

JOSEPHUS' PORTRAIT OF JEROBOAM

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A number of studies have been published of Josephus' portraits of biblical heroes, wherein we see that Josephus systematically aggrandizes their qualities of good birth, handsomeness, and the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, and piety.¹ But how does he depict biblical rogues?

Three Israelite kings whose wickedness is emphasized in the biblical record—namely, Jeroboam I, Ahab, and Manasseh—illustrate well the kind of treatment given by Josephus to such rogues. Our main attention in this essay is directed toward Josephus' depiction and characterization of Jeroboam, but first a survey of rabbinic thought concerning the above-mentioned three monarchs, plus an overview of Josephus' portrayal of them, will be *apropos*. Such an introduction will establish a frame of reference that is useful in describing and assessing the further details of Josephus' treatment of Jeroboam.

¹"Abraham the Greek Philosopher in Josephus," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 99 (1968): 143-156; "Abraham the General in Josephus," *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn et al. (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 43-49; "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: the 'Aqedah,'" *JQR* 75 (1984-85): 212-252; "Josephus' Portrait of Jacob," *JQR* 79 (1988-89): 101-151; "Josephus' Portrait of Joseph," *RB* 99 (1992): 379-417, 504-528; "Josephus' Portrait of Moses," *JQR* 82 (1991-92): 285-328; "Josephus' Portrait of Joshua," *HTR* 82 (1989): 351-376; "Josephus' Version of Samson," *JSJ* 19 (1988): 171-214; "Josephus' Portrait of Saul," *HUCA* 53 (1982): 45-99; "Josephus' Portrait of David," *HUCA* 60 (1989): 129-174; "Josephus as an Apologist to the Greco-Roman World: His Portrait of Solomon," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Elisabeth S. Fiorenza (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1976), 69-98; "Hellenizations in Josephus' Version of Esther," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970): 143-170; and, for an overall survey, "Use, Authority, and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, eds. Martin J. Mulder and Harry Sysling, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, Sect. 2, vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), 455-518.

1. *Introduction: Characterization of Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh in Rabbinic Thought and in Josephus*

The Rabbinic Evaluation

In the Mishnah, a codification of oral rabbinic tradition that was brought together about a century after Josephus' death, Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh are depicted as apparently so wicked that even though all Israelites are to have a share in the world to come, these kings have forfeited their share (*m. Sanh.* 10:1, 2). It is fair to assume that the reader of the Bible would conclude that of these three kings, the most reprehensible by far were Ahab and Manasseh. One thinks, for example, of the declaration in 1 Kgs 16:33 that Ahab did more to provoke the Lord to anger than had all the kings of Israel that were before him, as well as the statement that Manasseh "shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem [with it] from one end to another" (2 Kgs 21:16).

The rabbis also have vivid traditions illustrating the wickedness of Ahab and Manasseh, as well as Jeroboam. Thus, for instance, according to Rabbi Johanan, there was no furrow where Ahab did not plant an idol and worship it. Rabbi Johanan goes on to remark that the minor transgressions committed by Ahab were equal to the gravest ones committed by Jeroboam (*b. Sanh.* 102b). As for Manasseh, this king eliminated the name of the Lord from the Torah (*b. Sanh.* 103b) and delivered public lectures whose sole purpose was to ridicule the Torah; moreover, he violated his own sister (*b. Sanh.* 103b) and condemned his own grandfather, Isaiah, to death (*b. Yebam.* 49b).

And yet, the rabbis had ambivalent feelings about both Ahab and Manasseh. Thus, the same Rabbi Johanan who condemned Ahab so sharply asserts that this Israelite monarch merited a reign of twenty-two years because he honored the Torah, which was given in the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*b. Sanh.* 102b). Moreover, in a society in which exegetical scholarship was highly valued, he is said to have had the acumen to expound the difficult and technical book of Leviticus in eighty-five different ways (*b. Sanh.* 103b). There is, as well, a tradition to the effect that because Ahab used his great wealth to benefit scholars, half of his sins were forgiven.

As to Manasseh, he is depicted as a great scholar who could interpret Leviticus in fifty-five different ways, corresponding to the years of his reign (*b. Sanh.* 103b). He is also said to have appeared

to Rabbi Ashi, to whom he justified his behavior as being due to the corrupt atmosphere of his times. Indeed, the second-century Rabbi Judah bar Ilai argues that Manasseh did have a share in the world to come because he repented (*m. Sanh.* 10:2).

The rabbis likewise were ambivalent concerning Jeroboam. An anonymous statement credits him with having interpreted Leviticus in no fewer than 103 ways, thus surpassing even Ahab and Manasseh (*b. Sanh.* 103b). He is depicted as a true disciple of the prophet Ahijah, with whom he was in the habit of discussing secret lore of the Torah—lore whose existence was wholly unknown to others (*b. Sanh.* 102a). On an occasion when the angels objected that it was unconscionable to reveal the secrets of the Torah to a man who was going to set up two calves to be worshiped, the Lord asked them whether Jeroboam was at that moment righteous or wicked. When they answered that he was righteous, the Lord's retort was that he deals with persons as they are, not as they will be.

Moreover, we are told in a midrash (*Midr. Ps* 5:55) that Jeroboam's doctrine was as pure as the new garment which Ahijah wore when he met the king (1 Kgs 11:29). Inasmuch as modesty was a preeminent virtue of Moses (Num 12:3), whom the Bible calls the greatest prophet who ever lived (Deut 34:10), there is a distinct compliment of Jeroboam in the rabbinic view that at first, because of his poverty, Jeroboam refused the crown offered him, accepting it only when the people (or, according to some, the prophet Ahijah) bestowed great wealth upon him (*Aggadat Shir Ha-Shirim* 95).²

Jeroboam is compared most favorably with King Solomon in that he rebuked Solomon, who, in order to exact tolls for the benefit of Pharaoh's daughter whom he had married, closed the breaches which David had made in the walls of Jerusalem to allow pilgrims ready access to the city on festival days; consequently Jeroboam is said to have been rewarded with kingship (*b. Sanh.* 101b). That Jeroboam had a reputation for piety may also be inferred from a scenario recorded in the name of the second-century Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, wherein Jeroboam asked his righteous counselors whether they would approve of all that he commanded; when they replied in the affirmative, he asked them whether they would execute his commands even to worship idols, whereupon

²Cited by Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1928), 307, note 9.

they countered that a man like Jeroboam would certainly not serve idols and that he was merely testing them (*b. Sanh.* 101b). Another scenario shifts the blame for the sin of idolatry from Jeroboam to the people.³ Indeed, it was they who, intoxicated at the coronation of Jeroboam, urged him to erect idols, whereas he, unsure that they would not change their minds upon becoming sober, delayed his decision until the following day.

