeon:

17. And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

18. Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land.

Jeremiah 52

31. And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah in the twelfth month in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him forth out of prison,

II Kings 25

28. And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

29. And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.

30. And for his diet there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

Jeremiah 52

32. And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

33. And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.

34. And for his diet there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

With the sole exception of II Kings 25:22, which paraphrases a rather long section from Jeremiah, the author has merely copied the Book of Jeremiah almost verbatim, deleting a few passages here and there and rearranging the material. Nonetheless, if we compare the passages with greater care we can see that our book tells a very different tale.

Jeremiah leaves the description of the conquered Temple to the very end in order to contrast it with Jehoiachin's final deliverance. But in the present text Jehoiachin's final deliverance is contrasted with the actions of particular men, such as Gedaliah and Ishmael. He next deletes Jer. 52:12–18, apparently because it deals with Jeremiah himself. This reason, however, is insufficient since in a parallel passage in II Kings, Chapters 18–20, the author included a very long section from Isaiah in which the name *Isaiah* often occurs. By deleting the present verses from Jeremiah the author avoids mentioning the fact that Gedaliah, whom our author presented as a collaborator, was, in fact, a close friend of Jeremiah.

The author then deletes the first six verses of Chapter Forty of Jeremiah, in which the prophet berates the people for their sins. Our author, to the contrary, often speaks of the sins of the kings, but rarely, if ever, mentions the sins of the people, except insofar as they were misled by their leaders.

In Verse Seven he deletes the fact that Gedaliah was able to draw together the shreds of the poor who had been left after the men of prominence had been captured and taken away as slaves. His quotation continues down through Jeremiah 41:9.

According to the original text in Jeremiah, Gedaliah explained his plan to the people (Jer. 40:9–12) and was then warned of the impending danger, but his own good nature would not allow him to believe that Ishmael posed such a threat. In the Book of Kings, however, all of these things have been deleted. Our author picks up with the first verse of Chapter 41 but deletes the fact that Ishmael had come to Gedaliah as a friend and had even accepted an invitation to dinner. However he does pick up enough of Verse Three to make it clear that Ishmael killed the Jews who collaborated with Gedaliah, as well as the treacherous Chaldeans. The author then deletes Verses 4 to 15 completely, which,

along with Verse 14 of Chapter 40, make it clear that Ishmael and not Gedaliah was the traitor and was working together with Baalis, King of the Ammonites. He picks up random words from Verses 16 to 18 in order to show that Ishmael planned to join forces with the Egyptians in hopes of defeating the Babylonians, but left out a rather long passage earlier in Jeremiah in which Jeremiah advised the king not to join forces with the Egyptians since Israel's only hope was to wait for better days.

The author then picks up the last few verses of Jeremiah in Chapter 52, and both authors conclude with the rise of Evil-merodach, who released Jehoiachin from prison and gave him a place at the king's table.

There are almost no words in our author's text which have not been taken directly from Jeremiah. Any attempt to analyze the passage by modern word analysis would have established the fact that Jeremiah had written these passages even if the passages from Jeremiah had been lost. In these passages we can see how the author used older texts to weave his story. In the factual account Ishmael was a traitor, but our author is not interested in facts. He is much more interested in the general ways of peoples and nations. Since he wished to show that these were the days for waiting and not for fighting Ishmael suddenly became Caleb in order that we might see that the time was not ripe for slaying giants. Gedaliah's nobility was also dropped because times forced themselves upon Israel and it would have made no difference whether Gedaliah was noble or base.

If our author could take such liberties with texts dealing with times fresh in the memory of the people we are left to wonder how he handled the times of Abraham and Joshua. Would it have been possible to reconstruct the passages from Jeremiah given the passages in the Book of Kings? The present commentator could not have done it. And what of *E*, and *J*, and *P*—which are the names of all those reconstructed texts which modern scholars take to be behind the Book of Genesis? Are they not idle speculations masquerading as science by the use of words like *redactor*, and *Deuteronomistic Code*, and the *Priestly Code*? While it is true that modern science requires intricate terminology we must remember that strange words are also the tools of evil magicians.

In the original text Jeremiah had contrasted the rape of the Temple with the final position given King Jehoiachin at the end of the book. By replacing this contrast with the contrast between Gedaliah and the king, the author indicated one of the main facets which distinguish him from the Prophets. In general the root of political evil for the Prophets is the unwillingness of men to listen. For our author men do listen, but times depend upon what is available for them to hear.

