

*The Parting of the Ways*

*Things never quite got put back together again, after the Exile. The Temple was rebuilt, but life in Jerusalem, the center of a still captive Judah, was not what it had been; there was no revival of the Davidic Kingship. The old order was not what it had been, and confidence in the Yahweh persuasion waned. Here are some comments from that side of things.*

(61) The Samaritan Departure. A rival to the Jerusalem Temple was established on the sacred Mount Gerizim in the north. At last report, it still exists, complete with its rewritten version of the Pentateuch, and to this day, the Samaritans will have nothing to do with the people of Judea.

(62) Job represents loss of faith in Yahweh himself; Yahweh is too remote, and his plans are too deep, to have any meaning for us mortals here below.

(63) Qoheleth, “the Preacher,” takes that a step further. Not only is God inscrutable, but the mere secular life of man is also without meaning.

(64) Jonah, now one of the “Twelve Minor Prophets,” is instead a satire on all previous prophecy, and in its own way, a voice for a different future.

(65) The Ethical Horizon. Does God enjoy “an offering by fire, a sweet savor unto Yahweh,” as in Leviticus 1:9? Or is there something else for man, besides the duty of offering that “sweet savor” to God? Tucked away as so many interpolations in orthodox texts, there exists a highly unorthodox rejection of the sacrificial culture in favor of that something else: an ethical concept of the duty of man. They may remind us of the old Decalogue (§23), with its roots in the communitarian culture of Canaan.

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*Such was the diversity of thought and feeling in these deeply troubled times. And with that note of diversity, we bring these studies to an end.*