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THE WORD OF THE LORD AS MYTH IN THE BIBLE

Norman Mirsky

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

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Referee: Prof. Blank

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When the final draft of a work such as this is completed, one is in a quandary whether to acknowledge or to exonerate those from whom the writer received great aid. The help and inspiration of which I was beneficiary came in measure from the entire faculty of this College. The atmosphere of scholarship which they foster leads the student to inhale perhaps too deeply.

My unqualified gratitude, however, must go to my advisor, Dr. Sheldon H. Blank. He has, through his teaching, his consultation but above all through that which he has come to symbolize, not only to me but to students and Rabbis throughout the world, attempted to instill us all with his cool reason and his burning passion for truth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGEST

The title of this thesis is The Word of the Lord as Myth in the Bible. The object of this writer has been to see if the title and, in fact, the thesis itself is legitimate. To make this discovery we first examined contemporary theories of myth. These theories ranged from the basic opinion of "myth as a story of the gods" through the theory of Max Muller, who called myth a disease of language, to Emile Durkheim's notion of myth as a verbal story giving life to a societal ideal, to the myth ritualists represented currently by Theodore Gaster, to Clyde Kluckhohn's theory that myth in whatever form it takes, serves the function of anxiety reduction in a society.

We examined the psychoanalytic theories of myth which maintained that myth was a group dream on phantasy. We took into account lastly, the opinions of Ernst Cassirer and Paul Tillich. We moved all these theories into our own definition of myth. "Myth," we said, "is a verbal response to man's finitude which grows out of man's ability to use metaphor, which is held sacred by a group and which is lived as reality and not metaphor."

Next we did a content analysis of the word of the Lord in the Bible. We found that most of the 242 occurrences of the term were made by or with reference to prophets. Their use of the term varied but a majority referred either to

prophecy fulfilled or the existential message of the prophet.

Applying our definition of myth to the findings of Chapter Two, we concluded that when word of the Lord was used by or with reference to a prophet, the object of that use was to keep Israel's God the ultimate concern of biblical Israel. Since the word of the Lord was accepted by all as living reality and since we take it as metaphor, we concluded that by our definition the word of the Lord in the Bible is myth.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts what may be the impossible. In Chapter One the reader is presented with a broad overview of contemporary theories of myth and the relationship of these theories to the field of religion.

In Chapter Two, the reader is presented with a frequency distribution, a full accounting, and a content analysis of the occurrences of the phrase word of the Lord as it appears in the Hebrew Bible. In that chapter a minimum statement based on empirical evidence is given regarding the meaning of the phrase the word of the Lord.

In Chapter Three, a synthesis of the findings of chapters One and Two is presented. Given the theories of Chapter One and the evidence of Chapter Two, what statement, if any, may be made on the title of this thesis: The Word of the Lord as Myth in the Bible?

The writer feels that such a synthesis is possible. The reader may disagree. If the synthesis fails, the thesis offers at least a review of current theories of myth and a full presentation of the occurrences of the word of the Lord in the Bible.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section I has a brief history of the relation between the study of myth and the study of monotheism. It then goes on to point up the dangers and confusions inherent when one attempts to use "myth" as a tool for study.

Section II attempts an historical survey of concepts of myth which might be helpful in an attempt to develop a conceptual framework in which to view the word of the Lord as it occurs in the Bible.

Section I

What is the relation of the word of the Lord to myth? Since this relationship (if there is any) is the burden of this thesis, it is necessary to examine critically various theories of and attitudes toward mythology. The complexity of the subject is due to a great many factors. Chief among these factors are:

1. A diffusion and confusion of definitions of myth
2. A variety of attitudes toward the application of the concept myth to the monotheistic religions.

The meaning generally associated with "mythology" is stories of the gods. This meaning is the cause of one of our difficulties and it also tells the story of an important phase in the history of the science of myth. Because the generally accepted meaning for the word "myth" was "A story about the gods," an attitude developed which made a separation between "myth" and monotheism inevitable. If myth was the story of gods, then monotheistic religion could have no myth. God was not a god. Therefore stories about God were not myths. Myth was linked with paganism. Once one believed that Yahveh or any of his agents (Christ to the Christians or the angels in Judaism, Christianity and Islam) was the sole God and of a nature totally different from the gods of the pantheon of Babylon, Greece, or Northern Europe, mythology as tool to understanding the

nature of monotheistic religion was useless. It was even a blasphemy to speak of myth in connection with the true faith. E.B. Tylor, writing in 1871, relates how he was casually explaining to a Victorian lady that the parables of Jesus were not to be taken literally. They were merely stories with a didactic purpose. The lady was shocked. "Do you mean to say that Our Lord would say anything that wasn't literally true?"

This opposition to applying the concept myth to anything monotheistic still prevails. Literally dozens of books on Scripture include sections in the demythologization of the Bible which was reputed to be one of the major accomplishments of the authors of Scripture. This attitude is strongest among the fundamentalists but has countless adherents even among the more "enlightened" historians of religion. When the notion that mythology was limited to the pagans was universally prevalent as it was until the Enlightenment, no attempt was made to make any connection between myth and monotheism. Nor, for that matter, was there any serious attempt at an analysis of the structure and content of myth.

In the modern period when the "tyranny" of religious domination was broken, myth began to be studied with some seriousness. Even then, when the study of mythology began in earnest, it was not in direct connection with the prevailing religions of modern man. Those earliest students

of myth were "scientists". They were interested primarily in uncovering man's earliest states. Early ethnologists, aided by the findings of missionaries (primarily to the American Indians), began compiling tremendous amounts of data dealing with the behavior of primitive man. Among these data were stories of the gods and demons of each clan and tribe. Gradually when these data had accumulated and were studied, certain patterns began to appear. Nearly all the peoples studied had creation myths, a surprisingly large number had flood myths and myths of sibling or interfamiliar rivalry. These findings were grist for the mill of the scientists and all others who in the nineteenth century were engaged in a monumental struggle against organized religion. Not only were the miracle stories of the Bible sheer nonsense, but some of the more sophisticated hero tales were nothing more than "stories of the gods" stolen from the truly creative primitive cultures.

In the twentieth century, the struggle between science and religion is less pronounced and, if anything, mythology has become more a tool of the theologian than a weapon to be used against him. The discovery of quasi-universal themes in world mythology has been re-evaluated by two groups of scholars, theologians and analytic psychologists. The psychologists utilize the data to uncover (more honestly to substantiate) various theories of man's unconscious. The theologians who at first were backed to the

wall by the early discoveries of the ethnologists and students of comparative religion, suddenly seized the advantage and forced the anthropologists into retreat. Theologians suddenly saw in the discovery of common themes in mythology not a refutation, but rather a confirmation of man's religious needs. If nearly all groups of people on earth had a "tree of life", "a dying and rising god", etc., how easy it is to demonstrate that the Gospel is the ultimate myth, the embodiment of world mythology in a single narrative. Better yet, if you belong to that group of theologians called "existential", you need not even say that the Gospels or the Sinaitic revelation were "the myths par excellence". You need only say that for the Christian or the Jew, the myth of Calvary or Horeb, which incidentally has universal parallels yet is particularly unique, is important enough to give modern man's life a meaning. The taking hold of myth so vehemently and firmly by the theologians has forced the anthropologists to rethink their own positions and re-examine their own data. In an article entitled "Recurrent Themes in Myth and Mythmaking", the noted anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn briefly attempts a survey of what themes are really universal in world mythology. He warns:

> In considering various parallels, some elementary customs must perforce be observed. First, levels of abstractions must be kept distinct. It is true, and it is relevant to say that creation myths are universals or near universals. But this is a far more abstract statement than are generalizations about the fre-

> quency of the creation of human beings by mother earth and father sky, or by an androgynous deity or from vegetables. Second, mere comparisons on the basis of the presence or absence of a trait are tricky and may well be misleading. [1]

To be perfectly honest, it is not so much in reaction to the theologians as to the psychologists that the anthropologists began rethinking and retesting their theories on the universality of myths. Analytic psychologists and contemporary theologians seem to be strange bedfellows, but in their seizing upon ethnological data they show certain common characteristics. It is both an amusing and enlightening fact that just as the Freudians et al resent the utilization of their theories by religionists (whom they originally set out to destroy or debunk), so do the ethnologists resent the utilization of their hard earned data by both the psychologists and religionists.[2] (Theories of Myth and The Folklorist).

The response of the theologians to the hostility shown by the anthropologist is interesting. They claim that anthropologists are making a foolhardy attempt to apply pseudo-scientific thinking to the mind of early man. Man was and is basically irrational. Myths emerge, not out of man's intellectual desire, but out of his existential needs. "Though you gather all the data," say the theologians, "you do not know what to do with them."

The psychologists too claim that anthropologists totally misunderstand the information on myth which they

have gathered. "Myths like dreams are thinly disguised representations of certain fundamental unconscious fantasies common to all mankind."[3] It remains only for one to arrive at a definition of the unconscious for one to understand the nature and value of mythology. The treatment of the Oedipus myth by various psychologists is very enlightening. Originally, the early anthropologists saw most myths as a dialogue between the sun and the earth. Oedipus, the sun hero, defeated the schemings of the thundercloud Sphinx that hung threateningly over the city of Thebes; he reunited with his mother Jocasta, the Dawn, from whom he had been parted since infancy; unwilling to see the misery he had wrought, he tore out his eyes, meaning that the sun had blinded himself in clouds and darkness, etc.

As is well known, Freud revealed the Oedipus Complex. In it he disclosed the wish fulfillment of our childhood goals - to sleep with our mothers and kill our fathers.

According to Ferenci,[4] Oedipus was derived from the Greek "swell-foot", the foot in dreams and jokes symbolizes the penis and swelling symbolizes erection. Ferenci discovered also that eyes being round were really testicle symbols, and Oedipus symbolically castrated himself.

Erich Fromm shifted the burden to a conflict between matriarchy and patriarchy, revealed in the whole Oedipus trilogy, with Oedipus, Haemon and Antigone upholding the matriarchal order against the tyranny of Creon. Fittingly,

Oedipus dies in the grove of the matriarchal goddesses to whose world he belongs.

Jung sees the Oedipus myth as an ethical conflict between the "life task" that lies ahead and the "psychic laziness" that holds one back, clinging to the skirts of an idealized mother and a self-centered father.[5]

The frog, that slimy creature, who when kissed became a prince, was the sun to the early folklorists, a penis to Ernest Jones, a miniature sea-serpent symbolic of chaos to Joseph Cambell, Merica Eliade and C.G. Jung. After treatments like these, it is small wonder the field-workers began to despair of the information they gathered. What the analysts did to myths is reminiscent of the patient who, when shown a series of Rorshach ink-blots, asked to borrow those dirty pictures because he was throwing a stag.

What the theologians do with myths is no less frightening. As we shall demonstrate, one of the pitfalls of developing a cogent theory of myths is a lack of agreement as to what a myth is. After the theologians agreed that myths were useful, not hostile to religion, they began developing their own theories. The trouble was, since they drew their data from various schools of thought, they had difficulty communicating. What happens when theologians, all Protestants, all European, discuss the myth of the Gospels is well illustrated in Kerygma and Myth A Theological Debate by Rudolf Bultmann and Five Critics. Bultmann's

thesis is that the New Testament ought to be demythologized in order to make its basic truths relevant to present day needs. Bultmann defines myth in the following manner: "The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not theologically, but anthropologically or better still existentially."[6] In a footnote to this explanation Bultmann says, "myth is here used in the sense popularized by the history of Religions school. Mythology is the use of imagery to express the otherworldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side....Myth is not used in that modern sense, according to which it is practically equivalent to ideology."[7]

In the next essay, Julius Schwiewind offers "a reply to Bultmann." He says "by mythological we mean the expression of unobservable realities in terms of observable phenomenon."[8] According to Schwiewind an ideology could easily be a myth. His definition of myth is much broader than Bultmann's. He would not, nor does he find a need to demythologize what Bultmann feels it is essential to demythologize.

