THE JEWISH EXPECTATION OF GOD'S KINGDOM IN ITS SUCCESSIVE STAGES.

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ALTHOUGH the older Hebrew prophets, such as Micah and Isaiah, did not use the term "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" as did the later Jewish writers, they spoke in glowing terms of the coming of a glorious time in the "latter days," when nations would "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks," and "not lift up a sword....any more"; when every man should sit "under his vine and under his fig-tree and none make them afraid"; when there would be a ruler upon whom should rest "the spirit of Yahveh....the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahveh," who should judge, "with righteousness the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth," who "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips....slay the wicked"; when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahveh as the waters cover the sea."

Those early prophets had further spoken of a complete and perfect new world-order in the well-known description of a time when the wolf, bear, leopard and lion would dwell and feed together with the lamb, calf and ox, and a young child would put his hand on the cockatrice's den without harm. When speaking of this time they had further represented Jerusalem as the central seat from which would proceed this state of universal righteousness, justice and peace, saying that the nations would flock to the temple of the God of Israel to learn there his "paths and laws"; that such nations who were not hostile to God's people would be mercifully received, and that finally all the scattered tribes of Israel would be reunited. Still these writers did not predict a definite historical time, when all this would come about.

The first writer who used the term "kingdom of God." "king-
dom of heaven" for the glorious time already imagined by those earlier Hebrew prophets and who brought the appearance of this kingdom in connection with a special historical period, who predicted and expected its near coming, was the unknown Jew who wrote the Book of Daniel about 164 B.C.

According to him the world's history was to close with the end of the Macedonian empire founded by Alexander the Great, and the division of this empire among his generals. The Book of Daniel was written as a book of consolation and exhortation in the severe times of persecution and trial, when the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to destroy the Jewish religion and to force Greek religion and customs upon the Jewish people. The purpose of the book is to arouse faithful perseverance in the belief of the fathers, for God will soon erect his kingdom and a personality will appear in the clouds to whom the final everlasting government will be given. Those remaining faithful to the national religion will be partakers of this eternal kingdom while the unfaithful will be destroyed in the final judgment.

The expectation of the nearness of the time when the kingdom of God would come down from heaven, and the assignment of this advent to a special period of the world's history, as appearing for the first time in Daniel, was the natural result of the most terrible trial the Jewish religion had up to that time passed through. Great had been the vicissitudes and trials undergone by the Israelites during the succession of the great Asiatic empires whose dominion lasted to the time of the composition of the book, but the persecution begun by Antiochus, which was the cause of the book, was the worst of all.

The Israelites had lost the prestige of the political rôle they had played in the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah through the successive conquests of Assyria and Babylonia and had come under the dominion of Persia and Macedonia; from where else was help to be expected but from heaven? While the older prophets had continued to hope for a rejuvenation of the old royal stock of David that would produce some scion who would bring back the old glory, the later Jewish writers more and more imagined this personality to be a divine king coming down from heaven directly.

Under all oppressions and vicissitudes since the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar the Jews had remained zealously faithful to their religion and had purged it entirely from idolatry. Would not their faith be rewarded directly by heaven, especially since they considered it as their peculiar calling to be the religious light of the
world amid surrounding darkness? Hence the confident expectation of the writer of Daniel in the middle of the second century B. C. that the kingdom of God was close at hand.

Though the expectation of the writer was not fulfilled, the Book of Daniel at least accomplished its purpose. The attempt of the Syrian king Antiochus to destroy the Jewish religion was thwarted by the successful insurrection of the Jews under their leaders the Maccabees, after which the Jews again for some time had rulers of their own nationality. One of these Maccabees or Asmomeans even extended the limits of his realm to the former boundaries of the Davidian kingdom.

While the Book of Daniel was written in Palestine under religious persecution, we find about thirty years later an unknown Jew of Alexandria writing an oracle which prophesies that the kingdom of God would come under the reign of Ptolemy VII of Egypt who reigned from 146-117 B. C. This statement occurs in the Sibylline oracles, a collection of writings in Greek hexameter, which as we now have them are but a chaos and conglomerate of different fragments belonging to different times strung together in the most arbitrary order.