At this point our scarlet thread has run out and we can chase it back no further; but certain questions still remain. Were there any texts which glorified the capture of Jericho or which pronounced a curse on the man who rebuilt it prior to the time when the last independent king was killed on the way there?

Did anyone ever suggest that Abraham was from Chaldea until the Chaldeans destroyed the city? A clear decision on these problems can only be made by an archeological discovery which would reach far beyond the importance of anything found in the caves of Qumran. Until such a time we have only the text before us.

These speculations concerning the way in which our author writes, however, are to some extent justified by the discoveries of modern science. According to modern archeologists, the city of Ur did not exist at the time of Abraham. This in itself would prove nothing as far as the author is concerned, but the author himself indicates that he is aware of the problem. The Hebrew word for Chaldean is *chasdim*, or in other words *the sons of Chesed*. However, the author presents Chesed as the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and is rather careful to point out that Chesed had been born even after Abraham had left Haran, and hence obviously after he had supposedly left Ur of the Chaldees.

There are other ways in which our author uses history to say something which is more than historical.

The author's way of dealing with history can only now be seen by calculating the length of the Davidic dynasty from the capture of Jerusalem to the last moments of Josiah since, according to Hulda's prophecy, that was officially the end of the kingdom.

In order to understand better these last moments of the state we must pay close attention to the chronology of the kings. Several problems must be discussed before the list will be intelligible. When the text states the number of years a king ruled, both the first and last years of his reign are credited to him. Thus if two kings rule in succession and both are credited with 20 years the combined total will equal 39 years rather than 40.

Another difficulty is that the chronologies of the two kingdoms do not coincide. Since the northern kingdom was the cause of the split we shall calculate according to the dates given for the northern kingdom until its fall and not according to the dates given for the southern kingdom. Since the northern kingdom fell in the third year of Hezekiah, who ruled for 29 years, he ruled for 26 years after the fall.

In the last days of the kingdom all of Israel's past seemed to come together. The young *Man of God's* promise was fulfilled by Josiah, but at the same time Israel felt the sting of Joshua's curse. But there was even a more ancient threat. Like Kronos who ate his children, Abraham's grandfathers, the Chaldeans, returned to devour the children. Ever since the prophecy of the young *Man Of God* we had been waiting for the great moment when Josiah would come to reunite the country. But the Chaldeans were waiting, too. This ancient seed of Israel's destruction bloomed as Israel came to flower. The brothers—Moab, Edom, and the rest of them, had all failed. The kingdom in its proper sense had lasted four hundred years, and what we had thought to be the height of Israel's glory was merely another waiting period.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

Name	Number Of Years Given	Years Ruled	Chapter
David	33	32	II Sam. 5:1
Solomon	40	39	2:1
Jeroboam	22	21	2:11-12
Nadab	2	1	2:14-20
Baasha	24	23	2:15-25
Elah	2	1	16:8
Omri	7	6	16:23
Ahab	22	21	16:29
Ahaziah	2	1	22:51
Joram	12	11	II Kings 3:1
Jehu	28	27	10:36
Jehoahaz	17	16	13:1
Joash	16	15	13:10
Jeroboam II	41	40	14:23
Zachariah	6 months	0	15:8
Shaloum	1 month	0	15:13
Menachem	10	9	15:17
Pekahiah	2	1	15:23
Pekah	20	19	15:27
Haseh	9	7*	17:1
		<hr/>	
		Total	290

THE KINGS OF JUDAH FROM THE THIRD YEAR OF KING HEZEKIAH

Hezekiah		26	18:2
Manassah	55	54	21:1
Amon	2	1	21:19
Josiah	31	29*	22:1

Total 110
Years of the Kings of Israel 290

Grand Total 400 years

*The last partial year has not been counted.

The kingdom, from David in Jerusalem to Josiah at Beth-el, lasted four hundred years. Like the Flood, the years in Egypt, the wanderings in the desert, and Moses on Sinai, like the time of the Judges, it, too, had been a time of preparing.

The great promise *through you all the people of the world will be blessed* was never intended to mean Israel's victory. Israel had grown, but the roads through the brothers had been closed. The return of the Chaldeans meant that Israel would be led into captivity and could only help the world by being tossed

about in it. Through men like Evil-merodach and Cyrus, perhaps Israel could bring peace to the world through the example of law and the New Way.