Ernst Lohmeyer in the next essay writes the "Right Interpretation of the Mythological".[8] After reading Bultmann and Schwiewind, Lohmeyer asks the very pertinent question, "What is meant by myth?"[9] He answers the question by stating that "myth revolves around the inexhaustible

wealth of those relations between God and the world and man. It lives and springs like a ceaseless fountain from these three sources of theology, cosmology and anthropology."[10]

Finally, the last of the critics in the book Helmid Thielke has this to say: "There are myths which contain transcendental truth and which are therefore absolutely indispensable. Such for instance are the myths of the creation, the fall, etc. These are to be distinguished from legendary embroidery or mythological ballast derived from other religions outside the Bible."

"There are myths which are pictorial explanations of certain facts in history. The Virgin birth is an example of this sort of myth. It is as Schlatter observed the symbol of the historical fact that Jesus was the Son of God...."[11]

It is easy to see that the theologians quoted have no basic agreement as to the meaning of myth. Yet they all share a common point of view. God and Christ and any theological concept that they hold dear are outside the realm of myth and are at best better comprehended by myth and are at worst obscured by it. Most of these writers draw at least partly on the thesis of myth promulgated by Carl Gustav Jung and Mircea Eliade.

In the next section, I shall attempt a cursory treatment of the various theories of myth which are extant at the present time. In that section the school of Jung and Eliade will be dealt with.

In this section, I have tried to point out the general lack of agreement as to what use ought to be made of the tremendous body of data concerning myths which have been accumulated in the last 130 years. I have shown how at first myth was regarded as alien to monotheistic religion, how it then began to be utilized by psychologists and religionists so that finally the anthropologists who gathered the data began rethinking their own contributions and theories. Lastly, I pointed to the diffusion of interpretation given to myths by analytic psychologists and contemporary theologians. I have done this in order to demonstrate the danger inherent in a type of study such as this, and in order to elucidate how a bias toward a particular viewpoint can virtually negate any good which might come of the utilization of the concept "myth" by those in the field of religion. In 1871 E.B. Tylor, one of the true pioneers in the field of comparative mythology, sounded this warning: "Myth is the history of its authors, not of its subject; it records the lives, not of superhuman heroes but of poetic nations."[12] Care must be taken lest when attempting to understand the myths of others, we do not create our own.

Section II

E.B. Tylor, with whose warning we concluded the preceding section, begins this one. In attempting to lay the groundwork for a science of mythology, Tylor put all myths into the following five categories:[13]

1. myths philosophical or explanatory
2. myths based on real descriptions, misunderstood, exaggerated or perverted
3. myths attributing inferred events to legendary or historical personages
4. myths based on realization of fanciful metaphor
5. myths made or adapted to convey moral or social or political instructions

The fact that Tylor, who was hoping to find a schema for the utilization of mythology, was forced to divide myths into five types is significant. Unlike some of his predecessors and many who came after him, Tylor was unwilling to attribute the origin of myths to simple causes.

Prior to Tylor the most influential student of mythology was Max Muller. His significance is so great that no book on the subject of mythology written in the last one hundred years is without a refutation of Muller's hypothesis. Briefly summarized here is Muller's theory. Muller was a philologian. He said that myths result when everyday words become transformed into proper names - the

name for the sun was once "apollo" and for dawn "daphne". "Muller....regarded myths as the product of a disease of the intellect....When trying to explain the inmost nature of mythology I called it a disease of language rather than of thought. After I had fully explained in my Science of Thought that language and thought are inseparable, and that a disease of language is therefore the same thing as a disease of thought, no doubt ought to have remained as to what I meant. To represent the Supreme God as committing every kind of crime, as being deceived by men, as being angry with his wife and violent with his children, is surely a proof of a disease, of an unusual condition of thought, or to speak more clearly, of real madness."[14]

The theory that myths were everyday words turned into proper nouns gained widespread favor. The theory is not unappealing. It sprung from the discovery of the Vedas which showed that the Indo-European languages all had a common root-language. It also showed that most of the gods in the Indo-European pantheon were prevalent under similar names in that proto religion. These names, claimed Muller and the philologists, were names for natural phenomena which when described in terms of human action (the only descriptive terms available to pre-scientific minds) took on the linguistic appearance of human and animal beings. Later, when the process of naming and describing these natural phenomena had been forgotten, the named and described pheno-

mena remained as gods and goddesses. Stories about these gods were invented, having them perform all sorts of very human acts. Hence mythology came into being. Therefore mythology, according to Muller, is a disease of language. Muller made a definite distinction between myth and religion. Religion is not a disease. It is understandable that man should stand in awe of nature. What is pathological is that he should invent for these personified, natural forces, ridiculous stories about them mating, reproducing, being unfaithful, and taking interest in the activities of mortals. Both religion and myth were metaphor, but myth was mad metaphor.

One of the most articulate critics of Muller was the great French Jewish sociologist, Emile Durkheim. To begin, Durkheim shows that "Muller's doctrine rests, in part, upon a certain number of linguistic postulates which have been and still are very much in question. Some have contested the reality of many of the similarities which Max Muller claimed to have found between the names of the gods in the various European languages....it has been asked if these names, far from being the mark of a very primitive religion, are not the slow product, either of direct borrowing or of natural intercourse with others. Also, it is no longer admitted that the roots once existed in an isolated state as autonomous realities, nor that they allow us to reconstruct even hypothetically the original language of the Indo-Europeans.

Finally, recent researches would tend to show that the Vedic divinities did not all have the exclusive naturistic character attributed to them by Max Muller and his school."[15]

Durkheim, however, was not satisfied with the refutation of Muller by linguistics. He was, by his own admission, not especially competent as a philologist.[16]

Durkheim was concerned with establishing a system which would utilize all the ethnographic material made available to him by Tylor and others. He was, in the words of the title of his major work on the subject, trying to systematize "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life". His greater goal was the understanding of contemporary religion as a by-product of society.

From the point of view of a sociologist, Muller's philological explanation of the origin of myth and religion was grossly inadequate. If Muller were to be taken seriously, the masses of mankind throughout the ages would have to be either insane or inordinately stupid. If gods and goddesses and entire systems of myth were no more than common nouns made proper, how long would a society of men continue to be fooled. The philologic theory of myth might conceivably be adequate to explain its origin, but what accounts for its perpetuation over hundreds and even thousands of years. Why, for example, would people continue praying to a god of rain, if time after time, no rain came. Unless we assume that people are dupes, the answer must be that rain

or no rain, a rain dance or a sacrifice to the god of rain must be in some sense satisfying. As Durkheim says, "It is undeniably true that errors have been able to perpetuate themselves in history, but, except under a union of very unusual circumstances, they can never perpetuate themselves unless they were true practically, that is to say unless without giving us a theoretically exact idea of the things with which they deal, they express well enough the manner in which they affect us, either for good or for bad."[17]

What then, according to Durkheim, is the origin and function of myth? "All myths, even those which we find the most unreasonable have been believed. Men have believed in them no less firmly than in their own sensations; they have based their conduct upon them. In spite of appearances, it is therefore impossible that they should be without objective foundation."[18] Despite their objective foundation, science has shown that the myths do not describe the real nature of things. The world was not created in six days. The origin of lightning is not Thor's hammer. Crops are not made to grow by dances and sacrifices. Man, no matter how primitive, must notice that there is no real correlation between dance and rain or incantation and cure of illness. Therefore, is it not reasonable to assume that myth and "religion respond to quite another need than that of adapting ourselves to sensible objects; then it will not risk being weakened by the fact that it does satisfy, or only badly

satisfies the need. If religious faith was not born to put man in harmony with the material world, the injuries which it has been able to do him, in his struggle with the world do not touch it at its source because it is fed from another."[19]

Just what this other source is, is the burden of Durkheim's theory of myth and its relation to religion. To Durkheim, religion grows out of society's desire to restructure the universe in society's own image. Religion grows out of society's capacities to idealize. Society is more than the sum total of its individuals. It is made up of the happenings of the past as well as the occurrences of the future. The capacity to idealize is uniquely human. It is a product of man's living in groups. Ideals come from living in society. These ideals, once created, have a life of their own. They exist over and above the individual who makes up the society. These ideals which have independent existence are called collective representations.... "the mythology of a group is the system of beliefs common to the group. The traditions whose memory it perpetuates express the way in which society represents man and the world; it is a moral system and a cosmology as well as a history."[20]

Rituals according to Durkheim are intricately connected to myths. There can be no rituals without myth. "So the rite serves and can serve only to sustain the vitality of these beliefs, to keep them from being effaced from memory and in sum, to revivify the most essential elements of the

collective consciousness. Through it, the group periodically renews the sentiment which it has of itself and of its unity; at the same time individuals are strengthened in their social natures."[21]

Thus we see what Durkheim's concept of myth and religion is. Religion is a series of collective representations which embody the ideals of the group. The ideals of the French Revolution, the Religion of Reason as it was termed, was an authentic religion. It failed because society's adherence to those ideals was short lived. Mythology is the system of beliefs common to the group which relates those beliefs to the past, to the future, and to the universe.

Before we leave Durkheim, it is important for us to familiarize ourselves with two more of his concepts, "the sacred and the profane". "Sacred things are those things which the interdictions protect and isolate; profane things, those to which these interdictions are applied and which must remain at a distance from the first. Religious beliefs are the representations which express the nature of sacred things and the relations which they sustain, either with each other or with profane things. Finally, rites are the rules of conduct which prescribe how a man should comport himself in the presence of these sacred objects."[22] Magic is very similar to religion except that magic seems to delight in profaning sacred things.

It is essential that the following notions of Durkheim be grasped.

1. It is not necessary for a religion to center around a god. He gives Buddhism as the prime example of a religion that is based on ideals (the four truths) but has no deity. Hence, a myth to Durkheim does not have to be a story of the gods.
2. There need be no objective reality to the content of a myth so long as it perpetuates an ideal. Because 150 tribes and nations believe in heaven does not mean there is an objective heaven. Believing the earth was created in six days did not make it so.
3. Religion with its by-product, myth, is society's way of making man secure in the universe, of enabling man to perform his creative function by putting him at ease and at the same time inspiring him. Modern religion is failing at the present time (the time Durkheim's book was written) because:
4. science has undermined man's belief system by demonstrating that his old view of the universe was objectively false.
5. we are living in an age of mediocrity. Our myth-making capacity is inferior to our scientific

knowledge.

Religion and myth are important to man and should be revivified to meet the needs of contemporary man.

We have treated Emile Durkheim's concept of myth somewhat exhaustively in this section because as the "father of sociology", Durkheim has had a tremendous influence on later writers of the subject. Durkheim is to sociologists and anthropologists what Freud is to psychologists. Most anthropologists base at least some of their theories of myth on Durkheim, and most contemporary writers on the subject are forced, in one way or another, to deal with Durkheim.

One of Emile Durkheim's successors in the field of mythology is Theodore Gaster. In his book Thespis, Gaster applies Durkheim's formula of religion and myth to the texts of the ancient Near East. "Its thesis is, in a nutshell, that some mythological texts which have come down to us from the ancient Near East likewise reflect in their themes and structure and in the sequence of ritual, acts which, from time immemorial, have characterized major seasonal festivals in most parts of the world."[23] In very Durkheimian phraseology Gaster says, "the function of myth (so obstinately misunderstood) is to translate the real into terms of the ideal, the punctual into terms of the durative and transcendental. This it does by projecting the procedures of ritual to the plane of ideal situations, where they are then taken to objectify and reproduce. Myth is therefore an

essential ingredient in the pattern of the seasonal ceremonies, and in the interpretation of ritual myth provides the key to the essential nature of drama."[24]

However, Gaster differs from Durkheim in an important sense. To Durkheim myth functions as an idealization of sacred themes in a society. Myth and ritual are inseparable, but if one is to be given primacy, it is myth. No ritual is possible without myth, and it is likely that myth precedes ritual or at least is simultaneous with it. Gaster is representative of that school of mythology which gives precedence to the ritual. Franz Boas, the exhaustive collector of ethnic data, was also of this school. He said, "The uniformity of many such rituals over large areas and the diversity of mythological explanations show clearly that the ritual itself is the stimulus for the origin of the myth....the ritual existed and the tale originated from the desire to account for it."[25]

Myth to the ritualists therefore partakes slightly of Durkheim's definition - that is, it rises out of the presence of <u>societal ideal,</u> the need to order the universe. However, to them it is the ritual which emerges first and not the myth.