Ptolemy VII was called by his subjects Physcon, "Big belly," on account of his extreme corpulence, and instead of Euergetes, "Benefactor," the surname he had assumed at his accession, they dubbed him Kakoergetes, "Malefactor," for he was one of the most infamous rulers that ever sat on a throne in spite of the fact that he had inherited a taste for learning, was a patron of learned men and something of an author himself. From beginning to end his reign was sullied by his private vices and debaucheries as well as by a number of single and even wholesale butcheries. This monster once sent to his divorced wife, who was at the same time his sister, the head and hands of their son as a birthday gift. Josephus further relates that he once caught all the Jews he could get in Alexandria and had them exposed with their wives and children in an enclosed space to be trodden upon by his elephants, which he had previously made drunk for that purpose. The event, however, ended differently, for the elephants turned upon their masters instead, and the Jews afterwards celebrated this miraculous escape of their people.

Under this king the unknown Jew predicted the end of Egypt, the final great judgment to be ushered in by terrific omens of nature, the acceptance by all men of the law of the one and only God. "The people of the great God will be strong again and the leaders of life to all." (Sibyll., III, 97 etc.)
We shall not criticize the unknown Alexandrian Jew if in describing the new world soon to come he falls into lengthy glowing descriptions partly borrowed from Isaiah and other early prophets, speaking of the wolf and the lamb, the lion and ox dwelling together, etc. Under such infamous monsters as Ptolemy VII and many other oppressors and despots of that time, the intense hope that a terrible final judgment would bring retribution on all such evil doers, and the expectation that the old world-order would change into another in which all injustice, wrong and imperfection would be done away, was the only thing which made bearable the miserable conditions of the oppressed.

While the writer of Daniel and the Alexandrian Jew wrote their oracles under the immediate pressure of foreign persecution, we find a little later in history another Jewish work of similar character written under rather more specific and peculiar internal Jewish conditions.

This work, fictitiously attributed by its writer to the antediluvian Enoch, seems according to its contents to have been written under the influence of the victories and final success of the Maccabees against the Syrian oppressors, but also under the influence of the party dissensions which had rent the Jewish people. In consequence of the Hellenization of Asia through the empire of Alexander the Great, many Jews had a leaning towards Greek habits and ideas, while others held firmly to the national Jewish customs and laws. Moreover even the Maccabees had entered into political intriguing and scheming and had contracted alliances with foreign rulers in order to gain advantages for the Jewish people—all of which practices were discountenanced by those Jews who held that the only correct policy was a faithful and rigid adherence to Jewish customs and laws and the religion of the fathers without any compromise with foreign ideas and politics.

These strict Jews believed in a theocracy pure and simple, in a reign of God alone as they conceived it to take place through the ordinances of the traditional religion. For this reason they looked with great disfavor upon the innovation of the Maccabees, who were of priestly but not highpriestly descent, in trying to combine with their political rulership over the Jewish people the high-priesthood as well. In this time fell the beginnings of those Jewish sects, the Pharisees and Essenes, who more than any other Jewish parties fostered the religious life and the study of the sacred writings, and whose hopes lay more in the expectation of a future ideal and perfect state to be brought about miraculously by God than in any worldly,
temporal, realistic politics undertaken for the advantage of the Jewish people. In consequence of their views they were peculiarly adapted to keep alive the idea of the coming kingdom of God. We see therefore in the Book of Enoch this thought playing a dominant part.

Among many other things the book gives a history of the perversion of mankind through the fall of the angels in marrying human women and teaching mankind all kinds of arts and knowledge such as working metals, making swords and armor, jewelry, etc., as well as the secrets of astrology and magic; a history of the Israelitish nation in a symbolical representation up to the time of the writer showing its backslidings and misfortunes; the description of a journey through heaven and hell accompanied with a representation of the “elect one” or the “Son of Man” dwelling with the “Ancient of days,” both of the Daniel type. After this it gives many exhortations to live righteously and faithfully as the judgment and final consummation draws near.