And yet, rabbinic tradition, citing as its source the biblical passage in 1 Kgs 13:34 that the house of Jeroboam would be destroyed from off the face of the earth, also condemned Jeroboam as having lost his portion in the world to come (*m. Sanh.* 10:2), a point already noted. Indeed, he is presented as the prototype of the leader who not only sinned himself but, more importantly, caused the community to sin, so that the sin of the community was assigned to him. Thus he is the very antithesis of the true leader, Moses, who attained merit and who bestowed merit upon the community so that the merit of the community was assigned to his credit (*m. 'Abot* 5:18).

In still another respect Jeroboam was depicted by the rabbis as an anti-Moses, so to speak, because of his conceit (*b. Sanh.* 101b). This is the very opposite of the quality of modesty that one rabbinic view (already noted above) assigned to him. In 1 Kgs 12:26-27 Jeroboam expresses fear that the people of his kingdom, if permitted to go to Jerusalem to sacrifice, may turn to his rival, Rehoboam, the king of Judah, who was ruling there. Thus we have the irony, which the rabbis are quick to point out, that Jeroboam, who had once even courageously opposed King Solomon in order to encourage pilgrimages to Jerusalem, now created barriers between the people and the Temple (*y. 'Abod. Zar.* 1.1.39b; *b. Sanh.* 101b).

Again, the scenario depicting Jeroboam as trying to delay the construction of the idols demanded by the people declares as well that when he submitted to their demands he did so on condition that the members of the Sanhedrin be killed⁴ (or, according to others, removed from office) so that worship of the idols could be accomplished without fear. He then sent emissaries throughout the land, presenting the argument that inasmuch as the Hebrew generation of the wilderness, which was the most illustrious of all,

³See Ginzberg, 6:306, note 9.

⁴*Ibid.*

had worshiped the golden calf without being punished severely, there should be no fear to implement a similar practice now. When these decrees were ignored by the people, Jeroboam is said to have posted guards at the borders with Judah, and these guards had orders to put to death any persons attempting to go to Jerusalem (*t. Ta'anit* 4.7); however, the king's own son disobeyed the order (*m. Mored Qatan* 28b). Moreover, the priests whom Jeroboam appointed for his shrines were from the dregs of his people, inasmuch as others declined the appointment. Indeed, not only did Jeroboam abolish the three pilgrimage festivals but he also went so far as to make an end to the observance of the Sabbath (*y. 'Abod. Zar.* 1.39b; cf. Jerome on Hosea 7.4-7).

The third-century Rabbi Johanan, to be sure, asks why, if the minor transgressions committed by Ahab were equal to the gravest ones committed by Jeroboam, Scripture makes Jeroboam rather than Ahab the exemplar of sin (*b. Sanh.* 102b). Rabbi Johanan's answer is that Jeroboam was the first to corrupt his people.

Josephus' Evaluation

In view of such ambivalence on the part of the rabbis with regard to Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh, what stance did Josephus adopt concerning these paragons of wickedness?⁵ In his

⁵That Josephus was acquainted with traditions recorded in later rabbinic tradition is evident from his remarks on his excellent education, presumably in the legal and aggadic traditions of Judaism, which he received in his native city of Jerusalem, which was then the center of Jewish learning (*Life* 8-9). Josephus says that he received a reputation for his excellent memory and understanding (*μνήμη τε καὶ σύνεσις*) and that when he was only fourteen years of age he already had won universal applause for his love of learning (*φιλογράμματον*). While it is probably true that Josephus is not averse to boasting, he had so many enemies that it seems unlikely that he would have made such broad claims unless there were some basis to them. See Bernard J. Bamberger, "The Dating of Aggadic Materials," *JBL* 68 (1949): 115-123, who has argued convincingly that the Talmud and Midrashim are compilations of traditional material which had existed orally for a considerable time before they were written down. He notes that extrarabbinic sources, notably the LXX, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic Jewish writings, and the New Testament—all apparently older than rabbinic writings in their present form—contain innumerable parallels to the rabbinic aggadah. For example, inasmuch as the second-century Rabbi Meir (*Megillah* 13a) states, as does the LXX (*Est* 2:7), that Mordecai had married Esther, it is more likely that the translators of the LXX were acquainted with this ancient tradition than that Rabbi Meir consulted the LXX (if he consulted a Greek translation, it would surely have been Aquila's, which does not

portrait of Ahab, Josephus treads a tightrope. On the one hand, he could not deny the negative traits that were assigned to this king in the Bible and expanded upon in the rabbinic tradition. On the other hand, like the rabbis, he saw positive virtues in Ahab. In particular, Josephus shifted the blame to Ahab's role-model, Jeroboam (*Ant.* 8.317) and to his wife Jezebel (*Ant.* 8.318). Even in the incident with Naboth, Ahab is at least partly exculpated because he had used mild words with Naboth and yet had been insulted (*Ant.* 8.356). Moreover, as with his portraits of Saul and of David, Josephus' stress is on Ahab's remorse (*Ant.* 8.361).

The fact that the Jews, and Josephus in particular, had been accused of being cowards makes all the more meaningful the presentation of Ahab as a great tactician and a brave leader who was, above all, concerned for his people (*Ant.* 8.370). This we see especially in his eagerness to keep up the morale of his soldiers even after he has been gravely wounded (*Ant.* 8.415). Likewise, in his diplomatic activities Ahab is depicted more honorably by Josephus than he is portrayed in the Bible (*Ant.* 8.398). Finally, in a rare editorial comment, Josephus goes out of his way to absolve Ahab of blame for listening to a false prophet; rather it is inexorable and inevitable Fate that is blamed (*Ant.* 8.409), even as it is the culprit in determining the end of the good king Josiah (*Ant.* 10.76).

Likewise in his portrait of Manasseh, Josephus seems to go out of his way to rehabilitate this monarch. In order not to offend his idol-worshipping, non-Jewish readers, Josephus omits the specifics of Manasseh's introduction of the worship of pagan gods (*Ant.* 10.37, 42); rather, he magnifies the king's sins in killing the righteous men among the Jews and the prophets (*Ant.* 10.38). In details that go beyond the Bible account, we are told of Manasseh's major achievements in improving the city of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 10.44).

have this tradition). Similarly, the plague of 'arob is understood by the second-century Rabbi Nehemiah to consist of stinging insects (*Exodus Rabbah* 11:3), whereas the Hebrew is generally understood to refer to varied wild beasts; again, this is the explanation of the LXX (*Exod* 8:17). Moreover, one of the paintings of the third-century C.E. Dura Europos synagogue depicts Hiel (1 Kgs 16:34), a confederate of the priests of Baal, crouching beneath the altar while a snake approaches to bite him; but such a story is not mentioned in a Hebrew source until much later midrashim (*Exodus Rabbah* 15:15, *Pesiqta Rabbati* 4:13a) and not fully until the thirteenth-century *Yalqut* (on 1 Kgs 18:26). Hence that tradition must have been more ancient. For further examples see Salomo Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus* (Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1930).