Clyde Kluckhohn, the Harvard anthropologist who died in 1961, took up the challenge offered by Boas, Gaster and the ritual firsters. In 1942 he published the famous article, <u>Myths and Rituals, A General Theory</u>. It is significant to

note that the study was published in the Harvard Theological Review and not in the Journal of Anthropology or the American Journal of Sociology. The burden of Kluckhohn's article is that it is a gross mistake to see myth solely in connection with ritual, let alone as a by-product of it. "In ordinary usage the Oedipus tale is myth; but only some Freudians believe that this is merely the description of a ritual! The famous stories of the Republic are certainly called 'myths', and while a few scholars believe that Plato in some cases had reference to Orphic and/or Eleusinian mysteries, there is certainly not a shred of evidence that all of Plato's immortal 'myths' are 'descriptions of ritual'."[26]

The first problem which Kluckhohn attempts to solve is how to distinguish "myth" from "legends", "fairy tales", and "folk-tales". He uses Durkheim's distinction. A myth is a "sacred tale". Granting now that myth is a sacred tale, a concession to the myth-ritualists, is there still an inseparable connection between myth and ritual? "Generally speaking, we do seem to find rich ritualism and a rich mythology together. But there are cases (like the Todas) where an extensive ceremonialism does not appear to have its equally extensive mythological counterpart and instances (like Classical Greece) where a ramified mythology appears to have existed more or less independent of a comparatively meager rite system."[27]

"The early Romans got along without mythology. The

Mohave have an extremely complex mythology, but as A.L. Kroeber demonstrates in Handbook of the Indians of California, they are totally lacking in public ceremonies or rituals. So it is also with the Bushmen. The Central Eskimos have a ritual to accompany every phase of the Sedna myth while the California Indians never act out the creation myth."[28] "In different sections of one culture, the Papago, all of these possibilities are represented. Some myths are never ceremonially enacted. Some ceremonies emphasize content foreign to the myth. Other ceremonies consisting only of songs have some vague place in the mythological world."[29]

In American Indian cultures one of the most significant means of adding a new ritual to the culture complex of American Indian tribes is through the dreams of an individual. Certain individuals with a propensity for dreaming are looked to as a source of cultural innovation. In our search for a theory of myth with which to examine biblical culture, this is a noteworthy fact. Anthropologists have demonstrated that where dreaming is held in high repute, dreams as a means of creating a new ritual or a new cultural form are readily accepted. Even when the new form produced by a dream deviates greatly from the acceptable cultural pattern, the innovation of the dreamer is accepted. This fact should be borne in mind.

However, returning to Kluckhohn's attempt to arrive at a general theory for myths and ritual, we find that he

draws the following conclusions which are useful to understanding our problem. The first principle that must be grasped is that while myths and rituals may and often do serve the same or similar function in a given society, there is no necessary correlation between the two. In other words, where there is a myth there is not necessarily an accompanying ritual, and where there is a ritual there need not be a myth behind it. Furthermore, it is impossible to generalize where myth and ritual do accompany one another and to say that myth precedes ritual or that ritual precedes myth. In a given culture myth may precede ritual. In another culture ritual may precede myth. In a complex culture both instances may be true.

Now, according to Kluckhohn, what are the functions of myth and/or ritual in society? In his conclusion Kluckhohn reflects Durkheim. Dr. Kluckhohn says, "Existence in an organized society would be unthinkable unless most people, most of the time, behaved in an expectable manner - Rituals constituted a guarantee that in certain societally organized behavior patterns touching upon certain 'areas of ignorance' which constitute 'tender spots' for all human beings, people can count upon the repetitive nature of the phenomena." "Myths, likewise, give men something to hold to." "Rituals and myths supply, then, fixed points in a world of bewildering change and disappointment."[30]

Since all behavior is more or less repetitive, why,

it may be asked, are myths and rituals the most constant of the behavior patterns? "Because", says Kluckhohn, "they deal with those sectors of experience which do not seem amenable to rational control and hence where human beings can least tolerate insecurity, that very insistence upon the minutiae of ritual performance, upon preserving the myth to the very letter, which is characteristic of religious behavior must be regarded as a 'reaction formation' (in the Freudian sense) which compensates for the actual intransigence of these events which religion tries to control."[31] The social psychologist Gordon Allport postulated the "principle of functional autonomy". This principle, briefly summarized, states that once a given cultural configuration is, as it were, put into a kind of social orbit, that configuration tends to remain there, to perpetuate itself, despite the disappearance of the cause which produced it. Some scholars would account for the perpetuation of myths and rituals on the basis of this principle. In other words, to them a myth or ritual may originate as a response to a need to order a part of the environment, but that myth or ritual may take on a significance of its own after the environment has been ordered by another means. To use a biblical example, the Adam and Eve stories may have originally been created in order to relieve man's anxiety about his origins. Now we know that man has evolved. His origin is accounted for in a better way. Yet, the myth of Adam and

Eve prevails. This would be an example of the principle of functional autonomy as applied to myth by some scholars.

Kluckhohn rejects this point of view. He maintains that the perpetuation of a myth or a ritual shows an existing need for it in the contemporary culture. If the Adam and Eve myth is still prevalent in twentieth century America, then that myth is meeting a need of those twentieth century Americans who preserve it. Perhaps evolution, though scientific, does not accord with man's concept of himself, or perhaps accepting evolution would undermine the entire belief system of the individual and hence lead to great anxieties on his part. The existence of a myth or ritual points to a need for that myth or ritual.

But don't people who believe in the efficacy of a myth or ritual soon come to be disbelievers when the people see that a myth or ritual does not produce the desired effect? Here is where most of us living in the age of scientific analysis fail in our understanding of the function of ritual and myth. Kluckhohn points to an article by O.H. Mowrer, a stimulus response psychologist, to give us a clue to understanding how a myth may continue to have power in the face of empirical evidence refuting the effect of myth. Mowrer says, "The position here taken is that human beings (and also other living organisms to varying degrees) can be motivated either by organic pressures (needs) that are currently felt or by the mere anticipation of such

pressures and that those habits tend to be acquired and perpetuated (reinforced) which effect a reduction in either of these two types of motivation."[32] Kluckhohn explains, "...myths and rituals are reinforced because they reduce the anticipation of disaster. No living person has died - but he has seen others die."[33]

In the Navaho culture, the anxiety which permeated the society had its outlet in fears of ill health. This cause of anxiety is rational because most of the Navahos are sick a good part of the time. Because of the frequency of illness, rituals of healing are bound to have some efficacy out of sheer chance. However, this is not really important to the Navahos. The telling of the myth and the action of the ritual act to reduce anxiety. . Anxiety is worse than death to the anxious person.

In addition to protection against the anxieties of ill health, in the Navaho culture myths and rituals also jointly provide systematic protection against supernatural dangers, the threats of the physical environment, anti-social tensions and the pressures of a more powerful society. Of the ten "mechanisms of defense" which Anna Freud suggests that the ego has available, in the Navaho culture at least, myths and rituals afford institutionalized means of employing at least four.[34]

In summarizing, Kluckhohn says, "For myth and ritual have a common psychological basis. Ritual is obsessive

repetitive activity - often a symbolic dramatization of the fundamental 'needs' of the society, whether 'economic', 'biological', 'social', or 'sexual'. Mythology is the rationalization of the same needs, whether they are all expressed in overt ceremonial or not...." "Myths and rituals are composite creations; they normally embody the accretions of many generations, the modifications (through borrowing from other cultures or by intra-cultural changes) which the varying needs of the group as a whole and of innovating individuals have imposed. In short both myths and rituals are cultural products, part of the social heredity of a society."[35]

Kluckhohn represents the best transition from the purely sociologic to the social psychologic to the existential interpretation of myth and ritual. He was anthropo-psychologistic (to coin a term). He admits that culture or any of its manifestations (a myth or ritual in our case) is supra-individual - that is, it is more than the sum total of the individual who makes it up. But he is unwilling to go so far as the culturologists who would say that individual needs are irrelevant to the study of culture (in our case ritual and myth). Culture begets culture, the culturologists say. (Leslie White is the outstanding spokesman of this school).[36] There is no need to study individuals in the culture. It is only necessary to study the culture. Kluckhohn and Margaret Mead, to name two of the better known

anthropo-psychologists, place more emphasis on individual psychology than do the culturologists, but considerably less emphasis on individual psychology than do either the analytic psychologists or the existential mythologists, psychologists and theologians.

We have dealt with the orthodox Freudian interpretation of myth in Section One. Myth is a group dream or a collective phantasy. However, Freud was a great believer in psychic unity - the principle which holds that men have needs and drives which are universal and these needs and drives seek satisfaction in universal ways. Freud placed tremendous emphasis on the sex drive. He gave it primary importance because he felt that it was the drive most likely to be inhibited and hence the drive most likely to give rise to phantasy. Work with comparative ethnology, however, has tended to show that while man has universal needs and drives, the ways in which those drives are satisfied are certainly not universal. As we have just seen, the primary cause of anxiety in the Navaho culture was not sexual, but rather the result of low health standards. The mythology of the Navahos was therefore a mythology of physical healing.

Other groups suffer from chronic hunger and their myths and rituals center around food. They are much more likely to dream of a medium rare steak than Brigitte Bardot.

The most famous Freudian anthropologist is Geza Roheim. It is interesting to read his treatment of Navaho

myths as opposed to other less one-sided interpreters.[37]

The neo-Freudians, of course, have modified some of Freud's early theories of the unconscious on the basis of better cross-cultural data. The work of Malinowski and his Trobriand islanders, Margaret Mead and her Mungadumor have been read into Freudian theories. The result has been a de-emphasis of the all importance of the sex drive as a determinant of the formation of the unconscious, and hence a neo-Freudian interpretation of myth is likely to be close to a Kluckhohn or a Mead.

For our purpose it will be necessary to avoid a full discussion of the neo-Freudians. Their contributions to our understanding of myth are significant but can largely be subsumed, as a theory, under Kluckhohn.

As is well known, Carl Gustav Jung, an early disciple of Freud's, deviated quite radically from the master. Jung could not quite fathom the Freudian emphasis on the importance of sexual repression as an influence in the machinations of the unconscious. He looked for and "found" another basis for man's unconscious behavior. As was mentioned, in his Totem and Taboo Freud had made reference to a primal horde - a kind of myth invented by Freud - to account for the origin of many institutions which have survived to this day (for example, incest taboos). As is to be expected, sexual motives lay behind the actions of Freud's primal horde.[38] (For a full discussion of Freud's use of the primal

horde see Reik, T. Myth and Guilt).

But Freud was not a metaphysician. He postulated a primal horde as an hypothesis to account for certain phenomena which seemed to be universal in man and for which there was little explanation to be found in the analysis of the life of the individual. The incest taboo, for instance, certainly was not truly rational from a Freudian viewpoint. Perhaps then, its universality could be traced to the action of a primal horde. To be sure, this primal horde was not one timebound band, but rather a convenient means of speaking of that long period in man's pre-history when he was evolving into homo sapiens. This is not metaphysics. It is strictly loose empiricism.

Jung, if my understanding of him is correct, while not admitting to being metaphysical certainly seems to push beyond Positivism. He seems to be influenced by Kant. Jung speaks of racial archetypes - memory traces of man's earliest days on earth which somehow survive as layers in modern man's unconscious, and which emerge in dreams and myths. These dreams and myths are, to be sure, colored by the particular culture into which a dreamer or myth-maker is born, but they nevertheless reveal some universal human condition.

