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ON THE FULFILLMENT OF PREDICTION IN PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS:  
AMOS, HOSEA, MICAH, I ISAIAH

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the Degree of Master  
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## DIGEST

This thesis presents unfulfilled prophecies in order to show that the definition of a prophet does not rest solely on his ability to predict the future. Each chapter deals with two categories of prophecies: Those which deal with specific events and those which deal with the unspecified future

The first chapter deals with the prophet Amos. Seven prophecies are examined. Five prophecies were fulfilled after the death of the prophet, one prophecy has never been fulfilled, and one prophecy lacks sufficient information to determine whether it was fulfilled or not.

The second chapter deals with the prophet Hosea. Fourteen prophecies are examined. Five prophecies were unfulfilled, another four were unfulfilled if Hosea meant a literal return to Egypt, four were fulfilled, and one lacks sufficient information to determine whether it was fulfilled or not.

The third chapter deals with Micah. Four prophecies are examined. Two prophecies are unfulfilled and the other two can be considered unfulfilled if they are understood literally.

The fourth chapter deals with I Isaiah. Sixteen prophecies are examined. Ten prophecies are unfulfilled, three can be considered to be either fulfilled or unfulfilled, and the remaining three prophecies present two possibilities. First, if these prophecies refer to a specific event then one was fulfilled while the other two were unfulfilled. Second,

if these prophecies refer to the unspecified future, then all three were unfulfilled.

The conclusion presents the percentages of prophecies unfulfilled. These percentages are not absolute, but do show that the percentage of prophecies unfulfilled is significant.

The appendix contains a chart which shows those prophecies examined and the conditions under which they were fulfilled.



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## INTRODUCTION

Any work which deals with the prophets generally includes a discussion of the meaning of the word "prophet". Even though these definitions vary, there is one concept that is common among them: The prophet is capable of predicting the future. This view is reflected in the definition of prophet found in the Oxford English Dictionary: "One who predicts or foretells what is going to happen, a prognosticator, a predictor."<sup>1</sup> According to this same dictionary, a prophetic statement is "characterized by, containing, or of the nature of prophecy or prediction: predictive."<sup>2</sup> Otto Eissfeldt accepted this definition when he said: "The prophetic word is predictive."<sup>3</sup> In answer to the question "What was a prophet?" Dr. Sandmel says:

A prophet, simply stated, was someone deemed close to the Deity who through special revelation was able to predict the future. The remarkably elevated content of the literary prophecy in the Tanak led scholars toward the end of the nineteenth century to minimize the element of prediction in prophecy. From that generation we have inherited the misleading epigram that the prophets were not "foretellers," but "forth tellers". In fact they were both.

In view of the emphasis placed upon the predictive ability of a prophet it is the purpose of this thesis to present those prophecies whose accuracy can be checked and which a question is raised as to whether they are fulfilled or not. This is done in order to show that the definition of a prophet does not rest solely on his ability to predict the future. It

would be beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all the various factors that make up the definition of a prophet as would an examination of the writings of all the prophets. Consequently, the material for this thesis comes from the writings of the pre-exilic prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, and I Isaiah.

The prophecies of these prophets fall into two distinct categories. The first type deals with an impending historical event or concerns on individual's fortunes. Prophecies of this type will be called specific or concrete. A prediction of this type would say that within a certain period of time a kingdom would cease to exist; or that the army of one nation would attack or destroy the army of another nation; or that a certain individual would be killed or captured or would lose his material possessions. In some oracles, the time is not stated, or else stated in such a way that it is difficult to determine when it would happen. Nevertheless, this kind of prophecy concerns an event in history, so that if it did not happen after a certain lapse of time, it would never happen. These specific/concrete prophecies then, are bound by time, place, and person. A prediction of this type may be unfulfilled in one of several ways: First, the event did not occur when it was supposed to happen; Second, the order of events as predicted is incorrect; Third, the event predicted did occur, but only after the passage of a considerable amount of time;

Finally, two events were predicted to occur simultaneously, but they did not occur simultaneously. There are also some prophecies which, although they are clearly stated, we do not have enough information to know whether or not they were fulfilled.

In contrast to this type of prophecy, the second type deals with the unspecified or undifferentiated future. Prophecies of this type are worded in such a way that they are open ended. This is to say, no matter how much time passes, there is always the possibility that they will be fulfilled at a later time. As of now, prophecies of this type are unfulfilled, but this does not mean that they could not be fulfilled at a later date.

There are a few prophecies which do not clearly fall into either category. Depending on whether they are viewed literally or symbolically, they can be considered as being either specific or non-specific prophecies. Such prophecies are dealt with under each category.

In dealing with any particular prediction, in order to determine if it is unfulfilled, it is necessary to know the following: First, who is being addressed; Second, what is being predicted; And finally, when is the predicted event to occur. When it is not possible to determine these items about a certain prophecy, it is not known whether or not this prophecy was fulfilled.

## NOTES

1. The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, (1971) p. 1474.
2. Ibid.
3. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, trans. by Peter R. Ackroyd, p. 78.
4. Ibid, p. 48.