Again, in an extrabiblical addition, we hear that the degree of Manasseh's repentance was such that he was accounted a blessed and enviable man (*Ant.* 10.45).

When it comes to Jeroboam, however, Josephus finds no redeeming features. Indeed, Josephus seems to go out of his way to stress this king's sinfulness. As is well known, despite Josephus' disavowal of adding to or subtracting from the Scripture (*Ant.* 1.17), he does so frequently.⁶

One indication of the amount of interest that a given personality has for Josephus may be seen in the sheer amount of space that he devotes to that personality. Thus Josephus has a ratio of 2.70 in his account of Saul as compared with the Hebrew text,⁷ 2.00 for Joseph, 1.95 for David, 1.54 for Samson, 1.52 for Elijah, 1.32 for Daniel, 1.20 for Ezra (.72 as compared with the Greek text of 1 Esdras, which was, apparently, Josephus' source), .97 for Hezekiah, and .24 for Nehemiah. For Manasseh the ratio is only .91 (or, discounting the duplicate material in 2 Chronicles, 1.26), for Ahab the ratio is 1.98, and for Jeroboam (*Ant.* 8.205-245, 265-287 [463 lines] vs. 1 Kgs 11:26-40, 12:1-14:20, 2 Chron 13:1-20 [214 lines]) it is even greater—2.16 (1.29 as compared with the LXX text [360 lines]).⁸ How can we explain this great attention and the severe, unmitigated, criticism of Jeroboam by Josephus?

2. *The Negative Qualities of Jeroboam*

Jeroboam's Lack of Wisdom

Of the cardinal virtues, wisdom is set forth both in Plato's *Republic* and in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* as the preeminent quality of a leader. Connected with this, as we perceive in Thucydides' portrait of the ideal statesman, Pericles, is the ability to persuade the masses (2.60). Even in the case of Moses, who, according to the Bible (Exod 4:10 and 6:12), had a speech impediment, Josephus is careful to omit such references and, in his

⁶See my "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 466-470.

⁷For Josephus I have used the Loeb Classical Library text. For the Hebrew text I have used the standard edition with the commentary of Meir Loeb Malbim (New York: Friedman, n.d.).

⁸That Josephus used the LXX text may be seen in *Ant.* 8.236, where he follows the LXX in reading "his sons" rather than the Hebrew (1 Kgs 13:11), which reads "his son."

final encomium (*Ant.* 4.328), goes out of his way to declare that Moses found favor in every way in speaking to (εἰπεῖν) and in addressing (ὁμιλῆσαι) a crowd.⁹

The perversion of speech is demagoguery, as we see particularly in Plato's vivid portraits of sophists and demagogues in his allegories of the ship (*Rep.* 6.488) and of the beast (*Rep.* 6.492) and in Thucydides' portraits of Cleon (3.36-40) and of Alcibiades (6.15-18). In Josephus, the antithesis to the proper use of speech is witnessed in Korah (*Ant.* 4.14), who is singled out as a capable speaker (ικανός . . . εἰπεν), a person very convincing, in a perverse way, in addressing a crowd (δήμοις ὁμιλεῖν πιθανώτατος). Likewise, whereas in 1 Kgs 12:30 there is mention of Jeroboam's action in setting up calves at Bethel and Dan, in Josephus it is by spoken words that Jeroboam misleads the people and causes them to transgress the laws (*Ant.* 8.229). Such demagoguery, according to Josephus in an editorial remark, was the beginning of the Jews' misfortunes and led to their defeat in war and their being taken captive by other peoples.

Again, like the beast in Plato's parable (*Rep.* 6.492), Jeroboam was deceived by flattery, since the false prophet's goal was merely to please the king (πρὸς ἡδονήν).

Jeroboam's Intemperate Nature

Another of the cardinal virtues, temperance, is a recurring motif in Josephus.¹⁰ He states, for example, that shortly before Moses' death the Israelites had to be exhorted by Moses to learn moderation (σωφρονέω), and that Moses himself made mention of his own constraint in refraining from wrath at the time when he felt most aggrieved by the Israelites (*Ant.* 4.189). E. R. Goodenough has noted that Hellenistic theorists, such as Ecphantus, insisted that for a ruler to be truly so, he must begin with self-discipline, inasmuch as otherwise he would be unable to teach self-control to his subjects.¹¹ Indeed, in his final eulogy of Moses, Josephus

⁹On the importance of the ability to persuade, see my "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 490.

¹⁰See my "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 491-492; "Josephus' Portrait of Joshua," 361-362, "Josephus' Version of Samson," 190, "Josephus' Portrait of Saul," 79-82, and "Josephus' Portrait of David," 147-149.

¹¹Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928): 95.

remarks on his thorough control or command of his passions, using here a military term (**ἀντοκράτωρ**) which indicates that Moses was commander-in-chief of his emotions, was able to act according to his own choice, was completely independent, and exercised absolute control (*Ant.* 4.328). The opposite of temperance is lack of control, which is akin to lack of reflection (**λογισμός**), as illustrated, for example, by Jephthah in failing to consider what might result from his rash vow (*Ant.* 5.266).

In Josephus' view, hot-headedness was the defining characteristic of the revolutionaries against Rome. This we can see, for instance, in his remark that one of the elements provoking the revolution was the action by some of the more hot-headed (**οἱ θερμότεροι**) of the Jewish youths in attacking the builders of workshops and trying to disrupt operators on a site next to the synagogue in Caesarea, where there was a large non-Jewish population living side by side with the Jews (*War* 2.286). A similar characterization of hot-bloodedness (**θερμότερους**) is made of the Zealots, who plunged boldly into the heart of the city of Jerusalem and opened the gates to their allies, the Idumaeans (*War* 4.292). The terminology is used again as Josephus, in connection with his expression of abhorrence of civil war, mentions revolutionaries who thoughtlessly rushed into arms, their hands yet hot (**θερμάς**) with the blood of their countrymen (*War* 6.122). The same characteristic of hot-bloodedness is also seen in the advice given by those in Titus' council of war who were more hot-headed (**θερμότεροις**) and who advocated bringing up Titus' entire force to attempt to carry the wall of Jerusalem by storm (*War* 5.491)—a suggestion with which both Titus and Josephus were clearly in disagreement.

Turning to earlier occasions, we may note that Josephus attributed hot-headedness (**θερμότερον**) to the Egyptians who, after being saved by Moses, conceived a hatred for him and pursued with greater ardor their plots upon his life (*Ant.* 2.254). In Greek literature too one finds disparagement of rashness, such as Ismene's bitter comment to her sister Antigone in the *Antigone* (88) of Sophocles, one of Josephus' favorite authors:¹² "You have a hot heart (**θερμὴν . . . καρδίαν**) over chilly things."