Though giving no special historical date when the end will come, the book divides the world’s history into ten periods (“weeks” as it calls them). According to the description of what has already passed in these weeks of the world’s history the last two weeks are at hand. Of these last two the book says: “And then in the ninth week the just judgment of the whole world will be revealed and all works of the wicked will disappear from the earth; and the world will be written up for destruction and all mankind will look for the way of righteousness. And then in the tenth week in the seventh part will take place the great eternal judgment in which he will give retribution to the angels [of course the wicked ones who play such a great part in the book through their perversion of mankind]. And the first heaven will pass by and a new one appear, and all powers of the heavens will flash out sevenfold in eternity. And then there will be many weeks without number till in eternity in goodness and righteousness, and sin will from then on not be mentioned any more eternally” (Enoch 91).

Following history down to about the forties of the first century B.C. we meet with a book which does not give revelations and oracles about the future as those touched upon so far, but which nevertheless shows how intense the hope for the kingdom of God continued to be. This book is the so-called Psalms of Solomon, written in the same style as the Psalms of the Old Testament. These psalms deal plainly (1) with the desecration of the Jewish temple by Pompey the Great, who was the first pagan to enter the Holy
of Holies B. C. 63 and whose assassination on the shores of Egypt in B. C. 48, is (2) looked upon as a direct punishment for entering the temple; (3) the psalms speak of the crimes and atrocities of the native Asmonean house.

In consequence of all this the writer expresses the hope that God will soon send his Messiah and purge Jerusalem and the nation from all oppression and degradation coming from both the foreign tyrants and the native rulers. The expected king is described similarly to his portrayal by the older prophets, a ruler who will destroy all wickedness by the breath of his mouth; who will at the same time be a king of peace and not of war, not putting his trust in horse and rider and bow, but filled with the spirit of wisdom, justice, righteousness and mercy; who will be undefiled by sin. Not only will all the scattered tribes of Israel be united under his reign but all the nations will submit to his rule. One of the psalms which glorifies the coming of the final kingdom of God through his Messiah, ends with the words: "Blessed are they that shall be born in those days. May God hasten his mercy towards Israel, may he deliver us from the abomination of unhallowed adversaries. The Lord, he is our king from henceforth and even for evermore." (xvii. 51). These words and the tone of those psalms which deal with the Messiah's kingdom though they do not mention a definite time when it is to appear, nevertheless breathe an intense desire that it may come soon.

Another point which distinguishes these psalms from such apocalyptic writings as Daniel, Enoch and the Sibylline oracles, is that while the other writings do not speak of the ruler of the kingdom of God as a descendant of David, these psalms return to the phraseology of the old prophets, calling him a son of David "whom God will raise up in the time which he knows." Still in spite of this phraseology, because he is described as "pure of sin," these psalms also seem to consider him rather more as a divine personality.

Somewhat later than the composition of the Solomonic psalms is a Sibylline oracle in book III of that collection (vv. 36-92) which tells of the second triumvirate, that of Octavian, Antony and Lepidus B. C. 43, who proscribed so many Roman citizens and committed so many atrocities, and which further speaks of Cleopatra the Egyptian queen playing her noted political role in relation to Caesar, Antony and Octavian. The Sibylline passage is so interesting, giving a good example of these Jewish oracular utterings and its ideas, that we will translate most of this passage in prose:

"But when Rome, then in power, will be king of Egypt, then
will the great kingdom of the immortal king appear unto men. A holy ruler will come holding the scepter of the whole earth for all the eternities of time. And then will be the inexorable wrath of the Latins. Three will utterly destroy Rome with lamentable fate. All men will be destroyed in their own homes when the fiery cataract will rush down from heaven. Ah me, when will that day come and the judgment of the divine king? Now truly all you cities are built and adorned with temples and race courses and forums and golden and silver and stone images, in order that you may come to the bitter day. For it will come, when the breath of the divine one will go out among all men.