There is some notion in Jung's theories of myth, or, to be more articulate, in those theories of myth which are Jungian in influence, that getting at these archetypes help you to get at the core of a person's being - at the ultimate

reality of the human situation. Jung uses such words as psyche and soul, which seem to have religious meanings. He interprets such myths as the search for the Golden Apples or the struggle with prehistoric monsters, as journeys of the soul or struggles involving good and evil.

Writers such as Joseph Campbell (The Hero With A Thousand Faces) and Mircea Eliade (The Sacred and The Profane) reflect a Jungian approach. These neo-Jungian authors are quite convinced of the presence of such things as universal symbols (the hero = the soul) (old men = accumulated wisdom) (sacred places = a break through of the timeless into the timebound); these symbols, indicate the common origin of mankind and a common reality which underlies man's being. These people really do not contradict a Kluckhohn. They merely push beyond him. They simply say that it is not enough for Kluckhohn to say that myths and rituals reduce anxiety. He must also explain the presence of a phenomenon known as anxiety. Durkheim and Kluckhohn are epistomological. They are not ontological. Therefore, their theories of myth are incomplete. Jung and his followers are merely completing the task.

It is not difficult to see why a theory of mythology like Jung's and Eliade's would have an appeal to theologians. If myths are culturally limited expressions of a universal truth about mankind's condition, then one can search out mythology and locate certain universal truths. According to

Jung, one of these truths is the soul's quest. According to Eliade, one of the truths is a desire for the sacred and timeless.

As we stated earlier in this chapter, men like Kluckhohn reply to these assertions by claiming that the so-called universal symbols are not universal at all and are at best based on limited data and at worst the result of reading into extremely subjective accounts what the student of mythology or of religion wants to find.

Before summarizing and concluding this chapter, it is necessary to consider two splendid contributions to our search for a framework in which to test the word of the Lord as myth. The first of these two is Ernst Cassirer, and the second, Paul Tillich.

Ernst Cassirer in his book Language and Myth and in several of his other writings takes great interest in the inter-relationship between myth, language and religion. He defines man as "a symbol making animal".[39] Cassirer is known as a neo-Kantian, and his theories of myth and language reflect the philosophical influence of Immanuel Kant (as does Tillich), the linguistic approach of Max Muller (whom we dealt with earlier in this chapter), plus the data of those anthropologists who add to his understanding of the problem.[40]

Briefly Cassirer makes these points:

(1) "Before the intellectual work of conceiving and under-

standing of phenomena can set in, the work of naming must have preceded it and have reached a certain point of elaboration....For it is this process which transforms the world of sense impression, which animals also possess into a mental, a world of ideas and meanings."[41]

This uniquely human ability is called symbol-making. It is symbol-making which creates language. It is also symbol-making which creates myth. Before scientific thinking can take place with a given language, the users of that language must have reached a stage of development where they no longer concentrated on a single thing or event but were able to abstract from that thing or event.

(2) "Thus every separate event is ensnared, as it were, by invisible threads of thought, that bind it to the whole. The theoretical significance which the event receives lies in the fact that it is stamped with the character of this totality."[42]

(3) "Mythical thinking when viewed in its most elementary forms bears no such stamp; in fact, the character of intellectual unity is directly hostile to its spirit. For in this mode, thought does not dispose freely over the data of intuition in order to relate and compare them to each other, but is captivated and enthralled by the intuition which suddenly confronts it. It comes to rest in the immediate experience; the sensible

present is so great that everything else dwindles before it. For a person whose apprehension is under the spell of this mythico-religious attitude, it is as though the whole world were simply annihilated; the immediate content whatever it be, that commands his interest so completely fills his consciousness that nothing else can exist beside and apart from it....This focusing of all forces on a single point is the prerequisite for all mythical thinking and mythical formulation."[43]

Thus, according to Cassirer, myth production, like the growth of language, is linked to an early stage in man's development when man concentrates on the single event, not on the relation of that event to a broader whole. Hence,

(4) "The original bond between the linguistic and the mythico-religious consciousness is primarily expressed in the fact that all verbal structures appear as also mythical entities, endowed with certain mythical powers, that the Word, in fact, becomes a sort of primary force in which all being and doing originate. In all mythical ceremonies, as far back as they can be traced, this supreme position of the Word is found....In the creation accounts of almost all great cultural religions, the Word appears in league with the highest Lord of creation; either as the tool which he employs or actually as the primary source from which he, like all other

Being and order of Being, is derived."[44]

The extension of the "moment" of seizure to include more and more of creation as reflected in a myth such as that of Genesis 1-2:4 shows an ever-expanding system for organizing Being and thus a higher stage of myth-making. So just as language greatly increase its ability to concentrate on more than one phenomenon at a time or to organize those phenomena under a single system, so myth-making follows the same pattern. In the early stages of mankind, language and myth are co-sharers in the experiencing of and the organizing of experience.

To early man words are holy, they are Beings endowed by powers of their own. The word, Being par excellence, is therefore the most holy. The way early man viewed tools was very similar, says Cassirer, to the way he viewed words. "Instead of being governed by his will, it becomes a god or demon on whose will he depends - to which he feels himself subjected and which he adores with the rites of a religious cult. Especially the ax and the hammer seem to have attained such religious significance in earliest times."[45]

Words like tools are man's creations to which he grants Being or Creative power. In summary of his first crucial point, Cassirer says, "For our original aim was to treat both language and myth as spiritual functions which do not take their departure from a world of given objects, divided according to fixed and finished 'attributes' but which

actually first produce this organization of reality and make the positing of attributes possible. The concept of mana and the correlative, negative concept of taboo reveal the ways in which this construction is originally effected."[46]

Finally, Cassirer makes this point about the "power of metaphor". Tracing both myth and language back as far as he can, Cassirer finds a common form from which both sprang. "It is the form which one may denote as metaphorical thinking: the nature and meaning of metaphor is what we must start with if we want on the one hand, the unity of the verbal and the mythical worlds and, on the other, their difference."[47] The basic principle behind verbal as well as mythic metaphor is "the principle of pars pro toto".[48]

> It is a familiar fact that all mythic thinking is governed and permeated by this principle: Whoever has brought any part of a whole into his power has thereby acquired power in the magical sense, over the whole itself. [49]

The power of metaphor or "part for the whole" is demonstrated time and again in rituals such as the waving of the lulav to produce rain. Imitative magic is really metaphorical behavior and it is this ability to make metaphors that lies behind the production of myth and language.

In summation Cassirer says, "Myth, language and art begin as a concrete, undivided unity, which is only gradually resolved into a triad of independent modes of spiritual creativity."[50]

As we have seen, Cassirer pushes one step further

beyond the descriptive anthropologists and the analytic psychologists. The anthropologists (Kluckhohn, Mead, Malinowski) say that myth is vital and necessary to man because it orders nature, gives man's life a hold on the Rock of Ages, as it were, and thus reduces whatever anxiety the culture might specialize in producing. The analytic psychologists attempt to discover the source of all anxiety and link myth to that single cause for anxiety or to an early stage in man's development when a common experience produced universal symbols.

Cassirer has gone beyond the analytic psychologists in trying to account for man's ability to invent myth. Myth and language are both means of controlling being; yet, at the same time they are intermediaries between Being and the person who either speaks or makes myth. Behind each word or myth lies a reality which it is not possible to control without language or myth; yet which is blurred by language and myth. The growth of mythology parallels the growth of language. Because just as a language evolves into a more and more complex system and thus unifies the world, so a mythology which begins by an immediate seizure with a single part of nature expands to include all nature. In the beginning was the word. The word is the key to language and myth, but lying behind the invention and ascribing of power to the myth, lies the ability of man to make metaphor. It is man's ability to let a part represent the whole which

allows man to have language, myth and art.

From Cassirer it is but one step to Paul Tillich whose views on myth are relevant to our study and with whose views we will end our survey. In his great little book, Dynamics of Faith Paul Tillich defines faith as "ultimate concern".[51] Man's ultimate concern must be expressed symbolically because symbolic language alone is able to express the "ultimate". But because Tillich is attune to the problems inherent in the use of such words as "symbol" and "myth" he says, "....Every writer who uses the term symbol must explain his understanding of it."[52]

1. Symbols have one characteristic in common with signs; they point to themselves and to something else.
2. A symbol participates in that to which it points.
3. A symbol opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us.
4. A symbol not only opens up dimensions and elements of reality which otherwise would remain unapproachable, but also unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality.
5. Symbols cannot be produced intentionally
6. Symbols cannot be invented. Like living beings, they grow and they die.

About myth, Tillich has this to say:

> The symbols of faith do not appear in isolation. They are united in stories of the gods which is the meaning of the Greek word mythos - myth. The gods are individualized figures, analogous to human personalities, sexually differentiated, descending from each other, related to each other in love and struggle, producing man, acting in time and space. They participate in human greatness and misery, in creative and destructive works. They give to man cultural and religious traditions and defend these rites. They help and threaten the human race especially some families, tribes, or nations. They appear in epiphanies and incarnations, establish sacred place rites and persons, and thus create a cult. [53]

He goes on to say that, "Myths are always present in every act of faith because the language of faith is the symbol."[54] Tillich defines as a god anything that is the object of man's ultimate concern. Money, the orgasm, the Fatherland, if elevated to the position of man's ultimate concern, become his gods. Stories of the gods, myths, are interwoven symbols telling about man's ultimate concern.

Just as man's ultimate concern is the object of his faith, so a religion without myth and symbols does not express the ultimate concern, and hence is not a religion. Those who wish to demythologize religion have an impossible task unless they also wish to de-religionize it.

However, when a myth is recognized as a myth and as nothing more, that is when it ceases to express the ultimate, yet remains as a "story of the gods", it is "a broken myth". A myth which is understood as a myth but not removed or replaced, can be called a "broken myth".

"Christianity denies by its very nature any unbroken

myth because its presupposition is the first commandment: the affirmation of the ultimate as ultimate and the rejection of any kind of idolatry. All mythological elements in the Bible, and doctrine and liturgy should be recognized as mythological but they should be maintained in their symbolic form and not be replaced by scientific substitutes. For there is no substitute for the use of symbols.and myths: they are the language of faith."[55]

Although this last point relates to Tillich's theology with which we are not here concerned, it nevertheless aids us in our search for a cogent theory of myth with which to approach the "word of the Lord".

Tillich being a post-Kantian and contemporary of Cassirer and knowledgeable in sociology, anthropology and analytic psychology, is able to add another dimension to our search.

God should be the object of our ultimate concern. Whatever is the object of our ultimate concern is a god. If our ultimate concern is for the state, for example, then the state is god. This is idolatry.

A myth is a story about our ultimate concern. Therefore an analysis of a myth should yield the ultimate concern of the society whose myth it is.

Tillich's discussion of the myth is thus extremely useful as a tool with which to examine biblical society in general, and the concept "word of the Lord" in particular.

Tillich's concept of the myth builds on Durkheim, the analysts, and Cassirer. His theory would be impossible without the analysis of what myth is and does. Since this paper will attempt a scientific analysis of the word of the Lord, it is not our function to decide whether or not there is such a thing as Ultimate Concern. We may merely utilize the concept "ultimate concern" with lower case letters.

Summary

Let us now attempt to summarize briefly what we have done in this section. We began by telling how modern man came to study myths as tools useful to the unravelling of the mystery of man's past. We have tried to show certain essential theories of myth as reflected by representative men. We undertook this study in order to try to find out first whether we might legitimately consider dealing with the word of the Lord as myth.

First we dealt briefly with Max Muller who said mythology was a disease of language. He said that it was the result of common nouns becoming proper. When people forgot that laban was the word for moon, they made Laban into Jacob's uncle.

Emile Durkheim was looking for the "elementary forms of the religious life". He found mythology to be one of those elementary forms. He rejected Muller's view because he reasoned that myths are not perpetuated for centuries and do not survive in the light of contradictory evidence unless they serve a function, other than that of providing the individual with rational explanations of the universe. They must serve some other function. Myths must be true practically. Myths and rituals are "collective representations" of group ideals in the form of story and drama, given a root in history, which serves the function of keeping man in tune with his society's ideal. Myths provide the mystic link

between man, society, the past, the present and the future.