Hence, returning to Josephus' treatment of Jeroboam, we can see that he gives clear and forceful condemnation of that monarch

¹²See Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus the Man and the Historian* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1929), 115-117.

when he depicts him, in an extrabiblical comment, as the very opposite of temperate—a person who is "hot-headed" (θερμός, "hot-blooded," "passionate," "violent," "inconsiderate," "hasty") by nature (*Ant.* 8.209). Indeed, Jeroboam clearly lacks self-control, but he can and does nevertheless admire the self-control (ἐγκρατείας) of the prophet Iddo (*Ant.* 8.235).

Jeroboam's Impiety

Piety is another of the cardinal virtues, esteemed as such by both Greeks and Jews. One may take note of Socrates' question in Plato's *Protagoras* (349B): "Are wisdom and self-control and courage and justice and piety five names which denote the same thing?" Here, piety is listed as the fifth of the cardinal virtues. For Josephus, who was very proud of his priestly ancestry,¹³ piety was connected particularly with the Temple in Jerusalem.

It is significant that when Josephus paraphrases the biblical statement in 1 Kgs 12:26-27 concerning Jeroboam's prohibition of his people to go up to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem, he makes a point of mentioning Jeroboam's fear that the people might be captivated (δουλευθέν, "ensnared," "seduced") by the Temple ceremonies, adding that Jeroboam issued this prohibition at the time when the festival of Tabernacles was to take place—that is, at the approach of the great pilgrimage festival, the most joyous in the Jewish calendar (*Ant.* 8.225). Moreover, whereas 1 Kgs 12:32 states that Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like that which was celebrated in Judah, Josephus, fully aware that the holiday of Tabernacles was on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and that there was no biblical holiday in the eighth month, indicates that Jeroboam appointed a feast in the seventh month so as to coincide with, and clearly to rival, the festival of Tabernacles (*Ant.* 8.230). Moreover, from the point of view of Josephus, the proud priest whose ancestors were high priests (*Life* 2), a major sin on the part of Jeroboam, as we can see from an extrabiblical remark, was that he named his own priests and even made himself high priest (*Ant.* 8.230 vs. 1 Kgs 12:32). This aspect of Jeroboam as false priest is especially emphasized by Josephus, for whereas the biblical text in 1 Kgs 13:1 states that Jeroboam was standing by the altar ready to burn incense,

¹³This is seen, e.g., from the very introductory paragraphs of his autobiography: *Life* 1-6.

Josephus calls greater attention to Jeroboam's impiety by describing him as ready to offer the sacrifices and the whole burnt-offerings in the sight of all the people (*Ant.* 8.231). Indeed, the greatest sin of Jeroboam is, as Josephus puts it, that he did not cease (*διέλιπεν*, "interrupt") nor desist (*ἠρέμησεν*, "keep quiet," "be still," "be at rest") from outraging the Lord (*Ant.* 8.265).

Jeroboam's decision to set up his own alternative to the Temple in Jerusalem particularly rankled Josephus. Whereas in 1 Kgs 12:28, Jeroboam's address to his countrymen gives no reasons why he is preventing them from going to the Temple in Jerusalem, in Josephus' version, where this decision is so central, no fewer than five reasons are given: (1) the Lord is everywhere and is not confined to merely one place; (2) Jerusalem is the city of the enemies; (3) a man built the Temple in Jerusalem, and Jeroboam likewise has made two golden heifers bearing the divine name; (4) the two heifers are located more conveniently, so that it will no longer be necessary to make the long trip to Jerusalem; and (5) Jeroboam, in egalitarian fashion, will appoint priests and Levites from among the people themselves (*Ant.* 8.227-228). Moreover, the centrality of Jerusalem for Josephus may be seen in Josephus' further additions to the biblical text by remarking that it was from Jerusalem that the prophet Iddo had come (*Ant.* 8.231 vs. 1 Kgs 13:11) and that it was on Iddo's journey back to Jerusalem that a lion devoured the prophet (*Ant.* 8.241 vs. 1 Kgs 13:24).

In sum, Josephus enlarges considerably upon Jeroboam's impiety (*Ant.* 8.245). Whereas the biblical text in 1 Kgs 13:34 portrays Jeroboam's making priests from among the people as a grave sin that deserved the effacement of the house of Jeroboam from the earth, Josephus amplifies the sin, doing so in terms which his Greek audience would readily understand. Josephus refers to Jeroboam as committing an outrage (*ἐξύβρισεν*) against the Deity (*θεῖον*) and transgressing the divine laws, so that daily he sought to commit some new act more heinous (*μιαρότερον*, "more unclean," "defiled [with blood]," "horrible," "outrageous," "vile") than the reckless (*τετολημμένων*, "bold") acts of which he was already guilty.

Josephus' use of the word *μιαρότερον* is significant, inasmuch as it frequently has the connotation of fraternal strife and murder, which from Josephus' point of view was also the greatest sin of the

revolutionaries in his own day.¹⁴ In his amplifications of the biblical remark in 1 Kgs 13:33, that Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, Josephus states that Jeroboam did not "cease (*διέλιπεν*) nor desist from outraging the Lord." Here again Josephus singles out as Jeroboam's greatest sin his continuing to erect altars and to appoint priests from among the common people. The same sin of *ὑβρις* is underlined in another statement by Josephus, the biblical counterpart of which is 2 Chron 13:4-12, in which Abijah, the king of Judah, tells Jeroboam's troops that when Jeroboam "has paid the Lord the penalty for what he has done in the past he will end his transgressions (*παρανομίας*) and the insults (*ὑβρεων*) which he has never ceased to offer Him" (*Ant.* 8.277) and will persuade his people to do like-wise. This clearly calls to mind the sequence so common in Greek tragedy of *ὑβρις* leading to *νέμεσις*. Indeed, the end result of this insolence is the total defeat of Jeroboam's army and the slaughter of 500,000 of his men (2 Chron 13:17), a massacre which, according to Josephus' addition (*Ant.* 8.284), surpasses any that occurred in any war, whether of Greeks or barbarians.¹⁵

It is significant that Josephus specifically ascribes this debacle to the Lord's decision to permit Abijah to win so wonderful a victory. Indeed, in summarizing the downfall of Jeroboam and of his descendants, Josephus (*Ant.* 8.289), in an extrabiblical remark, not to be found in 1 Kgs 15:29, says that they suffered fitting punish-

¹⁴This connection of fratricide with pollution appears in Reuben's speech to his brothers declaring that slaughtering their brother Joseph would be far fouler (*μιαρότερον*) than murdering someone who was not their kin (*Ant.* 2.22). Likewise, when Amnon approaches his sister Tamar to violate her, she urges him to give up this unrighteous (*ἀδίκον*) and unclean (*μιαρός*) desire (*Ant.* 7.168). Similarly, Aristobulus I confesses to committing impious (*ἀσεβέσιν*) and polluted (*μιαροῖς*) crimes and quickly adds, defining those crimes, that "swift punishment has overtaken me for the murder of my kin," alluding to his murder of his mother and his brother Antigonus (*Ant.* 13.316). Moreover, Herod accuses his sons of savage and unholy (*μιαρόν*) hatred, asserting that they had sought to kill him (*Ant.* 16.93). That the revolutionaries of Josephus' day were polluted by the murder of their own kinsmen is seen in several allusions. We may note Titus' addresses to the revolutionaries as most abominable (*μιαρότατοι*, *War* 6.124, 347). In particular, we may cite Josephus' own editorial summary of the revolutionary groups, in which he refers to the Idumaeans as "those most abominable (*μιαρότατοι*) wretches" (*War* 7.267).

