

--the Prophetic: the material that comes with the kingdom age and centers about the cult/king/prophet period before 500 AD.

--the Priestly: with the latest aspect of the literature of Israel given as the priests dominated the national life and the priestly cult was offering explanations for the destiny of the nation.

Religious ideas will move through these three stages in which they first show the very crude tribal ideas and then come to have a more societal modification with the pronouncements of the prophets while finding a more acceptable expression for all mankind in the priestly age. None of the Pentateuchal material is thought to be old enough to be Mosaic but it is sometimes allowed that there might be fragments or allusions to material that could be Mosaic. The primitive material (pre-prophetic) may be done in the very early days of the monarchies and probably represents a tradition that was older. The prophets do not really look their best until the time of the Captivity while the priestly offices come to the full in the re-settled Jerusalem. The more advanced ideas will belong to this latter period although one should not be surprised if the fabricators of the record tried at times to hide veiled references to them in earlier literature.

(a) The Idea of God

In liberal concepts man had to find God...God is an indefinable and rather inscrutable property and the development goes like this.

/1/ God is a growing deity rising from primitive polytheism through henotheism to monotheism. This is modified somewhat and in some authors to allow a little better view of the henotheism stage...they really thought of their God as being the only one but in a sense of the only one for them...not as the only one ever and ever. The documentary theory says that if you lay the documents out right you will see this concept of persons catching a greater awareness of God and the developmental theory says it will show a better view of God stage by stage.