Followers of Durkheim such as Boas and Gaster tend to give primacy of function to ritual. They say rituals help keep man in tune with societal ideals and myths grow up to explain the origin of rituals.

Clyde Kluckhohn, after doing careful cross-cultural checking, concluded that myth and ritual need not be co-existent in a society. Unlike "love and marriage" in a popular song of a few years ago, you can have one without the other. However, myth and ritual do serve a similar function. They both serve to integrate a person into a society, but what is perhaps more important, they tell the person that in the past such and such a problem was faced by a god and solved in such and such a manner. They tell you that a given illness or drought or feast occurred since man has been here. They deal with those sectors of life which seem least amenable to human control and thus reduce anxiety.

The people whom we have termed analytic psychologists aid us by showing that myths and rituals are group phantasies, expressions of the unconscious mind of men.

Freud would trace the origin of most myths to sexual repression in the early stage of mankind's history. This, he says, is the major cause of anxiety and really of society.

Jung emasculates Freud's explanation and says that myth in a given culture is the existential solution to problems and strivings inherent in the basic human situation

since the beginning of time. Myths are culture bound racial archetypes.

Followers of Jung such as Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell see "universal symbols" in world mythology which tend to corroborate Jung. Others such as Kluckhohn are not so hasty to postulate these universal symbols. Nevertheless, Freud, Jung, and Eliade do point at some ultimate concern of mankind.

Ernst Cassirer traces language and myth back to the basic ability, unique to human beings, to use metaphor. Both language and myth mediate between reality and man. They obscure reality but it is impossible to grasp reality without them. Man is a metaphor making animal. He gives metaphor an independent existence because it is so valuable to him in grasping reality. To desire to know and control reality is a basic human drive.

Paul Tillich says that faith is man's "ultimate concern". The language of faith is the symbol. Symbols put together make a myth. A myth is the story of God or the gods and is thus a document of a given society's "ultimate concern". Man's drive to grasp reality causes him to make symbols and myths which when participated in, reduce the anxiety caused by not being able to grasp ultimate reality.

CHAPTER ONE

Conclusion

We have just presented in some detail an elucidation of contemporary theories of myth. Briefly stated, myth is a verbal response to man's finitude which grows out of man's ability to use metaphor, which is held sacred by a group and which is lived as reality and not metaphor. This, in all too concise language, is a definition arrived at by extracting what the writer feels is common to Durkheim, the analytic psychologists, Cassirer and Tillich.

With this definition in mind, we undertake Chapter Two of this thesis. In that chapter we deal with the word of the Lord.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Although we are armed with a definition of myth constructed through the efforts of the previous chapter, we must lay aside that definition temporarily.

In this chapter we shall merely undertake an empirical investigation of the phrase "the word of the Lord" in the Hebrew Bible.

The phrase d'var adonai occurs 242 times in the Hebrew Bible. Although there is some question as to the exact translation of the phrase, the generally accepted translation is "the word of the Lord". This translation will be maintained throughout this paper.

Our function in this chapter will be to give a summary of the occurrences of "the word of the Lord", to do a content analysis of these occurrences and to formulate, test, prove or reject an hypothesis which might account for the use of the phrase. Since the object of this thesis is to examine the possibilities of a connection between the "word of the Lord" and mythology, we will conclude this thesis with an analysis of that problem.

CHAPTER TWO

The phrase "word of the Lord" is distributed in the following manner throughout the Bible:

Book	No. of Occurrences
Genesis	2
Exodus	2
Leviticus	0
Numbers	1
Deuteronomy	1
Joshua	2
Judges	2
I Samuel	8
II Samuel	4
I Kings	34
II Kings	16
I Chronicles	6
II Chronicles	9
Isaiah	9
Jeremiah	52
Ezekiel	60
Hosea	2
Joel	1
Amos	2
Obadiah	0
Jonah	3

Book	No. of Occurrences
Micah	2
Nahum	0
Habakuk	0
Zephaniah	2
Haggai	5
Zechariah	3
Malachi	1
Psalms	2
Proverbs	0
Job	0
Song of Songs	0
Ruth	0
Lamentations	0
Ecclesiastes	0
Esther	0
Daniel	1
Ezra	1
Nehemiah	0

Even a cursory glance at this frquency distribution is revealing. It shows that far from being a widespread biblical expression, the word of the Lord is in fact limited to but twenty-seven of the Bible's thirty-nine books. Furthermore, of the 242 occurrences of the phrase, all but twenty-five are found in the division of the Bible called the Prophets. If we include the two books of Chronicles

among the Prophets we are left with only ten instances of d'var adonai in the divisions of the Bible called the Torah and the Writings.

A content analysis of the use of d'var adonai in both the Torah and the Writings is informative only in a negative sense. That is that while we discover that d'var adonai in Genesis is associated with Abraham,[1] in Exodus[2] it is difficult to tell precisely what the d'var adonai is.

Perhaps the most significant clue which we have to the meaning and use of the word of the Lord from the Torah is the complete absence of this phrase in the book of Leviticus. As our frequency distribution has shown most of the occurrences of d'var adonai are in prophetic books. This leads us to suspect that the d'var adonai is a prophetic concept. The absence of the term in Leviticus, a book traditionally ascribed to priestly writers, tends to heighten our presuppositions that it is the prophets who make the term d'var adonai into a mythic concept. The single appearances, each in Numbers[3] and Deuteronomy[4] tell us little more of the d'var adonai, nor does Joshua[5] or Judges.[6]

The Writings

In the Writings, as our chart shows, d'var adonai occurs but four times.[7] Two of the occurrences, those in Daniel and Ezra refer to the return from Babylonian Captivity; a return which fulfilled the word of the Lord as spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet. In these two instances

as in others to follow, the word of the Lord refers to prophecy fulfilled. It is of importance to note that modern scholars do not attribute the prophecy concerning the length of the exile to Jeremiah. When we investigate the Twelve and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we will come upon this phenomenon again. That is, we shall see that many of the prophecies preceded by the phrase "word of the Lord" are now considered to be additions to the original prophet's work.

As the "word of the Lord" is used in Psalms we have the subject for a new investigation. The two occurrences are both in Psalm 33. "For the word of the Lord is upright. And all His work is done in faithfulness." (Psalm 33:4)

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." (Psalm 33:6)

Psalm 33:4 adds evidence to a preliminary hunch, namely, that d'var adonai refers to fulfilled prophecy. The parallelism seems to show that the "word" is faithful to be accomplished. The parallelism in 33:6 reveals a possible attempt to convert the "word of the Lord", which is largely a prophetic concept, into a more universal one. In this verse it is by the word of the Lord that the world came into being. In Psalm 119 the "word", though not the "word of the Lord", is made synonymous with Torah. Here in 33:6 "word of the Lord" is made parallel to the phrase "and God said" in Gen. 1:-2:4. Thus in a somewhat devious manner, word of the Lord, Torah and the primal command of God are made equivalent.

If we further speculate and say that the absence of the "word of the Lord" in Leviticus is due to the fact that it was a prophetic device, then taking Psalm 119, Psalm 33:6 and the Creation story into account, we might postulate the following theory: When the Jerusalem priests first came into power with the reform of Josiah, they tried to obliterate all prophetic influence. They left in the Torah only non-descriptive references to the d'var adonai. In their own (the priest's) book, Leviticus, they completely obliterated any reference to this prophetic tool. Following the return from captivity, under the new theocracy which had prophetic sanction (See Haggai and Zechariah) an attempt was made to fuse prophetic thought with priestly conceptions. This accounts for the attempt in Psalms to equate d'var adonai with davar, with Torah and with Gen. 1. If d'var adonai can be made the equivalent of Torah, then the new Judaism consisting of priestly cult or concept and prophetic myth have been successfully merged in a single word "Torah". It is interesting so to speculate. Yet, inasmuch as d'var adonai is only used as an equivalent to the primal commands once and never as a parallel to Torah in Psalms, we can only speculate.

The Word of the Lord in First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings and First and Second Chronicles

In the two Book of Kings, d'var adonai occurs fifty times, third to only Ezekiel and Jeremiah in number of appearances of the term. It is not until we investigate our concept as it occurs in some quantity that we may really begin to construct an hypothesis.

Our study of d'var adonai is enhanced by I Samuel. Perhaps most enlightening is the statement found in I Sam. 3:1 "And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli and the word was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." and I Sam. 3:7, "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him."

The statement that the "word" was rare in those days would seem to illustrate that word, word of the Lord and revelation are synonomous. Such a contention is not unreasonable were it not for the fact that as we shall show the phrase word of the Lord is almost exclusively used by or to refer to prophets. It is our contention, based on the parity of the word of the Lord in the book of Judges and the relative frequency of contact between God and man in Judges, that when I Samuel, 3:1, says the "word was precious in those days", it is really saying that authentic prophets were scarce in the time prior to the rise of Samuel.

The only person in I Samuel to receive the word of the Lord is Samuel himself. At one point Saul says that he

had fulfilled the word of the Lord; Samuel denies it. This may have been Saul's true sin.[8]

Samuel's reputation as a seer or prophet hinged on his having the d'var adonai.[9] He definitely wielded this divine gift as an instrument of power. Reject it and lose the Kingdom; accept it and find favor with the Lord or perhaps more accurately with Samuel.

It is also important to note that Samuel uses the word of the Lord as ex post facto legislation. That is, when a command is given, Samuel does not say "Hear the word of the Lord!" When a displeasing act has been performed, however, Samuel says, "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord...."

The word of the Lord rejected ~~is~~ Samuel's order; unfulfilled. The word of the Lord must be fulfilled.

In Second Samuel, word of the Lord occurs three times[10] and word of God[11] once. Each of the three words of the Lord are spoken by a prophet (twice by Nathan, once by Gad). Each is a message of rebuke to David. The lone occurence of word of God arouses our curiosity as it did in Judges. Why word of God is used instead of word of the Lord is not evident to the writer.

I Kings:

First Kings has the d'var adonai thirty-four times. Thirty-three of these are spoken by either "men of God" or prophets. Solomon has a word of the Lord.[12]

The content of these "words" vary. One is fulfilled when Abiathar of the house of Eli is removed from the priesthood,[13] giving substance to a belief on our part that one of the uses of d'var adonai is as a label attached to a fulfilled prophecy, having come to pass.

Many instances of d'var adonai in First Kings are concerned with a prophet's agitation against a King. The Elijah and Elisha tales make use of the word of the Lord in this manner, as does the prophet Jehu.[14] None of these uses of the word of the Lord is unique to Kings. However, there are two events recorded in First Kings which are highly informative. The first is recorded in Chapter Thirteen of that book.

In that chapter a "man of God" who remains anonymous goes north to Beth El from Judah, and delivers a word of the Lord. He foretells the birth of a King named Josiah who will unify the cult.[15] As proof of the authenticity of this message, the "man of God" offers the sign of a mysteriously rent altar.[16] King Jeroboam who is the recipient of the message and witness to the miracle, reaches out to touch the altar and receives a withered arm. The "man of God" heals the King and is invited by him to a banquet. The "man of God" declines the invitation saying, "If thou wilt give me half thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying: 'Thou shalt eat

no bread, nor drink water, neither return by the way that thou camest.'"[17]

While returning home another way in compliance with his divine orders, he is met by an old prophet. This old man, who is called a prophet[18] in contrast to the younger man who is called a "man of God", goes out to meet the "man of God" who has gained a reputation from his encounter with Jeroboam. Like Jeroboam, the old prophet invites the miracle working younger man to dinner. The "man of God" again refuses... "For it was said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn back the way that thou camest.'"[19]

The old man, however, was insistent. "And he said unto him: 'I also am a prophet as thou art; and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord saying: ""Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water.""' - He lied unto him - So he went back with him and did eat bread in his house and drink water."[20]

"And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. And he cried unto the "man of God" that came from Judah, saying: 'Thus saith the Lord;'For as much as thou hast rebelled against the word of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to thee: Eat no bread, and drink no water:

thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers.'"[21]

The "man of God" goes forth from his dinner engagement and is slain by a lion. The lion guards his carcass as a sign of divine disfavor. The old prophet learns of his dinner guest's demise and is overcome by guilt. As atonement, he has the "man of God" buried in his (the prophet's) tomb and wills that he be buried next to the unfortunate spokesman for the Lord.