"But from the Sebastenoi [i.e., the "august ones," the surname used for the Roman emperors] will come Beliar [the incarnate Evil One]; he will do many signs with respect to mountains and sea and sun and moon and the dead. But they will be only deceit. He will deceive many men, faithful and chosen Hebrews, the unjust and other men, who do not obey the word of God. But when the threatenings of the great God will draw near and the burning might will come billowing upon earth, he will also burn Beliar and all proud men who put faith in him. And then the whole world will be in the hands of a woman governed and obeying in everything. Then when a widow will govern the whole world and throw gold and silver into the great sea and copper and iron of ephemeral men, then will all its elements be wanting to the world, when God dwelling in the ether will roll up the heaven as a scroll. And the whole many-shaped universe will fall down upon the earth and the sea. A cataract of destroying, untiring fire will rush forth and burn the earth and the sea and the heavenly pole; day and night and the whole creation will he melt and choose out for cleansing. And there will not be the joyous spheres of the stars, nor night, nor morning nor many days of care, nor spring, nor winter, nor summer, nor fall. And then the judgment of the great God will come into the midst of great time when all this will happen."

A point to be noticed in this passage is the view already expressed here, which recurs in the New Testament writings, that in the last days the incarnate power of evil will do great signs and wonders by which it will deceive many even almost believers. Especially in Rev. xiii this thought returns with full force where the Roman empire is described as the powerful and deceitful incarnation of the Evil One.

At the time when this Sibylline oracle was written which tells of the scheming Egyptian queen Cleopatra we meet with another
noted political schemer, Herod I, called in history “the Great.” This man of Idumean nobility and related by marriage through his wife Mariamne with the native Jewish Asmonean house, like Cleopatra had first espoused the cause of Antony. After the death of the latter he was more lucky than Cleopatra in winning the favor of Octavian and was by him confirmed king of Judea. The hatred of the Jews against this Idumean reign under Roman supremacy had long been smoldering during its duration of thirty-seven years. Finally, not long before Herod’s death, B. C. 4, a band of forty young men, disciples of the rabbis Judas and Mathias who were the founders of that fanatical wing of the Pharisees called the Zealots, who taught that the Jews ought not to obey any other king but God, had one day climbed up to the golden eagle, the sign of Roman sovereignty which Herod had placed over the entrance of the temple, and had cut it down with their axes. For this deed they with their teachers were burnt alive by Herod.

At the death of Herod the Jews broke out in open rebellion against his son Archelaus and against the Romans. After some successes on the side of the Jews the revolt was finally quelled by the governor of Syria, Varus, who crucified two thousand of the ringleaders. During this revolt a part of the temple was burned and the sacred treasury plundered of over $500,000 by one of the lieutenants of Varus, Sabinus. This revolt, called by the Jews “the war of Varus,” is mentioned in the writing called “The Taking up of Moses,” under which name some Jewish zealot represents Moses revealing to Joshua the varying fortunes of Hebrews from the time he is taken up to God until the end of history and the coming of “the eternal kingdom of God.” There is doubt about the date of this apocalypse, many scholars assigning it to the first century of our era and others to the first quarter of the second century. The question is difficult to solve because of the extremely mutilated condition of some of the passages in the manuscript found in the middle of the last century. Still, whatever may be the right solution regarding its date of composition, the fact remains that the writer of this apocalypse clearly and extensively describes and condemns the crimes and degradations of the later Asmoneans, who desecrate the “altar of God” and enter into alliances with foreign gods; the teachers of the law who accept bribes; the rise of Herod “godless, and exterminating the best of the people with the sword during thirty-four years”; the short reigns of Herod’s successors, by which he must mean the co-regents Antipater and Archelaus; the taking of Jerusalem by the Roman forces,
the burning of a part of the temple and crucifixion of Jews and the so-called "War of Varus" mentioned above. "Shortly after this," the writer continues, "time will come to an end." Then follows the extremely mutilated passage which caused the dispute about the date of composition.