¹⁵The phrase is reminiscent of Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.47 (Ralph Marcus, trans. and ed., *Josephus*, vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library [London: Heinemann, 1934], 724).

ment for his impiety (ἀσεβείας) and lawlessness (ἀνομημάτων). Likewise, in paraphrasing the biblical statement about the evil which King Baasha of Israel did (1 Kgs 15:34), Josephus adds that he was more wicked and impious (ἀσεβής) than Jeroboam and notes specifically that he greatly outraged (ἐξύβρισεν) the Lord (*Ant.* 8.299). Commenting further on the wickedness of Baasha, Josephus remarks in an editorial comment that he imitated Jeroboam, to whom he refers as the vilest (κάκιστον) of men (*Ant.* 8.300). Josephus clearly looked upon Jeroboam as the paradigm of wicked impiety, inasmuch as he added that although Jeroboam himself was dead, Baasha had revealed his wickedness as still living.

3. Jeroboam and Democracy

Like Plato, with whom he was clearly acquainted,¹⁶ Josephus was filled with contempt for the masses. Thus, he adds a snide remark directed against the rabble (ὄχλος) of women and children, who, he says, were responsible for vitiating the nobler instincts of the Israelites in the desert (*Ant.* 3.5). Josephus has a low opinion of human beings, declaring that the race of men is by nature morose and censorious (*Ant.* 3.23). He describes the rebellious Israelite assembly, in terms familiar from Plato (*Laws* 2.671A), as a tumultuous mass with its innate delight in decrying those in authority and ready to be swayed by what anyone said (*Ant.* 4:36-37). He returns to the theme of the fickleness of the mob when he speaks sneeringly of "all that a crowd, elated by success, is wont to utter against those who were of late disparaging the authors of it" (*Ant.* 6.81). Similarly, Josephus' other idol, Thucydides, points out the truism that the way of the multitude is fickle, as seen by the fact that the Athenians, angered at the terrible losses that had befallen them during the great plague, fined their leader Pericles, only to reverse themselves shortly thereafter and to choose him again as general (*Pelop. War* 2.65.4). The ideal government, as Thucydides stresses, is a government ruled by its foremost citizen rather than a true democracy which surrenders to the majority whim (*Pelop. War* 2.65.9).

That Josephus looked upon the common people with contempt may be seen from a pejorative reference to them by Titus, who

¹⁶See my "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 483, note 113.

describes those at Tarichaeae as undisciplined, a mere rabble (*ὄχλος* . . . *ἄλλως*), rather than an army (*War* 3.475). Likewise, we hear of the mere rabble (*ὄχλον ἄλλως*) of Jews at Machaerus (*War* 7.191). This same negative attitude may be seen in Josephus' remark that the nobler instincts of the Israelites under Moses were vitiated by a rabble (*ὄχλος*) of women and children, too feeble to respond to oral premonition (*Ant.* 3.5).

In particular, Josephus connects the act of a demagogue currying favor of the crowd with rebellion, as seen, for example, in his comment that Absalom, when rebelling against his father David, curried favor (*δημογωγῶν*, "acting as a demagogue") with the multitude, and when he thought that the loyalty of the populace (*ὄχλων*) was secured to him, proceeded to plot against the state, whereupon a great multitude (*ὄχλος*) streamed to him (*Ant.* 7.196). This aphoristic contempt for the mob may likewise be seen in Josephus' remark that all the people swarmed around the body of Amasa and, "as is the way of crowds (*ὄχλος*), pressed forward to wonder at it" (*Ant.* 7.287).¹⁷

Indeed, Josephus betrays his contempt for the ignorant mob in his citation of the comment of Plato, who was probably the most important single intellectual factor in the process of Hellenization in the East during the Hellenistic period, that it is hazardous to divulge the truth about the Lord to the ignorant mob (*ὄχλων*, *Against Apion* 2.224).¹⁸ That Josephus is thinking in contemporary terms in his snide remarks about the masses may be seen in his account of King Aristobulus of Judaea disencumbering himself of his rabble (*ὄχλων*) of inefficient followers (*Ant.* 1.172). Again, the word's use in connection with the mob (*ὄχλον*) of women and children drafted by that most despised of revolutionaries, John of Gischala (*War* 4.107), is most significant.¹⁹

¹⁷Similar negative connotations of the word *ὄχλος* may be seen in the following statements: "Of the impious people (*ὄχλου*) Azaelos shall destroy some and Jehu others" (*Ant.* 8.352); "The entire multitude (*ὄχλος*) [during the reign of Zedekiah] had license to act as outrageously as it pleased" (*Ant.* 10.103).

¹⁸So Moses Hadas, "Plato in Hellenistic Fusion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19 (1958): 3-13; idem, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 72-82.

¹⁹Similar disparaging remarks about the mob of revolutionaries are found in *War* 6.283: "the poor women and children of the populace and a mixed multitude (*ὄχλος*) had taken refuge [in the Temple]"; 6.384: "the rest of the multitude (*ὄχλον*)

It is indicative, therefore, of Josephus' negative attitude toward Jeroboam that the latter was called to power by the leaders of the rabble (τῶν ὄχλων) immediately after the death of King Solomon (*Ant.* 8.212).²⁰ Josephus himself shows his contempt for the masses when he remarks that the advisers of King Rehoboam of Judah were acquainted with the nature of crowds (ὄχλων), implying that such mobs were fickle and unreliable, and that they urged the king to speak to them in a friendly spirit and in a more popular style than was usual for royalty (*Ant.* 8.215).

Egalitarianism, which the aristocratically-minded Josephus despised, also comes to the fore in the extrabiblical promise, ascribed to Jeroboam, to appoint priests and Levites from among the general population (*Ant.* 8.228). To be sure, 1 Kgs 12:31 notes that Jeroboam appointed priests from among all the people, but it is much more effective to have this come as a promise from Jeroboam directly to his people. Josephus clearly opposed such egalitarianism, which smacks of the remarks made by Korah, who likewise had attacked Moses (*Ant.* 4.15-19) for bestowing the priesthood upon his brother Aaron instead of making the appointment democratically and on the basis of sheer merit (*Ant.* 4.23).