But what, what in heaven's name did the writer of the books think that little people could do floating out there in that vast sea? This is the final question of the book. It's not the serpent's question nor God's question, nor Sarah's nor even little Isaac's. The book can no longer help us; its pages seem to give no answer. Was it Cyrus then? Isaiah seemed to think so once. He wrote:

. . . that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of Kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou has not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. (Is. 44:27-45:7)

Maybe Cyrus was the answer and maybe not; the pages are blank, the reader cannot make them speak. We have seen another dream at Beth-el. Jeroboam's altar was gone, and all the world with it. The people were on their way back to Haran and through Haran to Babylon. The Silent God of Jacob had returned, but Israel had no Magic Staff. Maybe the answer was that there was no answer. Man was alone now. God was their rock, the ground on which they stood, but the Way was open. A little people in a vast sea, what did he think they could do?

Do not kill . . . Honor thy father and thy mother . . . You saw no likeness of . . . Bow not down to . . . Is this the wisdom and the understanding which shall be in the sight of all the nations?

CHAPTER XXXIX

I. AND JOSEPH WAS BROUGHT DOWN TO EGYPT; AND POTIPHAR, AN OFFICER OF PHARAOH, CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, AN EGYPTIAN, BOUGHT HIM OF THE HANDS OF THE ISHMAELITES, WHICH HAD BROUGHT HIM DOWN THITHER.

The word which has been translated *captain* originally meant *eunuch* but came to mean a higher officer because of the lofty position that those men

were given in Egypt. The word may be used simply in this later meaning. However if the earlier meaning is intended the actions of Potiphar's wife would be more intelligible.

The *Ishmaelites* were closely related to the Egyptians since both Ishmael's mother and wife were Egyptians (Gen. 16:1 and 21:21). This might appear to be another instance of the failure of the original plan through which the seed of the New Way might grow. However that is probably not the case since the *Ishmaelites* were intended as a radical alternative, rather than as a link between the New Way and the rest of the world (see commentary to Gen. 19:31 and 15:12).

2. AND THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH, AND HE WAS A PROSPEROUS MAN; AND HE WAS IN THE HOUSE OF HIS MASTER THE EGYPTIAN.
3. AND HIS MASTER SAW THAT THE LORD WAS WITH HIM, AND THAT THE LORD MADE ALL THAT HE DID TO PROSPER IN HIS HAND.
4. AND JOSEPH FOUND GRACE IN HIS SIGHT, AND HE SERVED HIM: AND HE MADE HIM OVERSEER OVER HIS HOUSE, AND ALL THAT HE HAD HE PUT INTO HIS HAND.
5. AND IT CAME TO PASS FROM THE TIME THAT HE HAD MADE HIM OVERSEER IN HIS HOUSE, AND OVER ALL THAT HE HAD, THAT THE LORD BLESSED THE EGYPTIAN'S HOUSE FOR JOSEPH'S SAKE; AND THE BLESSING OF THE LORD WAS UPON ALL THAT HE HAD IN THE HOUSE AND IN THE FIELD.

Chapter Thirty-nine is devoted to a description of Joseph. He is a member of the first generation of *sons* properly speaking, since the first three generations are all spoken of as *fathers*. The fabric of this chapter is therefore woven from threads of the preceding chapters. In Verse Three one can spot a bit of the life of Isaac. Joseph's good fortune and the phrase which reads *all that he did to prosper in his hand* is a reference to Chapter Twenty-four, in which Abraham's servant continually wondered if his way would *prosper* (Gen. 24:21,40,41).

Verses Four and Five on the other hand remind the reader of Jacob's relation to Laban, particularly in Gen. 30:27. The mere fact that he is alone and starting life again in a new country would be sufficient to remind us of Abraham, but there is a more specific kinship which will emerge as the chapter develops.

6. AND HE LEFT ALL THAT HE HAD IN JOSEPH'S HAND: AND HE KNEW NOT OUGHT HE HAD, SAVE THE BREAD WHICH HE DID EAT. AND JOSEPH WAS A GOODLY PERSON, AND WELL FAVOURED.

Potiphar has been thoroughly charmed by Joseph. However, the meaning of the phrase which refers to the *bread* is unclear. It has been suggested that Joseph managed all of Potiphar's affairs both private and public except for his food, because of the Egyptian laws concerning food, which are referred to in

Gen. 43:34. But it seems more likely that the verse merely means that Potiphar had complete trust in Joseph and so long as he enjoyed his daily meal was well content.

Joseph inherited the outward beauty of his mother, Rachel (Gen. 29:17). We have already discussed the ambiguity of that virtue in the commentary to Gen. 23:2. At this point it serves as a transition between Joseph's good fortune in acquiring the friendship of Potiphar and the difficulties which he will have with Potiphar's wife.

7. AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT HIS MASTER'S WIFE CAST HER EYES UPON JOSEPH; AND SHE SAID, LIE WITH ME.
8. BUT HE REFUSED, AND SAID UNTO HIS MASTER'S WIFE, BEHOLD, MY MASTER WOTTETH NOT WHAT IS WITH ME IN THE HOUSE, AND HE HATH COMMITTED ALL THAT HE HATH TO MY HAND;
9. THERE IS NONE GREATER IN THIS HOUSE THAN I; NEITHER HATH HE KEPT BACK ANY THING FROM ME BUT THEE, BECAUSE THOU ART HIS WIFE: HOW THEN CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS, AND SIN AGAINST GOD?

Joseph, from his own point of view, stresses the ingratitude which he would have shown had he acquiesced to the desires of Potiphar's wife. Throughout the chapter the author uses the tetragrammenon to refer to God. However, Joseph uses the word which, had he been speaking in the Egyptian language, would probably have been translated *the gods* and may have been intended to remind the wife of Potiphar of her own duties.

10. AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS SHE SPAKE TO JOSEPH DAY BY DAY, THAT HE HEARKENED NOT UNTO HER, TO LIE BY HER, OR TO BE WITH HER.

The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is part of the melange of the preceding chapters. It is Joseph's counterpart of Abraham's relation to Pharaoh and the relationship which both Abraham and Isaac had to Abimelech. As in the case of Isaac there was no need for divine intervention, but the reasons are very different. In this case Joseph's care and human decency rather than his naivete protect him.

11. AND IT CAME TO PASS ABOUT THIS TIME, THAT JOSEPH WENT INTO THE HOUSE TO DO HIS BUSINESS; AND THERE WAS NONE OF THE MEN OF THE HOUSE THERE WITHIN.
12. AND SHE CAUGHT HIM BY HIS GARMENT, SAYING, LIE WITH ME: AND HE LEFT HIS GARMENT IN HER HAND, AND FLED, AND GOT HIM OUT.
13. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN SHE SAW THAT HE HAD LEFT HIS GARMENT IN HER HAND, AND WAS FLED FORTH,
14. THAT SHE CALLED UNTO THE MEN OF HER HOUSE, AND SPAKE UNTO THEM SAYING, SEE. HE HATH BROUGHT IN AN HEBREW UNTO US TO MOCK

US; HE CAME IN UNTO ME TO LIE WITH ME, AND I CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE:

15. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN HE HEARD THAT I LIFTED UP MY VOICE AND CRIED, THAT HE LEFT HIS GARMENT WITH ME, AND FLED AND GOT HIM OUT.

In recent times there has been much discussion about the meaning of the word *Hebrew*. A rather scholarly account of the modern attempt to connect the *Hebrews* with a group known as the *Habiru* can be found in the doctoral thesis *The Hab/Piru*¹ by Moshe Greenberg. The problem has also been discussed by Theophile James Meek in *Hebrew Origins*.²

Let us begin by considering the passages in front of us, and then we shall see their relationship to modern discoveries. The term *Hebrew* appears in clusters in the Bible as well as appearing in single instances. In accordance with the author's way of writing we shall first examine the passages in which it occurs often in order to see what light they can shed on the other passages.

By far the greatest use of the word *Hebrew* occurs between the thirty-ninth chapter of Genesis and the seventh chapter of Exodus. The other passages in which the word occurs regularly come from the First Book of Samuel, Chaps. 4–14. The passages in the latter part of the Book of Genesis continue from the present chapter through the thirty-second verse of Chapter Forty-three (Gen. 39:14,17; Gen. 40:15; Gen. 41:12; and Gen. 43:32). The word is restricted to the time during which Joseph is either in bondage or in jail. It will never again be used after Joseph is placed in high office. In the Book of Exodus it will be used almost from the very beginning of the book but will only be used once after the Children of Israel have gained their freedom from Egyptian bondage. In Genesis it will be used twice by Potiphar's wife to describe a mere slave she desperately loves and violently hates because he dares to spurn her. Joseph himself will speak of the *Hebrews* in Gen. 40:15, and it will also be used once in a rather offhand way by Pharaoh's butler to refer to a slave that he once met while he was in prison (Gen. 41:12). It is used once more in the book to refer to those people who are so lowly that Egyptian law prevents the Egyptians from eating together with them (Gen. 33:21).