The entire tale as related above might be titled "The Word of the Lord - its Uses and Abuses." The anonymous "man of God" is probably called a "man of God" rather than a prophet because he belongs to no guild. He receives a specific message from the Lord explicitly telling him what to say to Jeroboam and what to do afterwards. This the man does.

However, an old prophet hears of a young rival in the area and sets about investigating. He learns that indeed the man has worked a wonder and indeed seems to have a word of the Lord. This the prophet tests by saying that he too has a word of the Lord which contradicts the man from the South's word. However, since the text clearly states that the old prophet was lying, the text therefore states that the prophet received his word by means of an angel. This may be a gloss or an attempt of the narrator to keep the word of the Lord free from the taint of lies.

The "man of God" is placed in a precarious position.

Since the old man claimed to have a word of the Lord and flattered him by calling him a co-prophet, the younger man had either to call the prophet a liar or go against his own command. The "man of God", probably unsure of himself in the presence of a guild of prophets and their chief, yields to the deceitful invitation and is punished for his uncertainty by a supernatural death, the prophecy of which came by a word of the Lord.

In this chapter we gain rare insight into an aspect of the meaning of word of the Lord: The "man of God" foretells by the word of the Lord the reform of Josiah, a prediction which came to pass. He is told in a word not to eat, and drink and not to return the same way he came. He disobeys and is slain. His punishment is announced by the word of the Lord and fulfilled. In the only place where d'var adonai is false, the text says it is used in a lie and in that place it was said to come by an angel. Thus, every time the d'var adonai is used, what it says comes to pass.

Furthermore, since it will probably be admitted that this tale was written after the Josiah reform, it is safe to say that the author claimed that the reform once it was an accomplished fact was ordained by God and thus established it by this story as a d'var adonai.

The word of the Lord, as it is used in this narrative in Kings, is both prophecy which will come true and which did come true.

Absent in two chapters, the word of the Lord returns in Chapter Sixteen of I Kings. In this chapter, the word of the Lord is used four times. Each eventually is fulfilled prophecy.[22]

In the Elijah tales in Kings, the word of the Lord is used in two ways, either as direct communication[23] or as fulfilled prophecy.[24] The use of d'var adonai as direct prophecy is noteworthy because here as elsewhere, when a prophecy comes to pass, even when its original pronouncement was not in the form of a word of the Lord, when the prophecy is fulfilled it is called retroactively the word of the Lord.[25] In the famous resurrection legend of I Kings 17, the grateful mother expresses succinctly what may be the clue to our thesis: "Now I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."[26]

Further light is thrown on our study by the well known story of Micaiah ben Imlah, the Kings of Israel and Judah and four hundred false prophets.

The action of the story is familiar. Israel and Judah are united in war against Aram. Before entering into battle, Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, wishes divine help. "Inquire, I pray thee at the word of the Lord today."[27] Although it was certain to the King of Israel that Micaiah ben Imlah was the most reliable prophet in Israel, nevertheless it was also known to him that "He doth not prophecy good concerning me but evil."[28] To counterbalance the truthful but disturbing message of

Micaiah, four hundred other prophets are invited to prophecy before the two kings.

Micaiah knows that what he has to say will not be well received. Thus at first, he delivers a false message - a message which agrees essentially with that of the false prophets. Eventually, when he is assured of his safety, Micaiah gives his true message which, as the King predicted, bodes ill for Israel and Judah.

What is significant in this tale, from the view point of our thesis, is the fact that the phrase word of the Lord is only used when a true prophecy is given. When the false prophets spoke or when Micaiah ben Imlah delivered his pleasing but inaccurate speech, the word of the Lord was missing.

The battle went according to the second message of Micaiah. "So the King died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the King in Samaria. And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; the harlots also washed themselves there; according unto the word of the Lord which He spoke."[29]

The uses of d'var adonai in I Kings are varied but all can either be categorized as fulfilled prophecy, immediate truth or direct communication from God.

II Kings:

II Kings follows the pattern of I Kings in that d'var adonai is fulfilled prophecy. Of the sixteen occurrences of

the phrase in II Kings, ten make direct references to a prophecy which came to pass.[30] The occurrences which do not make direct reference to fulfilled prophecy are part of a pattern with a fulfilled prophecy. For example, in Chapter Seven of II Kings we find such a pattern. "And Elisha said 'hear ye the word of the Lord, thus saith the Lord. Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria.'" (II Kings 7:1)

"And the people went out and spoiled the camp of the Arameans. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel according to the word of the Lord." (II Kings 7:16)

The other use of d'var adonai is that of a direct revelation from God to a prophet. In II Kings we have a full proof text linking prophecy with d'var adonai. "But Jehosaphat said: 'Is there not here a prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of the Lord by him,'and one of the King of Israel's servants answered and said: ''Elisha the son of Shaphet is here who poured water on the hands of Elijah.''And Jehosophat said: 'The word of the Lord is with him!'"[31]

I and II Chronicles:

I and II Chronicles are chiefly of value to our investigation because they confirm observations made in Samuel and Kings. For example, in the story of Micaiah ben Imlah and the lying prophets, we note that d'var adonai was never used

for a false prophecy. That is also true in II Chronicles where the story is repeated.[32] The phrase "according to the word of the Lord" is used frequently in Chronicles to tell of prophecy fulfilled. Here are some examples. "And kill the Passover lamb and sanctify yourselves or prepare for your brethren to do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses."[33] Or, "Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia..."[34]

There is one other important use of d'var adonai. In II Chronicles 34, there is related the story of the discovery of a book in the Temple. It was learned that the law in that book had been violated. The violation of this law is called "not keeping the word of the Lord."[35] A prophetess, Huldah, is then consulted in order to make right the violation of the d'var adonai.[36]

This incident is significant because it is a direct link between a written law and a word of the Lord. This might be one step toward equating Torah and d'var adonai - a connection most pronounced in Psalm 119.

I and II Chronicles, in regard to the word of the Lord, is largely a confirmation of our earlier observations.

The Twelve

To refresh the reader's memory, here is a repetition of the frequency distribution of the word of the Lord in the twelve minor prophets.

Hosea	2
Joel	1
Amos	2
Obadiah	0
Jonah	3
Micah	2
Nahum	0
Habakuk	0
Zephaniah	2
Haggai	5
Zechaniah	13
Malachi	1
total	31

In the Twelve, we have for the first time in our investigation instances of entire biblical books being characterized by the term d'var adonai. The first verse of the first chapter of Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi begin with a statement saying that either the book or the prophet's message is a word of the Lord.

In Joel and Malachi, d'var adonai occurs only in the opening verse whereas in Hosea, Micah, Jonah and Zephaniah this use of the word of the Lord comprises at least 50% of

the uses of the term.

The use of d'var adonai in this manner differs significantly from its use in the biblical books which we have heretofore investigated. In the Torah and especially in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, the word of the Lord has been used in a variety of manners, but always with the single purpose of announcing a specific, timebound message from the Lord via a prophet. In the minor prophets, while the d'var adonai is certainly used this way, especially in Amos, Haggai and Zachariah, it is used for the first time to characterize an entire literary unit.

This use of the d'var adonai leads one to suspect that the ancients were aware of what we are on the verge of discovering, namely, that the ability to use d'var adonai was a prophetic prerogative. D'var adonai was not simply another means of stating that a given message was divine in origin; it was a means of identifying the deliverer of that message as an authentic prophet.

The use of d'var adonai in the book of Jonah is an illustration of this point. It is generally agreed by modern biblical scholars that the book of Jonah is a work of fiction. It is a midrash using as its protagonist a prophet named Jonah.[37]

Now, certainly the author of the book knew that the story was fiction. Yet he wished to make the story as realistic as possible to the reader. Knowing that a genuine prophet

uses d'var adonai as a sign of his calling, the author of Jonah begins his legend with "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai saying..."[38] He continues the narrative with "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time saying..."[39]

Thus, d'var adonai is used in Jonah, certainly as a means of giving credibility to a work of fiction by giving to a character in a story a symbol associated with a genuine prophet.

There is, I feel, a possibility that the word of the Lord was put to a similar if not directly analogous use in Joel, Micah and Malachi. In these books the word of the Lord is used almost purely as an introduction. The prophets to whom the books are ascribed do not make use of the word at all. It is absent from their prophetic vocabulary. It seems credible that the editor of random collections of prophecies might have wished to justify his inclusion of these works in a canon by calling them the word of the Lord.

Neither Hosea nor Amos nor Zephaniah confine the word of the Lord to an introductory statement, though in both Hosea and Zephaniah, Chapter 1, verse 1, does contain the phrase. Hosea in a sermon which opens Chapter 4 of his book cries out "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel!"[40] This more animated use of the phrase differs from the passive way it is used in Jonah, Micah, Malachi or Joel.

Amos equates the word of the Lord with revelation in

general or perhaps more precisely as a sign of the covenant. "Behold the days will come, saith the Lord God that I will send a famine in the land not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it."[41]

One of the signs of Israel's total estrangement from God will be the cessation of prophecy, a gift which, like the love of God itself, the misguided children of Israel had begun to take for granted.

That Amos equates the ability to prophecy with the d'var adonai is made clear by his famous declaration of his call. "I was no prophet, neither was I prophet's son but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees; and the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said unto me: 'Go prophecy unto My people Israel.' Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord."[42] He is saying, "I have become a prophet by divine decree not through undergoing a pledge period. But a prophet I am nonetheless. Here is my credential - I possess a word from the Lord."

Zephaniah uses d'var adonai in a manner which we would not have expected to be as rare as it is. "Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Cherethites, the word of the Lord is against you."[43]

It appears that in the above passage the d'var adonai

is a substitute for God Himself or for His power. Perhaps here we have a genuine deanthropomorphization. However, in the light of our newly accumulated knowledge, it is safer to say that in Zephaniah 2:5, the prophet is merely saying that the words of God's spokesmen the prophets are directed against the land of the Philistines.

Haggai and Zechariah:

We have set Haggai and Zechariah apart from the other members of the Twelve because of the frequency of occurrences of d'var adonai in these two books. Eighteen of the thirty-five appearances of the phrase in the Twelve are found in the works of these two post-exilic prophets.

Haggai and Zechariah open in a style similar to many other books in the Twelve. That is, in Chapter One, verse one of each book, there are the opening few words then the statement, "....came the word of the Lord unto Haggai." and "....came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah."[44]

These superscripts, as we mentioned in connection with the other prophets, are believed by this writer to be a means of introducing what the editor wishes to present as the true message of a prophet. That is why he includes "came the word of the Lord" in the opening line of the book.

In Haggai we have the peculiarity of having five such "came the word of the Lord" expressions within two chapters of his book.[45] We can attribute such an unusual

cluster of appearances of d'var adonai only to the stylistic peculiarities of the author.

Content considered, Haggai's words make up Haggai's prophecy. He speaks of rebuilding the Temple,[46] inquiring of the priest for instruction,[47] and establishment of Zerubbabel on a glorious throne.[48]

Of these five occurrences, only one is unusual for a word of the Lord; the command telling the people to ask the priest for instruction. This is a parable of sorts and is not involved with priestly legislation. The other four uses of d'var adonai in Haggai are reminiscent of the messages of Samuel and Nathan (crowning kings, building Temples).