4. Jeroboam as Ancestor of the *Revolutionaries of Josephus' Day*

The underlying theme of Josephus' *Jewish War* was the emphasis on the civil strife (στάσις οἰκεία) engendered by the Jewish "tyrants" (οἱ Ἰουδαίων τύραννοι) as responsible for the ill-fated revolt (*War* 1.10). He contrasts the brutal treatment these tyrants dispensed to their fellowcountrymen (ὁμοφύλους) with the clemency which the Romans showed toward the Jews, though they were an alien race (ἄλλοφύλους, *War* 1.27).

The same theme of the dreadful consequences of civil strife pervades his paraphrase of the Bible in the *Antiquities*. In his

[of the Jews in Jerusalem] with the women and children were sold [by the Romans]"; 7.138: "the mob (ὄχλων) of [Jewish] captives [in the triumphal procession in Rome]."

²⁰Moshe Weinfeld notes that we find here the concept of the king as the servant of the people; but it is quite clear from the context that the aristocratic Josephus himself views such a relationship disparagingly ("The King as Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," *JJS* 33 [1982]: 189-194).

prooemium, Josephus sets forth as the goal of his work that it should embrace not only the entire ancient history of the Jews but also evaluate their political constitution (*διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος*) (*Ant.* 1.5). He appeals to his politically-minded audience by stressing the theme of civil strife (*στάσις*) so familiar to readers of Thucydides' description (*Pelop. War* 3.82-84) of revolution at Corcyra. Thus he portrays the punishment inflicted by the Lord upon the builders of the Tower of Babel as discord (*στάσις*, a word not found in the LXX version, Gen 11:9), created by having them speak various languages (*Ant.* 1.117). Again, according to Josephus' addition, the Lord thwarted Pharaoh's unjust passion toward Sarah by bringing about an outbreak of disease and of political strife (*στάσει τῶν πραγμάτων*, *Ant.* 1.164). Similarly, in his treatment of the rebellion of Korah, Josephus remarks that it was a sedition (*στάσις*) "for which we know of no parallel, whether among Greeks or barbarians" (*Ant.* 4.12), clearly implying that information about seditions was familiar to his readers. Likewise, in discussing the consequences of the seduction of the Hebrew youth by the Midianite women, Josephus remarks that the whole army was soon permeated by a sedition far worse than that of Korah (*Ant.* 4.140). Indeed, a good portion of Book 4 (11-66, 141-155) of the *Antiquities* is devoted to accounts that illustrate the degree to which *στάσις* is the mortal enemy of political states, a subject particularly stressed by Josephus as a comment on the warring factions among his contemporary Jews during the war against the Romans.²¹

The case of Jeroboam becomes, for Josephus, an outstanding example of the disaster brought on by secession and civil strife. Thus, when he first introduces Jeroboam, Josephus remarks that Jeroboam, "one of his own countrymen" (*ὁμοφύλων*, the same word which Josephus had used with reference to the revolutionaries' treatment of their fellowcountrymen), rose up against the king, thus emphasizing the theme of fraternal strife (*Ant.* 8.205). The Bible states that Jeroboam lifted his hand against King Solomon (1 Kgs 11:26). It is significant that the rabbis, as we have noted, looked with favor upon this confrontation of Jeroboam with Solomon and justified it by stressing that Jeroboam wanted to

²¹This is particularly the case in Josephus' depiction of David and of Solomon; see *Ant.* 7.130, 338, 373-374, and the comments by Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 180-181.

insure free access of pilgrims to the Temple, whereas in Josephus' version Jeroboam is severely condemned.

That Josephus viewed Jeroboam as the prototype of the revolutionaries of his own day may be seen in Josephus' extra-biblical remark that Jeroboam attempted to persuade the people to turn away (ἀφίστασθαι) and to start a revolt (κινεῖν) (*Ant.* 8.209).²² The phrase which Josephus uses to describe Jeroboam's sedition, that he was "ambitious of great things" (μεγάλων ἐπιθυμητής πραγμάτων, *Ant.* 8.209), is strikingly similar to that which he uses to describe the archrevolutionary, John of Gischala, that he was always ambitious of great things (αἰεὶ . . . ἐπιθυμήσας μεγάλων, *War* 2.587). Those who responded to John's invitation are similarly depicted as always ambitious for newer things (νεωτέρων ἐπιθυμούντες αἰεὶ πραγμάτων), addicted to change and delighting in sedition (*Life* 87). We find similar language applied to those bold Jews in Jerusalem who were admonished by the procurator Cumanus to put an end to their ambition for newer things, that is revolution (νεωτέρων ἐπιθυμοῦντας πραγμάτων, *Ant.* 20.109). Josephus employs similar language in describing his archrival Justus of Tiberias as "ambitious for newer things" (νεωτέρων . . . ἐπεθύμει πραγμάτων, *Life* 36).

It is significant that this aspect of fratricidal strife is stressed when King Abijah of Judah wins a great victory over the forces of Jeroboam and slays no fewer than 500,000 (2 Chron 13:17), a slaughter which surpassed that in any war, "whether of Greeks or barbarians" (*Ant.* 8.284). This latter phrase is found also in Josephus' account of the slaying of Jesus by his brother John, the high priest, when John was carrying out his duties as priest (*Ant.* 11.299).

Indeed, when Josephus seeks to analyze the underlying cause of the demise of the Kingdom of Israel, he insists that the beginning of the nation's troubles was the rebellion which it undertook against the legitimate king, Rehoboam, when it chose Jeroboam as king (*Ant.* 9.282). It is almost as if Josephus were analyzing the demise of the Jewish state of his own day, which he likewise ascribes to the rebellion against the legitimate authority. In a word, Josephus points his finger at Jeroboam's lawlessness (παρανομίαν, *Ant.* 9.282), the very quality which he denounces in

²²Josephus is here basing his story on the LXX addition (1 Kgs 12:24b).

the revolutionaries,²³ particularly in his bitter attack on the Sicarii (*War* 7.262), as the first to set the example of lawlessness (*παρανομίας*) and cruelty (*δυσότητος*) to their kinsmen. In an editorial comment not found in his biblical source (1 Kgs 15:24), Josephus stresses that this lawlessness (*παρανομίαν*) and iniquity (*ἀδικίας*) brought about the destruction of the kings of Israel, one after the other, in a short space of time (*Ant.* 8.314). That Jeroboam is, for Josephus, the model of lawlessness may be discerned by comparing the Bible (1 Kgs 16:30), which speaks of the evil which Ahab did but does not mention Jeroboam, and Josephus' statement that Ahab did not invent anything in his wickedness but merely imitated the misdeeds and outrageous behavior (*ὕβριν*) which his predecessors showed toward the Lord (*Ant.* 8.316). Of these predecessors and their misdeeds, Josephus here singles out Jeroboam and his lawlessness (*παρανομίαν*). To the Romans, who had such a deep and long-standing reverence for law and who were so proud of their legal tradition, such an attack on Jeroboam for his lawlessness would be devastating.