In the early chapters of Exodus one finds both the terms *Hebrew* and *the Sons of Israel*. The two terms obviously refer to the same people, but they are used in very different ways. In Chapters One and Two the word *Hebrew* is used by the Egyptians to refer to a mass of people whom they wish to destroy (Ex. 1:15–19 and Ex. 2:6,7). It is also used for the *Hebrew* slave Moses saw being beaten by an Egyptian master, as well as the two *Hebrews* he saw fighting (Ex. 2:7,11).

1. Moshe Greenberg, *The Hab/Piru*, American Oriental Society, New Haven, Conn., 1955.

2. T. J. Meek, *Hebrew Origins*, Harper & Row, New York, 1960.

When Moses asks God who He is and under what name He should be referred to when he is speaking with the children of Israel, God uses the name *the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* (Ex. 3:15). However, when God tells Moses under what name He should be referred to when Moses is speaking with the king of Egypt He gives the name *Lord of the Hebrews* (Ex. 3:18), and Moses quite consistently uses the terminology when speaking with Pharaoh (Ex. 5:3, 7:16, and 9:1). Aside from these occurrences it is never used again in the Book of Exodus to refer to the whole of the people.

The term *Hebrew* next appears with great frequency in the First Book of Samuel, Chaps. 4–14. In all cases the passages concerned their wars against their unconquerable enemy, the Philistines. Chapter Four of the First Book of Samuel tells the story of the first attack when Israel, finding itself hard put, brought the Ark of God into the battle. The story of this grave misuse of the Ark was retold in the commentary to Gen. 21:1. On this occasion the Philistines in their confidence refer to the Israelites as *Hebrews* (I Sam. 4:6). Somewhat later they say *Be strong and quit yourselves like men, oh ye Philistines, that ye be not like slaves to the Hebrews as they have been slaves unto you: quit yourselves like men and fight* (I Sam. 4:9).

In this passage again the word *Hebrew* is placed in opposition to *men*. The reference to a time when the *Hebrews* were once slaves to the Philistines may refer to their slavish behavior at the time of Caleb, or it may actually refer to the period of the Judges when the Philistines ruled part of the conquered land (see Judg. 10:6 and Chaps. 13–15).

Two years after the beginning of his reign, King Saul planned his first attack on the Philistines. At the beginning of the battle King Saul throws their words back into their teeth. The text reads as follows: *And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land saying Let the Hebrews hear* (I Sam. 13:3). Despite this rousing cry the battle went badly. Many of the men hid in caves and thickets. Those who were so cowardly as to go beyond the Jordan into Gad and Gilead, are referred to by the author as *Hebrews* (I Sam. 13:7). When the army finally regrouped itself the Philistines jeeringly said *Behold the Hebrews come forth out of their holes where they had hid themselves* (I Sam. 14:11). On that occasion Jonathan became the first meaningful hero. The heroism of Caleb was only potential, and the heroism of Samson remained private.

After Jonathan's single-handed battle with the large company of Philistines the men regained their courage and the text reads: *Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them unto the camp from the countryside around, even they turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan* (I Sam. 14:21). Here again one sees the same kind of distinction between the Hebrews and the Israelites that appeared in the

early part of Exodus. Even in those chapters in which the word *Hebrew* was often used there were many references to *the elders of Israel* but no references to the *elders of the Hebrews*.

After having been trounced by Jonathan, the Philistines never used the word *Hebrew* again, except in one wonderfully ironic passage.

During the period in which David was gathering forces at Ziklag, Achish the Philistine, then his mentor, once took him to meet the other Philistine princes and to join them in battle against Israel. Not fully realizing who David was they said to him *What do these Hebrews here?* When they discovered that the *Hebrews* were David, the slayer of giants and his men, their contempt turned to anger (I Sam. 29:3).

The term *Hebrew* is also used in parallel verses in Ex. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12. Both passages deal with the laws concerning a Hebrew slave, and in both cases strong limitations on slavery are placed. According to both texts no *Hebrew* can be held in slavery by his brother for more than seven years against his will, and according to the Book of Deuteronomy the freed slave must be given sufficient cattle, feed, and land in order to begin life on a solid foundation. The sense of this is very well grasped by Jeremiah, who proclaimed the freeing of slaves after the attack of Nebuchadnezzar.