In the further course of the book the author speaks of the coming final and most fearful persecution of the Jews, in connection with which he utters these words significant of a Jewish zealot: "Let us rather die than transgress the laws of the Lord of Lords, the God of our fathers! For if we do this and die, our blood will be avenged before the Lord." Following this exhortation come the words: "And then his kingdom will appear in his whole world. Then will the devil have an end and sorrow will be gone with him." Upon this follows a description of God rising from his throne to destroy pagan idolatry and to avenge his people, accompanied by a representation of the vanishing of the old earth and heaven, similar to that we have given from the Sibyllines. "Then wilt thou be happy, Israel," jubilantly cries the writer, "and will rise above the necks and wings of the eagle and soar in the starry heavens." It reads "necks" in the text, resembling the description of the Roman power as an eagle with several heads and several pairs of wings in a later Jewish apocalypse, as we shall see. These words significantly picture the spirit and fervor of the Jewish zealots who cut down the Roman eagle over the entrance of the temple. "Two hundred and fifty periods" after the ascension of Moses, the end will come, says the book. Nothing definite as to the time the writer intended to indicate can be gained for us from this expression, since the chronology from the death of Moses up to our era differs in the Old Testament, Josephus and other chronologies. Whichever we accept, the apocalyptic term "250 periods," denoting surely each a certain number of years (as in Daniel, who speaks of year-weeks, i.e., weeks of seven years each), the expression would land us somewhere in the first century of our era.

We are now at the threshold of Christianity. During the boyhood of John the Baptist and Jesus happened the exciting times of the revolt of the Jews, the war of Varus.

Every one knows that both John the Baptist and Jesus began to preach with the words: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," meaning thereby the near visible coming of a kingdom from heaven, the end of the world and the judgment as the Jewish apocalyptic writers had meant it before them. This is proved by different sayings attributed to Jesus in the gospels. Jesus says that
his disciples would not finish their preaching in the cities of Israel before the end would come (Matt. x. 23); that some were standing about him who would not see death before the kingdom would come with power (Mark ix. 1), and that immediately after the destruction of the city the end would come (Matt. xxiv. 29); Paul expected to live to see the end (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xvi. 52); the whole New Testament expresses throughout the expectation of the approaching end, especially the Revelation of John. That the Roman empire was to be the last empire was the established opinion among the Jews of Christ's time according to the false interpretation of the Book of Daniel in vogue at that time which explained the image seen in the dream by Nebuchadnezzar as symbolizing the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, Macedonian and Roman empires, instead, as originally meant, the Babylonian, the Mede, the Persian and Macedonian empires. Even the Jewish historian Josephus expresses this opinion in his Antiquities written for Gentiles, cautiously omitting to mention the Roman empire by name and adding that he did not think it proper to relate the meaning of the stone that smashed the image (X. 10, 4).

From the oracles of Daniel down through the apocalyptic literature to the times of Jesus, the Jews considered themselves to be the bearers of the only true, pure religion and the revealed law of God, in opposition to the idolatry of paganism and the many immoral and lax practices connected with it. They looked for the final downfall of idolatry and the victory of Jewish monotheism. They zealously denounced and ridiculed polytheism and idolatry. This denunciation and ridicule is even a more distinctive feature of the apocryphal apocalyptic Jewish literature than of that of the Old Testament.

At the same time these writers denounce the political and social oppression of the great pagan world-powers, especially their persecution of the Jewish religion and its adherents. In the Jewish oracles concerning the coming of God's kingdom there is much intense and fierce crying to God for retribution for this oppression and persecution. At the same time there is also much denunciation of the laxity and unfaithfulness towards God and his law among the Jewish people. Much of this denunciation may have been directed against lax outward observance of the Jewish law. But this denunciation does not stop here. It goes deeper. It condemns also the

1 Compare also Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32, stating that the generation living at his time would not pass away before the end would come.
unfaithful observance of the deeper ethical demands of the law. It would be a great mistake to think that the zealous Jewish apocalyptic writers when demanding and preaching faithfulness towards the Jewish religion only preached outward ceremonial righteousness and did not think of a deeper righteousness consisting in a just and brotherly behavior towards one's fellowmen. And in this respect the preaching of the Baptist and Jesus and the preaching of the apocalyptics touched one another.

Nevertheless, we must not overlook the fact that the Baptist and Jesus, though preaching the nearness of the kingdom of God and the final judgment as did the preceding Jewish apocalyptics, directed themselves more specifically and distinctively to the individuals in their own nation, bidding them repent of all evil and unrighteous action and be truly righteous in heart and not only outwardly. The apocalyptical writers had mainly in mind the more general distinction between the Jews as the proclaimers of monotheism and the followers of polytheism and idolatry. It was in the preaching of John and Jesus that the words rang out most clearly to their people: "Do not think we have Abraham for our father. The ax has been placed at the root of the tree. Every tree not bringing forth good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire," that is to say, no outward belonging to God's people, but only a true change of heart and life, saves in the day of judgment and makes acceptable in the coming kingdom.