5. Intermarriage and Assimilation

Just as Livy, in the preface to his history, laments the decline of morals in the Roman Empire, so Josephus, as a responsible historian, cites lessons to be learned from history. One major lesson, perhaps with a view toward what was happening to some of Josephus' contemporaries, is that Jews must avoid assimilation with Gentiles. This may be seen, as Van Unnik²⁴ has stressed, in Josephus' account of the Israelites' sin with the Midianite women (Num 25:1-9), which he has expanded from nine verses to twenty-five paragraphs (*Ant.* 4.131-155). It may likewise be perceived in Josephus' moral of the Samson story, that one must not debase

²³See *War* 4.134, 144, 155, 339, 351; 5.343, 393, 442; 6.122. Likewise, in the *Antiquities* Josephus make a number of changes in his paraphrase of the biblical text to emphasize the importance of observance of the laws. See, for example, 5.185 (vs. Judg 3:12); 5.198-200 (vs. Judg 4:1), 5.255 (vs. Judg 10:6); 7.130 (no biblical parallel); 8.245 (vs. 1 Kgs 13:33); 8.251-253 (vs. 1 Kgs 14:22).

²⁴Willem C. van Unnik, "Josephus' Account of the Story of Israel's Sin with Alien Women in the Country of Midian (Num. 25:1ff.)," *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to Professor M. A. Beek*, ed. M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 241-261.

(παρεχάρασσαν—used of coins) one's rule of life (διαίταν) by imitating foreign ways (*Ant.* 5.306).²⁵

The same moralizing about the effects of assimilation may be seen in Josephus' discussion of Anilaeus and Asinaeus, the two Jewish brothers who established an independent state in Mesopotamia in the first century, only to lose it when, at the very peak of their success, Anilaeus had an affair with a Parthian general's wife (*Ant.* 18.340). The closely connected theme, that one must not, as did Samson, submit to one's passionate instincts, is frequent in Josephus.²⁶

In connection with the secession of the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam, Ahijah, in prophesying the split of the kingdom in two, declares in the Bible (1 Kgs 11:33) that the Lord will do so because Solomon has worshiped foreign gods and has not kept the statutes as had David. Josephus is more explicit in stating that Solomon's sin is intermarriage, in that he has gone over wholly to his wives and to their gods (*Ant.* 8.207). Indeed, in his summary of Solomon's character, Josephus, after praising his good fortune, wealth, and wisdom, cites as the one exception to these positive qualities the fact that as Solomon approached old age he was beguiled by his foreign wives into committing unlawful acts (*Ant.* 8.211).

The very fact that Josephus compares the religious groupings of the Jews to the Greek philosophical schools, asserting that the Pharisees are a sect very similar to the Stoic school (*Life* 12), is an indication of the philosophical interests he expected his audience to have. Since much of Josephus' projected audience was sympathetic to Stoicism, which became the dominant philosophy of intellectuals during the Hellenistic period,²⁷ it is not surprising that there are a number of Stoic touches in his paraphrase of the Bible in the *Antiquities*. Indeed, at the very beginning of his account, Josephus employs Stoic terminology in his extrabiblical

²⁵See my "Josephus' Version of Samson," 210-213.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 211-212, note 94.

²⁷Cf. William W. Tarn and Guy T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, 3d ed. (London: Arnold, 1952), 325: "The philosophy of the Hellenistic world was the Stoa; all else was secondary." See also F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), 16; A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 107; and Luther H. Martin, "Josephus' Use of *Heimarmene* in the *Jewish Antiquities* XIII, 171-3," *Numen* 28 (1981): 127-137.

statement that the Lord had decreed for Adam and Eve a life of happiness unmolested (ἀπαθῆ) by all ill (*Ant.* 1.46). The term ἀπαθῆς, as well as the corresponding noun ἀπάθεια (freedom from emotional disturbance), is a common Stoic term referring to freedom from emotion.²⁸ Moses is presented as, in effect, a Stoic sage, remarkable for his contempt for toils (πόνων καταφρονήσει), a typically Stoic phrase (*Ant.* 2.229). By allegorically imputing cosmic significance to the tabernacle, the twelve loaves, the candelabrum, the tapestries, and the high priest's garments, Josephus was appealing to the Stoic view that law must have a cosmic dimension (*Ant.* 3.181-187). The Stoic term, πρόνοια, appears no fewer than seventy-four times in the first half of the *Antiquities*.²⁹

And yet, Josephus seems to have realized the danger inherent in the attraction of Stoicism. Thus, although Josephus uses Stoic terminology in connection with his proof for the existence of the Lord (*Ant.* 1.156), he is actually combatting the Stoics, as we see from the reference in the section immediately after the one containing Abraham's proof (*Ant.* 1.157).³⁰ Likewise, Josephus

²⁸That Stoic influence is at work here is indicated by the fact that Josephus does not in either of these two passages employ the synonymous word ἀβλαβῆς, which means "unharmful" and which he uses on six occasions in the first half of the *Antiquities*.

²⁹See further Bernard Brüne, *Flavius Josephus und seine Schriften in ihrem Verhältnis zum Judentume, zur griechisch-römischen Welt, und zum Christentume* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1913), 199-210; my "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: the *Aqedah*," 222-224, especially 223, note 36; and my "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 498-500.

On parallels between Judaism and Stoicism, see Wilhelm Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, vol. 1 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1903); Judah Bergmann, "Die stoische Philosophie und die jüdische Frömmigkeit," *Judaica*, Festschrift Hermann Cohen (Berlin: Cassirer, 1912), 145-166; Armand Kaminka, "Les rapports entre le rabbinisme et la philosophie stoïcienne," *Revue des études juives* 82 (1926): 233-252; Yitzhak Baer, *Israel among the Nations* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1955); and Henry A. Fischel, "Stoicism," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15: 409-410. Cf. most recently Martin Hengel, "Der Alte und der Neue 'Schürer,'" *JSS* 35 (1990): 58-59, who remarks that Josephus (*Life* 12) is not wholly wrong in comparing the Pharisees to the Stoics and that the Stoic views of the creation of the world and of the fate of the soul after death must have been of interest to cultured Jews.