In Zechariah the content of the word of the Lord is extremely diverse. In one place it deals with moral righteousness,[49] in another with rebuilding the Temple,[50] another with the establishment of a theocracy.[51] There are even in the book of Zechariah so-called prophecies against nations, spoken in a word of the Lord.[52] We shall comment on the use of d'var adonai in this manner when we deal with Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Given the diversity of content of the word of the Lord in Zechariah, it is difficult to conceptualize about it. Let us here scrutinize two of the uses of the term in the book to see if we might add to our knowledge.

In Chapter One, verse seven and following, there occurs in Zechariah the first of a series of night visions.

It is introduced in this way: "Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying - 'I saw in the night....'"[53]

I cite this introduction to the night visions merely because it comes under the heading of d'var adonai. The entire series of visions with all their graphic imagery are in a word of the Lord. This supports our contention that it is not so much what is said that makes a statement a word of the Lord as who says it. A prophetic vision because it is described by a prophet is acceptable as a word of the Lord.

The second use of d'var adonai in Zechariah which bears a closer examination is found in the fourth chapter of the book. In a night vision, the prophet sees a series of mysterious images. Zechariah also sees the "angel that spoke with me." He asks the angel what all these symbols signify. The angel replies, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying: 'Not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit' saith the Lord of hosts."[54]

An analysis of the above verse confirms, I believe, our notion of what is one use of the d'var adonai. It is Zechariah who has the vision, talks with the angel and ultimately interprets the message for Zerubbabel. When the angel says, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel", he or perhaps Zechariah's prophetic insight is telling

Zechariah what to say to the ill-fated claimant to David's throne. Here as elsewhere, the d'var adonai is a prophetic message though here it is shrouded in the language of the mystic.

Summary of D'var Adonai in the Twelve

Our study of the Twelve minor prophets has revealed that d'var adonai is used in the following manner in those books:

1. As a means of describing the entire message of the prophet.
2. As a means of lending authenticity to a fictional prophet.
3. As a means of conveying whatever the prophet feels is vital.
4. As a divine gift, the absence of which will be one sign of the end.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

The phrase word of the Lord occurs but nine times in sixty-six biblical chapters called by the redactor Isaiah. The term occurs seven times in Isaiah 1-39, and once each in Isaiah 40-55 and 56-66.

One of the major problems we have been unable to solve is the relative infrequency of the word of the Lord in this lengthy and highly important book. We have seen that in Samuel and Kings d'var adonai was found regularly. Why Isaiah which is next in time should have few occurrences of the term is puzzling.

However, since we deal primarily with what we have, let us analyze these data that are available in Isaiah.

Of the nine times d'var adonai is used in Isaiah, 33 1/3% are found in Chapters 38 and 39, which are almost exact paribles to Chapter 20 of II Kings. Recall that in II Kings 20, Hezekiah the king was dying - a fact which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, beheld and then predicted. Hezekiah prays and repents and God sends a d'var adonai by Isaiah telling the King that he has another fifteen years before permanent departure.

The Babylonian potentate, hearing of Hezekiah's God-favored recovery, sends gifts. Hezekiah impresses the gift-bearers by giving them a view of the royal treasury. When Isaiah learns of this vulgar act on the part of the King,

he foretells by the word of the Lord the looting of the treasure house by those same Babylonians.

In the two versions, the one in Kings and the one in Isaiah, the word of the Lord is used identically. In both books there are predictions which eventually come to pass. They are prophecies which are fulfilled.

With one exception the other appearances of the word of the Lord in Isaiah are stock. That is they are prophecies which express the immediate concern of the prophet. For example, Isaiah says, "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scoffers. The ballad-mongers of this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said: 'We have made a covenant with death and with the nether-world are we at agreement....' Therefore this saith the Lord God."[55]

The one deviation from this existential use of d'var adonai is found in Chapter Two of Isaiah. "For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."[56] This verse which has an identical parallel in Micah[57] lends credence to our earlier speculation that in the days of the theocracy an attempt was made to fuse prophetic revelation with priestly authority. Here again, the lack of evidence confines us to mere speculation.

In Isaiah, unfortunately, we face scant data. We have the Hezekiah narrative, the few instances of existential prophecy and the one statement making Torah and d'var adonai parallel.

We must await the more fertile territory of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to bring our investigation to a fruitful halt.

Jeremiah:

At the outset of this chapter we saw that our data were to be most heavily concentrated in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. So rich are our data that we search in vain for an adequate means of conceptualizing our evidence. Indeed in the books called by the names of these two great prophets, there is no famine of the word of the Lord.

What will be attempted will be purely a summary of the occurrences of d'var adonai in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with comment only upon those occurrences which deviate from our previous discoveries.

Broadly generalizing them, we find the following categories into which we place the word of the Lord in Jeremiah.

I. The word as a sign of or a call to prophecy:

Jer. 1:1,2	Jer. 13:3	Jer. 26:1
1:4	17:15	27:18
1:9	25:3	

II. Words which came to the prophet through visions or the interpretations of symbols:

Jer. 1:11	Jer. 16:1	Jer. 32:8
1:13	18:1	35:1
13:3	27:1	43:1
13:8	32:6	

III. The word as the burden of the prophets' message.

The existential word of the Lord.

Jer. 2:1	Jer. 9:19	Jer. 18:5	Jer. 33:23
2:4	9:19	21:1	34:1
2:31	10:1	22:2	34:4
6:10	13:8	22:29	34:12
7:1	14:1	29:30	37:6
8:8-9	17:20	30:1	39:15
			40:1
			42:7

IV. The word as an answer to a prophet's prayer.

Jer. 17:15	Jer. 33:23
33:1	
33:19	

V. The word versus the nation.

Jer. 31:10	Jer. 47:1
46:1	49:34

VI. Jeremiah and the editors' attitude toward the word of the Lord.

Jer. 20:8	Jer. 36:27
25:3	37:2
27:18	43:1
32:8	

A perusal of these categories is revealing. It tells us that though Jeremiah used the word of the Lord in several ways, one way predominated numerically. In the mouth of Jeremiah as in the mouths of his predecessors the word of the Lord was existential. By "existential" I mean "timely", "vital", "Containing the essence of the prophetic analysis of an historical situation". Every prophet used the d'var adonai in this way; Jeremiah being more vital than most, uses it more often.

I think no lengthy comment is needed on the use of d'var adonai as either symbol of prophecy or as the result of a prophet's ability to hear God where others see only a potter's clay or an ox's yoke. We have encountered this before. Just as the ability to use the word of the Lord is a prophet's right, so is his ability to find that word in the commonplace a prophet's duty.

What must occupy our thoughts is Jeremiah's peculiar attitude toward the word of the Lord. Jeremiah was intensely human. He left autobiographical material. He suffered greatly. He often had misgivings, but he believed in the word of the Lord just as he believed in the Lord. His attitude toward the divine gift is revealing. First - he cherished the d'var adonai as the mark of the true prophet. "But if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts...."[58] Occasionally

Jeremiah chafed in his role. "For as often as I speak I cry out, I cry: Violence and spoil. Because the word of the Lord is made a reproach unto me and a derision all the day."[59] He saw in the people's attitude toward him and his message a rejection of God. "Behold the word of the Lord is become a reproach unto them. They have no delight in it."[60] To Jeremiah the word of the Lord was truth, truth to be spoken by God's servants, the prophets.

Our study of Jeremiah concludes with a note on the prophecies concerning the nations which are found in his book. Some scholars hold that these messages do not belong to Jeremiah, and that true authors are lost. Yet, each of these diatribes begin with "The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet...." Here, as in Jonah and very likely in many other works attributed to prophets, we have an editor's attempt to lend authenticity to an anonymous author' work. Adding word of the Lord as well as Jeremiah's name to the prophecy, doubles the realism of the appended work.

Ezekiel:

We conclude our analysis of the word of the Lord by examining closely its occurrences in the book of Ezekiel. Following the procedure we used in analyzing Jeremiah, we shall categorize the word of the Lord in Ezekiel and then comment upon any unusual uses of the term.

I. The word of the Lord as symbol of prophecy.

Ezekiel 1:2,3
3:16
21:6

II. Word of the Lord as existential message.

Ezek 7:1	Ezek 13:1	Ezek 20:2	Ezek 24:15
11:14	14:2	21:13	33:1
12:1	14:12	22:1	33:23
12:8	16:1	22:17	34:1
12:21	16:35	22:23	36:1
12:26	17:11	23:1	36:4
6:3			36:16
			37:15

III. The word of the Lord versus the nations.

Ezek 25:1	Ezek 29:1	Ezek 32:1
26:1	29:17	32:17
28:1	30:1	35:1
28:11	30:20	38:1
28:20	31:1	25:3

IV. The word of the Lord which came to Ezek. through visions or interpretation of symbols.

Ezek 15:1	Ezek 18:1	Ezek 21:23	Ezek 24:1
17:1	21:1	23:1	24:15

Here again a frequency distribution is most enlightening. Although Ezekiel contains more words of the Lord than any single book in the Bible, we see from our categorization that variety of usage does not highlight the book.

In Ezekiel, unquestionably the word of the Lord is existential. Even when Ezekiel utilizes symbols or sees visions, it is always with the purpose of illustrating a current problem.

From this point of view, if we accept the scholarly opinion which holds that with minor exceptions the book is a unit, Ezekiel is the best possible illustration of what we mean by "existential".

Prior to the mass exile of the Jews from Palestine in 586, the d'var adonai in Ezekiel was directed at the evil doers among the inhabitants thereof. "And it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came unto me saying: 'Son of man, I have appointed thee a watchman unto the house of Israel and when thou shalt hear a word from Me thou shalt give them warning.'"[61]

When Israel was politically no more and the people cried aloud, "How shall we live?", the word of the Lord by Ezekiel had this to say: "You people are not at fault. It was your leaders. You poor sheep were led astray by careless shepherds. Behold here am I, and I will search for my sheep and seek them out."[62] The thirty-sixth chapter of the book, a word of the Lord speech, is a clear example of the changing

content of the d'var adonai when the historical situation has changed.

Even the so-called oracles against the nations which are not attributed to Ezekiel by scholars, have existential value. They serve to lift the flagging spirits of a weary people. That they begin with "Hear the word of the Lord" supports our contention that anonymous prophetic material is given a d'var adonai superscript to lend it an aura of authenticity. That the term can be used in such a manner illustrates, I think, its association with no one particular message, merely with a class of men, prophets, and with one type of material - existential truth.

Summary and Conclusion to Chapter Two

In this chapter we began with a frequency distribution of the occurrences of the word of the Lord in the Bible. From this distribution, we noted immediately that our data were richest in a limited number of books. We resolved to deal first with those biblical books where the data were sparsest and then to do a book by book analysis of those segments of the Bible which had the bulk of the d'var adonai material.

We speculated on the basis of the Torah and the Writings that d'var adonai was associated with prophets and that perhaps eventually, due to historical developments, it became linked to the priestly concept of Torah. We emphasized the element of speculation involved in such a theory.

From Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles we learned that the word of the Lord was used in a multitude of ways but that certain patterns emerged:

1. It was nearly always spoken by a prophet.
2. It was often used to refer to a prophecy that was fulfilled.
3. It was always regarded as truth and never used when the truth was not spoken.
4. There was no one type of message which a prophet delivered in the name of the word of the Lord.

We then examined the Twelve minor prophets and concluded:

1. That d'var adonai added to the superscript of prophetic works assured the reader that the work was prophetic and that the message in the work was authentic.
2. That no one message could be tied to a d'var adonai but that it represented whatever the prophet deemed to be historically urgent. We called that use of the term "existential".
3. That the d'var adonai was viewed by the prophets as a divine gift, the absence of which was a sign of the end.

Although close to half of our data was found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we learned that in Isaiah the word of the Lord was extremely rare. We also learned that for all its great frequency in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, barely any of its uses in those two books deviated from the patterns of usage which we discovered in the other books of the Bible.

In Jeremiah we found that the prophet was conscious of his possession of that divine gift.

Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah had the great ability to hear the word of the Lord where others less perceptive saw only seething pots or potters' clay or the yoke of an ox.