The preceding Jewish prophets of God's kingdom touched more upon the political, social and religious oppression coming from their pagan adversaries and world-powers and emphasized the importance of the chosen race and its possession of the only right religion; while John and Jesus laid no stress whatever on these outward things but aimed to lead each individual in their nation to the conviction that the greatest bondage is not political bondage but the bondage of individual sin and passion, that the only genuine religion and liberty is to free oneself from this bondage. The true preparation for the kingdom to come, wherein would be perfect peace, righteousness and justice, would be to begin here to root out individually all selfishness and to practice benevolence, righteousness, forgiveness, mercy and love towards one's fellowmen. No one could be expected to be a partaker of God's kingdom unless he had at heart a disposition for it.

John the Baptist, Jesus and their followers were as much deceived in their expectation that the kingdom of God would come down suddenly and visibly from heaven as were the previous apo-
apocalyptic writers. But their teachings laid stress on a radical, individual personal change of heart and mind, leaving out the danger- ous apocalyptic national element of belonging to God's people and of having monopolized the true religion and law of God, and thus they were better fitted to open the path for a universal religion in which the idea of a kingdom of God received a higher meaning. This new conception was an idea to be realized not by a sudden overturning of the whole existing physical world-order but gradually by each individual bringing himself into accord with the supreme mind and will, the true, the good and the beautiful; so that governed by one Law, all may develop into a humanity of which each member will serve the rest unselfishly in as complete harmony as the many parts of the universe blend together.

After this digression on the teaching of Jesus in connection with the idea of the kingdom of God we will turn to the last historical stages in the Jewish expectation of that kingdom.

This expectation entered a peculiar stage with the death of Nero, 68 A. D. Shortly afterward the legend arose among the people, as the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius testify, that Nero was still living and had fled to the Parthians from whence he would return again. This legend is taken up in the Sibyllines (Book IV) and there woven together with other things. The flight of Nero to the Parthians is mentioned, the contention for the succession to the imperial throne, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the terrible eruption of Vesuvius as a warning to Rome to acknowledge the wrath of God for having destroyed "the guiltless race of the godly." Nero will come back across the Euphrates with "myriads" in his train, Rome will be punished and will give back doubly to Asia the great wealth it has plundered there. The whole world will be shaken. With all this is joined the exhortation to acknowledge God and repent, for the judgment is approaching.

Towards the end of the first century and the first part of the second we have the Jewish apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch, fictitious revelations attributed to the scribe Ezra of the Old Testa- ment (on the ruins of the city, as the book anachronistically says) and Baruch, the friend of the prophet Jeremiah, at the taking of the city of Nebuchadnezzar.

In the first is related a vision of an eagle with three heads, twelve large and eight small wings, rising from the sea and spreading himself over the whole earth. A roaring lion from a forest fore- tells his destruction as the last of the symbolical animal-monsters reigning over the earth, of which Daniel set the first type. At the
words of the lion the eagle-monster instantly disappears. The eagle is interpreted in the book as an empire reigned over by twelve main rulers, eight pretenders and three final reigns, the most impious of all. The lion is "the anointed of the Most High" reserved by him to bring judgment on the eagle and salvation for his people.

Another vision is given in the book. A man rising from the sea carried by the clouds of heaven takes his place on a high mountain. Great multitudes make an attack upon him, but are consumed by a stream of fire issuing from his mouth. This vision is interpreted as the destruction of the enemies of God by his anointed standing on Mount Zion. The book predicts besides the gathering of all Israel that also of the ten tribes. It further states that the world's history is divided into twelve periods of which ten have passed by and half of the eleventh part. Almost all commentators are agreed that the vision of the eagle refers to the Roman empire up to the time of Domitian, 81-96. With the beginning of the reign of the three Flavians, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, the three heads of the eagle, came the most fatal time for the Jews, the destruction of the city and the temple.