This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; that every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. (Jer. 34:8,9)

Thus far every instance of the word *Hebrew* refers to a slave or a coward. Since the word *Hebrew* is used derogatorily it is more than possible that the word was in fact derived from the word *Habiru*. They were a mixed lot of people wandering through the Middle East at about the same time. Its use in the Bible, however, does not necessarily imply that the Hebrews were a separate people who joined the Children of Israel. It may have been used in the way that many thoughtless people use the word *Gypsy* today, even when not referring to people who belong to the Gypsy nation. Even to this day no self-respecting Jew ever calls himself a Hebrew.

The word *Hebrew* only appears one more time in the whole of the Bible, and that is a difficult passage to understand. In Gen. 14:13 Abraham called himself a *Hebrew* prior to the battle against Chedorlaomer. Abraham's forces were successful, and he was able to drive Chedorlaomer beyond the northeastern border into Damascus. At first glance, it strikes one as strange that the term *Hebrew* should be used during Abraham's most successful campaign. However, we must remember that in Chapter Fifteen the problem of Damascus came up again. Throughout the twelve books it is impossible to forget that Abraham merely chased Chedorlaomer into the countries of the north but was

unable to defeat him. The return of these forces under Nebuchadnezzar at the time of Jeremiah marked the beginning of a new period of slavery. The seeds of this final collapse may have been in the author's mind when he spoke of Abraham as a *Hebrew*.

16. AND SHE LAID UP HIS GARMENT BY HER, UNTIL HIS LORD CAME HOME.
17. AND SHE SPAKE UNTO HIM ACCORDING TO THESE WORDS, SAYING, THE HEBREW SERVANT, WHICH THOU HAST BROUGHT UNTO US, CAME IN UNTO ME TO MOCK ME:
18. AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS I LIFTED UP MY VOICE AND CRIED, THAT HE LEFT HIS GARMENT WITH ME, AND FLED OUT.
19. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN HIS MASTER HEARD THE WORDS OF HIS WIFE, WHICH SHE SPAKE UNTO HIM, SAYING, AFTER THIS MANNER DID THY SERVANT TO ME; THAT HIS WRATH WAS KINDLED.
20. AND JOSEPH'S MASTER TOOK HIM, AND PUT HIM INTO THE PRISON, A PLACE WHERE THE KING'S PRISONERS WERE BOUND: AND HE WAS THERE IN THE PRISON.
21. BUT THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH AND SHEWED HIM MERCY, AND GAVE HIM FAVOUR IN THE SIGHT OF THE CHIEF OF THE PRISON.
22. AND THE CHIEF OF THE PRISON COMMITTED TO JOSEPH'S HAND ALL THE PRISONERS THAT WERE IN THE PRISON; AND WHATSOEVER THEY DID THERE, HE WAS THE DOER OF IT.
23. THE CHIEF OF THE PRISON LOOKED NOT TO ANY THING THAT WAS UNDER HIS HAND; BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM, AND THAT WHICH HE DID, THE LORD MADE IT TO PROSPER.

Potiphar's wife was a woman of excessive pride who could not brook Joseph's spurning. Love does not turn to hate in all men, and Potiphar seems to be a perceptive person. Verse Three of Chapter Forty makes clear that the *chief of the prison* referred to in Verse Twenty-one is the *Captain of the Guard*, that is to say the *chief of the prison* was Potiphar himself (see Gen. 39:1). Potiphar's anger was not against Joseph but against his wife. He realized that neither he nor Joseph could have acted differently but was forced to transfer Joseph to a high position in the prison under the guise of being his prisoner.

The word used for *prison* seems to be an Egyptian word which never appears again in the Bible, but there is a Hebrew word which appears three times: once at the end of First Kings and twice near the end of Second Kings. Micaiah, the prophet during the reign of King Ahab that we discussed in the commentary to Gen. 20:7, was once threatened with jail. He was the prophet who lied to King Ahab in order to trap him during the projected campaign against Syria. Again, many years later, when the Assyrians finally captured Israel, King Hosiah was placed in *prison* by Shalmaneser. The last time a *prison* is mentioned is in the account of the final days which we discussed in the commentary to Gen. 38:27 when Jehoiachin was released from prison by Evil-

merodach and given a place at the king's table. Joseph's ultimate release from prison and the hopes of freedom which are implicit at the end of the Book of Genesis may be a reflection of the author's understanding of the situation at the conclusion of the Second Book of Kings.

In many ways the end of Genesis is parallel to the end of the Book of Kings. If our assertion is correct that the book was written in the early days of the Babylonian Exile and that Joseph's redemption from prison was symbolic of Jehoiachin's release, then the Torah itself would become a promise of Israel's redemption from Babylon.