Neither of these prophets used the d'var adonai to refer to prophecy fulfilled, a use definitely present in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel each uses the word of the Lord

in the way which we have called "existential". It is this way of hearing the word of the Lord which predominates. It is this use, along with the others which we have discovered, which must be borne in mind when we try to find the relationship between the word of the Lord and myth in the Bible.

CHAPTER THREE

After examining closely each occurrence of the word of the Lord in its context in Scripture, the reader is entitled to raise this vital question: Is the word of the Lord myth?

It is hoped that after reading the first chapter of this thesis, the reader is willing to admit that there is a problem in this question. Taking myth in its most literal sense, that is, a story of the gods, the word of the Lord is not myth. Unless we say that nearly the entire Bible, since it is a story of a God, is myth, it is not correct to call d'var adonai myth in the traditional sense.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to decide whether or not virtually the entire Bible, vis a vis its being a story about a God, is myth. Yet let me speculate, Strictly speaking, the Bible is not really a story of the gods in a traditional sense. An examination, for example, of every creation story extant reveals a crucial difference from the Genesis account of the beginning. In every other creation story a god is created or the world is created out of a god.[1] (See Kaufman, Gaster) In a sense then, even creation is part of a god's biography.

The Genesis creation (both versions considered) tells nothing explicitly about Yahweh. The reader must infer what Yahweh is like, why he created the world, why he did anything, from the text. That is why the Midrash to Genesis is more

mythological in the traditional sense of the word. The Bible is the story of man, particularly of Hebrew man, with reference to a God. Granted that there are passages descriptive of God's throne, arguments between man and God, miracles performed by God; nevertheless, using the old meaning of myth, it is difficult to say that the Bible is a mythological document.

Holding to this premise, it would then become impossible to state that the d'var adonai is myth. After our content analysis it is apparent that the word of the Lord, a phrase used infrequently enough and with a certain predictability, does not have an existence of its own. Although in Genesis the world was created by speech, it was not created by d'var adonai.

The prophets, who use the phrase in the majority of its 242 occurrences, do not use it to change the natural order, to curse or to bless. Granted that words in the Ancient Near East have power, does our evidence reveal that d'var adonai caused fear and trembling? The content of the message delivered as being the word of the Lord may have evoked a variety of responses, but the expression, word of the Lord itself was not a magical formula. When a prophet uttered "hear the word of the Lord," it did not seem to be the equivalent of the Shem m'phorash in Rabbinic legend.

As a matter of fact, d'var adonai does not seem to be involved in legend at all. When Elijah and Elisha resur-

rect, they do not say, "Hear the word of the Lord, O thou departed one, arise, take on life."

If Jonah is legend or even myth, d'var adonai is probably included to give the story credibility. The d'var adonai came to Jonah twice. He was an authentic prophet. This is why d'var adonai is part of the story of Jonah.

D'var adonai is not descriptive of God. It is not endowed with an existence of its own. It has existence by means of a prophet. It is not a magical formula. Possession of the word of the Lord may afford the prophet respect. It does not afford him actual power. Jeremiah used the davar more than any single individual. Jeremiah sat in prison. He did not or could not call upon the d'var adonai to save him.

However, our first chapter revealed that the concept myth is both broader and deeper than the way it was used in the past. We have seen that myth to the modern anthropologist, theologian, psychologist and philosopher is more than a mere "story of the gods".

We have spelled out in some detail in Chapter One what we believed to be cogent modern theories of myth. In the conclusion of that chapter we defined myth as a verbal

response to man's finitude which grows out of his ability to use metaphor, which is held sacred by a group and which is lived as reality and not metaphor.

Let us here briefly review all that has been said about myth in Chapter One.

There are in the human situation certain givens. That is, in every known society there have been and are events that are unexplainable, thoughts that are incommunicable, feelings that are inexpressible. However, the fact that there are unexplainable events, incommunicable thoughts and inexpressible feelings does not mean that man will not attempt to explain, communicate and express these events, thoughts and feelings.

Each man is unique, the product of a certain combination of genes, of a peculiar environment. Yet, each man shares with all others those biological characteristics which by definition make him human and those social-psychological characteristics which enable him to take his place in groups. Every group is time bound.

Among the inexplainable, incommunicable, inexpressible givens in the human situation, seems to be one called anxiety (free floating fear). This is characteristic of every human being, perhaps as a result of his biological make-up, perhaps as a result of his being wrenched free from nature. Now, this anxiety may be different in every individual; yet, by virtue of the fact that each individual shares the same

biology and within a given group more or less the same environment, it is possible for a solution to the problem of this core anxiety, spawned by an individual or a sub-group in a culture to be accepted as amenable to all or nearly all the individuals in that culture.

Broadly gleaning from those men with whom Chapter One dealt (Durkheim, Kluckhohn, Freud, Jung, the neo-Freudians, Cassirer and Tillich), we feel that we are justified in offering this partial explanation of the origin and uses of myth. Myth is a verbal attempt to express what the subculture has deemed to be the explanation of the inexplainable, the communication of the incommunicable, the expression of the inexpressible. It is the culture's or subculture's attempt to eliminate anxiety by giving it a referent. Myth is metaphor, but it is metaphor believed in as real. It is experienced as reality, not as metaphor. The second it becomes known as metaphor, it ceases to be myth.

According to the great anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, "Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told, but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction, such as we read today in a novel, but it is a living reality believed to have once happened in primeval times and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. This myth is to the savage, what to a fully believing Christian is the Biblical story of creation, of the Fall, and the

Redemption by Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross."[2]

In the Bible we are a long way from primitive man. However, since we have ample evidence from our own day of people believing in myth as reality and not metaphor, we may make the assumption that in biblical days myth had much the same function to biblical man as it had to primitive man and has to modern man. Because we have never met biblical man, this is only an assumption. Our whole thesis rests on this assumption, namely, that biblical man perceived myth as we and the primitives do. This is, of course, improvable.

Assuming that biblical man uses myth in the same way as primitive and contemporary man, we are finally prepared to make a statement on d'var adonai as myth.

Since the use of d'var adonai is limited almost exclusively to prophets or to books credited to prophets, perhaps a word or two ought to be said about the role of the prophet in biblical Palestine. I realize that everything I will say about the prophetic role is challengeable, but say it I must.

Whether he belonged to a guild or whether he was not associated with a guild, a prophet in the Bible was a spokesman for a god. When he spoke, a god was his inspiration. For the prophet to have a credulous audience the people to whom he spoke must either have believed in the existence of the god the prophet claimed to represent, or at least they must have been unwilling to have denied that god's existence.

Despite their backsliding and profanation of all that the prophets held to be sacred, there is, to my knowledge, not a single instance in the entire Bible of a denial of Yahweh's existence by an Israelite. As a matter of fact, at the time prior to the exile, "The people of Israel trusted their God and with good reason. They remembered his hand outstretched over Egypt, his eruption against the Philistines at Perazim....Trusting God, his people were at ease in Zion."[3]

Sinners the Israelites may have been, but atheists they certainly were not! Since the time of Samuel, at the latest, men called prophets existed. These men were acknowledged to be in communication with Yahweh. Yahweh, if not the sole God, was certainly one of the most vital in the life of the Hebrews. His cult, his history, his tradition, his laws, his priests, in the South his King, were organizing features in the lives of the Hebrew. In short, Yahweh was the organizing principle in Jewish life in biblical Palestine. Yahweh, this organizing principle, may have changed. In modern times Yahweh may merely have become the metaphor in description of the Ultimate Concern in Jewish culture. But to the people of the Bible, Yahweh was not metaphor. He was God or a god. When he became a god and not God he ceased to be Ultimate Concern. When perversion of justice, profanation of cult, violations in any manner showed the prophets that Yahweh ceased to be foremost in the minds of people, they spoke out. The message they delivered was called a <u>word of</u>

the Lord, a d'var Yahweh. Often what the prophets said would come to pass, did. This gave credibility to the d'var adonai. However, our study of myth has revealed that what is believed in does not have to be objectively true. If it serves an anxiety reducing function, no coherence with objective reality is necessary.

The editors of the Bible, those who wrote the superscripts to those prophetic books that begin with the "word of the Lord," who inserted the so-called prophecies to the nations into the books of the literary prophets and who began these prophecies with "d'var adonai" were probably utilizing the concept of the word of the Lord to lend authenticity to their work.

In other words, men called prophets were constantly exhorting the people to heed their message. These messages contained the prophetic analyses of those situations where Yahweh had ceased being the Ultimate Concern. It is likely that many, if not all, prophets used the expression "word of the Lord." However, this is speculation. Nevertheless, those prophets who survived the test of time used the term d'var adonai. The people, at least those who preserved the works of these prophets, assumed that the d'var adonai was the authentic message of Yahweh. It is unnecessary to say that the prophets themselves believed that they were actually in possession of a message from the Lord.

Prophets who claimed to have the word of the Lord

were imprisoned, harrassed and often ignored, but they were never deemed insane. They were never denied the prerogative of proclaiming their message. They may have been accused of sedition or they may have been driven away, but they were never forced to prove that they were prophets.

This indicates, it seems, that d'var adonai, like prophecy, like cult, like ritual, was part of the Yahweh complex. The Yahweh complex was the Hebrew answer to the unexplainable, the incommunicable, the inexpressible.

However, the function of d'var adonai was unique in this complex. For a long period in Jewish history, it alone was responsible for keeping the religion of Yahweh on the level of Ultimate Concern. The cult was conservative. Guild prophets probably tended to be conservative. The d'var adonai, or as our study has revealed, the timely word, the existential message, was that element in biblical Judaism or rather was symbolic of that element in biblical Judaism which turned a religion of a god into the religion of God[1]

Those of us who live over two thousand years later can say with certainty that it was the genius of the prophets which transformed a tribal cult to a universal faith. To us the word of the Lord is not myth, but metaphor. To the prophet of Yahweh compelled, despite the gravest personal dangers, to deliver the word of the Lord, the davar was not metaphor, but myth; reality lived, immediate, unrelenting truth.

FOOTNOTES

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FOOTNOTES

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1. Gen. 15:1
   15:4

2. Exodus 9:20
   9:21

3. Num. 15:31

4. Deut. 5:5

5. Joshua 8:8

6. Judges 3:20

7. Psalms 33:4
   33:6

   Daniel 9:1-2

   Ezra 1:1

Chapter Two
(cont.)

8. I Sam. 15:10-13

9. I Sam. 3:21
9:27
10:1

10. II Sam. 7:4
12:9
24:11

11. II Sam. 16:23

12. I Kings 6:11

13. I Kings 2:27

14. I Kings 21:17
21:28
22:4
16:1-3
16:7

15. I Kings 13:1

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17. I Kings 13:8,9

18. I Kings 13:11

19. I Kings 13:17

20. I Kings 13:18-22

21. I Kings 13:20-24

22. I Kings 16:1-3
16:7
16:12
16:34

23. I Kings 17:2
17:8
18:1
19:9
21:17
21:28

24. I Kings 17:5
17:16
18:31

25. I Kings 17:16
18:31

26. I Kings 17:24

27. I Kings 22:5

28. I Kings 22:8

29. I Kings 22:37

30. II Kings 1:17
4:44
7:16
9:26
10:10
10:17
14:25
23:16
24:2

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38. Jonah 1:1

39. Jonah 3:1

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44. Haggai 1:1
Zechariah 1:1

45. Haggai 1:1
1:3
2:1
2:10
2:20

46. Haggai 1:1
1:3
2:1

47. Haggai 2:10

48. Haggai 2:20

49. Zechariah 1:1ff
7:8

50. Zechariah 4:8

51. Zechariah 6:9ff

52. Zechariah 9:1
12:1

53. Zechariah 1:7-8

54. Zechariah 4:6

55. Isaiah 28:14,16

56. Isaiah 2:3

57. Micah 4:2

58. Jeremiah 27:18

59. Jeremiah 20:8

60. Jeremiah 6:10

61. Ezekiel 3:16

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FOOTNOTES

Chapter Three

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