In close connection with the twelve periods of the Ezra apocalypse is the division given by the writer of the Baruch revelation, who sees a great cloud rising from the sea covering the whole earth, full of black and light colored waters, which succeed each other twelve times. The last waters are the darkest of all. Upon this a great flash of lightning appears lighting up the whole earth. The book interprets the vision as meaning the duration of the world and the history of Israel. The light colored waters designate the happy times of Israel when they were faithful, the dark waters its evil times. The last, the darkest waters of all, represent the end of all things; the great flash of lightning is the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of his people. Besides this the apocalypse says that God will prepare different peoples who will rise up in war against the last rulers of the last empire. This representation of revolts and great dissensions in the last empire is a feature which occurs in most Jewish apocalypses and oracles and is looked upon by them as a mark of the last days. Noted commentators consider the first quarter of the second century as the date of the composition of Baruch and that of the expected end.

With the last-mentioned work we have reached the last stage of the Jewish literary products on the subject treated. All expectations of the Jews in respect to the coming of God's kingdom had come to nought. The Roman empire continued to live while the
Jewish state had lost its existence after the destruction of the city and the unsuccessful final revolt under Bar-Cochab during the reign of Hadrian. After the destruction of the Jewish state the dispersed Jews for the time despaired of being able to foretell the definite period of God's kingdom as they understood it and resigned themselves to their fate.

But rising Christianity, the daughter of Judaism, took up the heritage of the Jewish apocalypses. The more the Roman government learned to distinguish between the Jewish religion and Christianity and the more aggressive the latter began to be in its fight with paganism, the more of that persecution came to be directed against the new faith which formerly had been aimed at the hated peculiar Jew.

The earliest Christian apocalypse, the Revelation of John, runs entirely along the lines of previous Jewish apocalypses. Rome is the last empire; from it will rise the Antichrist, the personification of the Evil One; Nero will return; revolts against Rome will take place and the great city will fall and the end come through the coming of Christ and his victory over the Antichrist and his forces. The whole background of this apocalypse is so thoroughly in accord, as regards its spirit and detail, with other Jewish apocalypses, that it may be almost counted with these. Even the fantastic materialistic description of the new world-order with its abundance of fruit, its gigantic bunches of grapes, its manna, its aromatics, etc., are transferred verbally from the Baruch apocalypse by such early Christian writers as Papias of Hierapolis.

The spirit of the first Christian apocalypse which saw in pagan Rome the incarnation of the Evil One because of its persecution of Christianity for which it would soon be punished and destroyed, is continued in later Christian writers of the second and third centuries. In the Christian Sibyllines and other Christian writings, such as in chapters xv and xvi of the Ezra apocalypse which are Christian additions, invectives are hurled against Rome either openly under this name or under the name of Babylon, in which the wrath of God is threatened and predicted for the shedding of the innocent blood of the believers in the new faith, all this in a tone imitating the old Hebrew prophets.

The return of Nero is hinted at in Rev. xvii. 11, "the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven"; xiii. 3, "his deadly wound was healed"; xiii. 18, "the number of the beast," the number 666 according to the most plausible explanation referring to Neron Caesar in Hebrew numerals; and xvi. 12, which speaks of the drying up of the Euphrates to make a way for the kings of the Orient (probably Parthia) who are to destroy Rome (led by Nero).
But as this is beyond the purpose of our article we will not enter any further into this kind of literature. Suffice it to say, that the Christian apocalyptic writers as well as their Jewish fore-runners were disappointed in their predictions and expectations of the kingdom of God in the literal sense of the word. Rome did not fall in the sense these writers expected, nor did an Antichrist arise from it who was destroyed with his forces by the second appearance of Christ. The idea of a kingdom of God on earth therefore underwent a transformation. Augustine (De civ. Dei, XX, 7, 9) and other Christian writers taught that the victory of the Christian church over paganism marked the advent of Christ's reign of a thousand years upon earth with the martyred saints and "those who had not adored the beast" (Rev. xx. 4). Since the times of the Reformation the idea of the kingdom of God has become a more spiritual, moral and even social idea, and the idea of a visible kingdom coming down from heaven has become more and more empty and meaningless in spite of the belief in it continued in the different confessions of the churches.