

Buck, Harry M., People of the Lord (The Macmillan Company, New York) 1966

The Yahwist Tradition

p. 100 Throughout J there is a note of conscious optimism, a stress on the greatness of Israel and her sure possession of the land. Such favorable constructions on Israel's history can be viewed against the background of Solomon's affluent realm before the disaster of 926 B.C. . . . It was a remarkable collection, profound and inspiring. Although it purported to be a history, it was actually a rationale of history and a glorification of Israel and YHWH. Its author . . . viewed Israel as the fulfillment of YHWH's promise, . . .

p. 101 It is not a simple story. It contains material frankly unflattering to Israel and its heroes and pictures of God that are not always noble. It combines these portrayals, which a less confident writer would have omitted, with a noble conception of YHWH, the high God of the heavens, controller of destiny, whose will is not to be treated lightly. . . .

. . . The J Document was combined with other materials, and it can now be reconstructed in the Pentateuch, chiefly in Genesis and Exodus. It is doubtful whether any of it contained stories of the kingdom period itself, although the inclusion of some of what we isolated earlier as the Saul Source in Samuel is not completely impossible.

The Elohist Tradition

p. 101 Another compilation appeared in the North. . . . it stressed congregational and democratic elements in the tradition centering around Shechem.

p. 102 There is more caution in E than in J, together with a noticeable embarrassment about the defects of the patriarchs. Their gross sins are handled with more sensitivity than in the parallel stories in J.