## CHAPTER ONE

### AMOS

The prophecies of Amos can be divided into the two categories mentioned in the introduction. First, we shall deal with those prophecies that predict an impending historical event or concern an individual's fortunes. Then we shall examine those oracles that deal with the unspecified future.

In Am 3:11 Amos makes the following prediction:

סבן כה אמר אדני יהוה צר וסביב הארץ והארץ  
נמק עסק אנכי ארמנו תיך:

"Therefore, thus says Yahweh the Lord, an enemy shall surround the land, your stronghold shall be thrown down and your palaces sacked." This prediction raises the following questions: Who is being addressed? Is it Israel, Judah, or perhaps both? Who is the enemy that Amos is referring to? When is such a confrontation to take place?

In order to determine who is being addressed, it is necessary to begin by looking at the superscription, Am 1:1:

דבר רי עמוס אשר-היה בקדש מתקוע אשר חלה ע  
ישראל

"The words of Amos who was one of the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel." From this verse it is clear that Amos was concerned with Israel. But what has

to be determined is what did the word "Israel" mean for Amos. Did he use it to designate just the northern kingdom, i.e. the country of Israel, or did he use it to designate all of the people, regardless of whether they lived in the north or south. In Am 3:1 Amos is addressing all the twelve tribes, i.e. the people of both Israel and Judah:

שְׁמַע אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 עַל כֹּל הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלִיתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם לֵאמֹר:

"Listen, people of Israel, to this oracle Yahweh speaks concerning you, the whole family I brought out of the land of Egypt." From this verse it would seem that Amos uses Israel to mean the inhabitants of both the southern and northern kingdoms. If indeed Amos was prophesying against both Israel and Judah, one would expect explicit mention of Judah. Amos does mention Judah in Am 1:2, 2:4, 2:5, 6:1, 7:12 and 9:11, but only in 2:4 and 2:5 is there a definite prophecy involving Judah. The other citations merely mention Judah in passing.<sup>1</sup> In Am 2:4 and 2:5 we find the following oracle:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה כְּשָׁדֵי יְהוּדָה וְעַל אֶרֶצָהּ לֵאמֹר  
 אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ עַל מַאֲסָם אֶת־תִּירוֹת יְהוָה וְחִקִּין לֹא שִׁמְרוּ  
 וַיִּתְּעוּם כַּזְבִּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

וַיִּשְׁלַחְתִּי אֶשׁ בִּיהוּדָה לִמְכַלֵּה אֶרְמוֹנֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

Thus says Yahweh: For the three transgressions of Judah and for four, I will not relent, because they have rejected the law of Yahweh and have not kept His commandments, and their lies, which their fathers followed, caused them to err. I am going to send fire on Judah and it shall consume the palaces of Jerusalem.

The authenticity of these two verses has been questioned by the author of the I.C.C. on Amos. He offers the following reasons for considering it a gloss:

1. The late date of the idea contained in it; Judah's sins are of a Deuteronomic character.
2. The use of the word וְהָיָה .
3. The awkwardness of the syntax as it is here introduced.
4. The symmetry of the strophic arrangement is entirely destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

The I.C.C., along with the views of other scholars<sup>3</sup>, leave little doubt that these two verses are a gloss. Since these two verses were not written by Amos, we are left with only passing references to Judah. These references do not support an argument that both kingdoms are being addressed.

In Am 7 we learn that Amaziah, a northern priest, has been listening to the words of Amos and he is concerned with what Amos has said. So concerned is Amaziah that he sends a report to Jeroboam II saying that Amos is plotting against both the king and the country of Israel. A northern priest at a northern sanctuary would not be concerned with events in the south. In fact, had Amos been predicting a destruction of the south, Amaziah would have picked it up and relayed such news to the king. The only prophecies which would upset

Amaziah would be those leveled at Israel and her king. Consequently, Amos must have been speaking about Israel.

The only strong reference to both north and south is to be found in Am 3:1. But with no other evidence to support a prophetic statement against both Israel and Judah, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the phrase "the whole family I brought out of the land of Egypt," was a literary device used to catch the attention of the people and was not meant to be taken literally to include both the north and the south.

It is clear then that Amos is concerned with what has been happening in the northern kingdom and this would account for passing mentions of Judah, but when Amos uses the word Israel he is addressing the northern kingdom.

It is now necessary to describe the conditions under which Amos prophesied in order to discover who the enemy was. Jeroboam II's father, Joash had crushed Damascus and had regained territory that had been lost. Jeroboam II continued these attacks and finally took Damascus (II Ki 14:28) and restored the eastern boundaries (I Ch 13:5). Tribute was collected from these territories adding to the wealth of Israel.

Internationally, Assyria was occupied with her own internal problems as was Egypt, thus neither one of them posed a threat to Israel. Urartu was the only power capable of threatening Israel, but she was never concerned with territory that far south. Consequently, any threat of military attack would not be taken seriously. Israel was secure.

militarily and well off financially and anything that Amos might say would only be considered a nuisance. It is just this kind of treatment that Amos received from Amaziah.