³⁰So Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947), 1:176-177, 329, and 2:78, who notes that the Chaldeans, whom Josephus describes as opposed to Abraham's views, are in Philo (*De Migratione Abrahami* 32.179) prototypes of the Stoics.

clearly disassociates himself from the extrabiblical remarks put into the mouth of Jeroboam in the latter's address to his countrymen, which are definitely Stoic in their outlook and which are intended to refute the idea that the Lord has a special place, namely the Temple in Jerusalem: "Fellow-countrymen, I think you know that every place has the Lord in it and there is no one spot set apart for His presence but everywhere He hears (*ἀκούει*) and watches over (*ἐφορᾷ*) His worshippers" (*Ant.* 8.227). Here Jeroboam is clearly repeating the words used by King Solomon when, in dedicating the Temple, he declared that the Lord was the one who watched over (*ἐφορᾶν*) and heard (*ἀκούειν*) all things, and that even though the Lord dwelt in the Temple He was very near to all men (*Ant.* 8.108). However, it is clear that when Jeroboam repeats these words Josephus no longer identifies with them. Significantly, in the biblical passage (1 Kgs 12:28) which Josephus' Jeroboam is paraphrasing, Jeroboam says nothing about the omnipresence of the Lord but merely introduces the gods which he has set up as those who had brought the Israelites out of Egypt, without any philosophic justification of such an action.³¹

6. Dramatic Build-up

One basic reason why Josephus wrote his *Antiquities* was that he was dissatisfied with the LXX and felt that for the Bible to make a more favorable impression upon non-Jewish readers the biblical narrative had to be presented in a more appealing fashion. Hence, he appealed to the political, military, geographic, and philosophic interests of his audience and developed dramatic and romantic motifs.

One such motif is that of the rise of the ruler from humble beginnings, as we see, for example, in the stories about the upbringing of King Cyrus of Persia (Herodotus 1.95) and of Romulus and Remus. In the case of Jeroboam, whereas the Bible (1 Kgs 11:26) declares simply that his mother's name was Zeruah,

³¹If, as Josephus remarks, the Pharisees are described as "quite similar to" (*παρὰπλήσιος*, "almost the same as") the Stoic school (*Life* 12), we may have here a veiled attack upon the Pharisees. This would be in line with Josephus' other negative views of the Pharisees, as seen in *War* 1.110-114; 1.571, *Ant.* 13.288-298; 13.400-432; 17.41-45; and *Life* 191-198. This would support the thesis of Steve Mason, disputing the conventional view that Josephus desired to present himself as a Pharisee (*Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* [Leiden: Brill, 1991]).

a widow, Josephus adds the information, which increases the dramatic element, that he was bereaved of his father while still a child and was brought up by his mother (*Ant.* 8.205).

There is also considerable drama in the scene (1 Kgs 13:4) in which Jeroboam, upon hearing the prophet's protest against the altar which Jeroboam had built at Bethel, stretches out his hand instructing his followers to seize the prophet. The scene is even more dramatic, however, in Josephus' version (*Ant.* 8.233), according to which Jeroboam was roused to fury (*παροξυνθείς*, "incited," "aroused emotionally," "provoked," "made angry") by the prophet's words, whereupon he stretched out his hand with orders to arrest the prophet. There is further increased drama in the sequence of events following this. According to the Bible (1 Kgs 13:4), Jeroboam's hand dried up, so that he was not able to draw it back. Josephus has a much more vivid scene: straightway (*εὐθέως*), we are told, his hand became paralyzed (*παρείθη*, "became exhausted," "grew weary"), and he no longer had the power to draw it back to himself but found it hanging, numb (*νεναρικήκυϊαν*, "grow stiff," "become paralyzed") and lifeless (*νεκράν*, "dead," "numb"). Likewise, the prediction of the prophet Iddo is more dramatic. In the Bible he prophesies that Jeroboam's altar will be torn down (1 Kgs 13:3); in Josephus he is much more emphatic: the altar shall be broken in an instant (*παραχρήμα*, *Ant.* 8.232). Again when the prediction is fulfilled, the biblical statement (1 Kgs 13:5) is that the altar was torn down and the ashes poured out from the altar. Josephus is more dramatic: the altar was broken and everything on it was swept on the ground (*Ant.* 8.233). Similarly, there is greater emotion in Jeroboam's reaction when his hand is restored. The Bible declares simply that after his hand was restored the king told the prophet to accompany him home in order to obtain a reward (1 Kgs 13:7). In Josephus' version (*Ant.* 8.234) Jeroboam is overjoyed (*χαίρων*). The drama, moreover, is increased by the fact that the old false prophet was bedridden through the infirmity of old age.

7. Summary

Unlike the rabbis, who had ambivalent feelings about Jeroboam, praising him for his great learning and for standing up to King Solomon in insisting that pilgrimages to Jerusalem not be deterred, while at the same time attacking him for instituting the worship of golden calves, Josephus, the proud priest, who gives an

unusual amount of attention to Jeroboam as compared with his concern with other biblical figures, is unequivocally critical of him, particularly because, in words very similar to those used by Rabbi Johanan (*b. Sanh.* 102b), he was the first to transgress the laws (*παρὰνομῆσαντι*) with regard to the sacrifices and because he had begun the process of leading the people astray, especially in refusing to allow his people to make the pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 9.18). Jeroboam emerges as an earlier version of the revolutionaries of Josephus' own day. To Josephus, whose ancestors were high priests, the major sin on the part of Jeroboam was that he set up his own alternative to the Temple in Jerusalem, that he named his own priests instead of recognizing those who were priests by birth, and that he even made himself high priest. In terms highly reminiscent of Greek tragedy, Josephus denounces Jeroboam for his *ὑβρις* against the Lord in erecting altars outside of Jerusalem and in appointing priests from among the common people. It is this *ὑβρις* which leads to the *νέμεσις* of the total defeat and slaughter of Jeroboam's army.

Moreover, Josephus, who looked with contempt upon the fickle and unreliable mob, shows disdain for Jeroboam for being called to power by the leaders of the rabble. Furthermore, it is again with a view to the contemporary scene that Josephus portrays Jeroboam as an outstanding example of the disaster wrought by secession and civil strife. It is particularly striking that the language which Josephus uses in describing Jeroboam's sedition is so similar to that which he employs to describe the archrevolutionary of his own day, his great rival, John of Gischala. Likewise, in analyzing the causes of the demise of the kingdom of Israel, he insists that it all began with the rebellion against the legitimate ruler Rehoboam. Again and again he stresses Jeroboam's lawlessness, a word which must have struck a responsive chord in his Roman audience, proud as it was of the respect of the Romans for the legal tradition. Finally, another indication that Josephus' portrait is conditioned by the contemporary scene is his clear attempt, as a priest closely connected with the Temple in Jerusalem, to dissociate himself from the extrabiblical remarks put into the mouth of Jeroboam which are highly reminiscent of the language of the Stoics, the most popular philosophers among intellectuals in his day, and which attempt to refute the idea that the Lord is associated with a particular place.