In Am 3:11 the enemy is not named:

גַּם אֶת־הָאֵלֹהִים

"An enemy shall surround the Land." Also in Am 6:14 the nation is not named:

כִּי־הִנֵּנִי מִקִּים עֲלֵיכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
הִצְבֵּאוֹת לֵאמֹר וְלִמְחֹצוֹ אֶתְכֶם מִלְּבָאֵל חֲמַת עַד הָעֲרָבָה:

"For behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O House of Israel, it is Yahweh who speaks, the God of hosts; a nation that will afflict you from the pass of Hamath right down to the wadi of the Arabah." There are two possible reasons as to why Amos does not mention that nation by name. First, Amos did know that God was about to punish Israel for her sins and this punishment would be in the form of an attack by a foreign nation, but he did not know which nation it would be. Second, he did know, but he had his own reasons for not mentioning that nation by name. Given the circumstances described above, he would have had to have given a lengthy explanation in order to convince anyone that Assyria was going to attack Israel. And it is doubtful if any argument would have been convincing.

The possibility that Amos did have Assyria in mind may be present in a hint in Am 5:27, where he says:

וְהַדַּעַתְנִי אֶתְכֶם מִלְּבָאֵל חֲמַת עַד הָעֲרָבָה

:יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ



"Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity far beyond Damascus, says Yahweh, God of hosts is his name." Amos uses the phrase *לְרָחוֹק* meaning "far off, far away, far beyond." This same phrase is found in Gen 35:21:

וַיֵּסַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְהֵכָה לְרָחוֹק מִבְּנֵי-עֵדֶר:

"And Israel journeyed, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder." This is also found in Jer 22:19:

קְבֹרֶת חֲמֹר יִקָּבֵר שָׁחַל וְהִשָּׁק מִהֵלֶכָה לְרָחוֹק יְרוּשָׁלַם:

"He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." In both examples this phrase does not designate a specific location. In Genesis it merely refers to the area of land beyond the "tower of Eder" and in Jeremiah it refers to any place outside of the city. In the same way, Amos may have used this phrase to mean any territory far away from Israel and he did not mean an exact geographical location, i.e. Assyria. On the other hand, Amos may have been thinking of Assyria, but because of the reasons stated above, he did not want to mention Assyria by name. We do know that the inhabitants of Israel were led away to Assyria in 722/721 B.C.E. and Assyria is located beyond Damascus, but on this basis it would be fallacious to assume that Amos was referring to Assyria. It is thus impossible to say with confidence which enemy Amos had in mind if indeed he had any at all.

We now come to the problem of when the attack was to take place and when the people were to be led away. In the oracle itself, Amos makes no mention of when the attack

would come. All that we know is that in the future Israel will be surrounded and the people will be led away into captivity. Here again we are faced with two possibilities. First, Amos did not know when it would occur, but he knew it was coming, so rather than give a date that might be incorrect, he chose to say nothing. Second, Amos did know, but decided not to say. It is possible that he felt that if he said the attack would take place in thirty or forty years, the impact of his oracle would be lost. But it seems more likely that Amos thought that the invasion was imminent. This would appear to be the case for the following reasons. First, when one knows something is going to happen soon, one usually just states it without attaching a date. We hear predictions like this all the time from government officials. For example, "We will have a beef shortage," or "We will have an increase in taxes." They do not say when the shortage or increase will occur because there is no need to, as it will happen in the near future. Second, had Amos thought that the invasion was thirty or forty years away, by failing to state this, his oracle would have lost credibility. After a few years people would think that since punishment for their actions had not come, their actions were not wrong. This would defeat the purpose of the prophetic statement. Finally, Amos would not have appeared at Beth El and confronted Amaziah, a high priest of a royal sanctuary, unless he believed that what he prophesied was about to happen. Amos would have realized that his prophecy would anger Amaziah and place his

own life in danger. If he thought it would take thirty or forty years before his prophecy was to be fulfilled, he would have said so. By not saying when, Amos would have left himself open to continual criticism and after a few years Amaziah would have thought of him as a false prophet and continued in his old ways. In other words, he would do those very things that were not acceptable to Yahweh, the practices that elsewhere Amos condemns. There is no reason to think that Amos wanted to see Israel destroyed; rather the opposite is true. Consequently, it is difficult to believe that Amos would have knowingly reinforced those very practices he was trying to eliminate.

Again, we cannot say with certainty what was in Amos' mind and what his motivations were or whether he knew when the invasion would come. We do know that thirty or forty years after Amos' prediction, the people were led away into captivity thus fulfilling his prophecy.

Concerning the confrontation with Amaziah, Amos says to Amaziah in Am 7:17:

לכן כה אמר יהוה אלוהיך בעיר תצננה וזנך וזנתיך בחרה  
יפלו ואוצרותיך בחרס תחלשן ואת עמך אצמנה וטמאה תמנות  
וישראל אלם ילםה מעד אצמנה:

Therefore thus says Yahweh: Your wife will be a harlot in the city, your sons and daughters will fall by the sword and your land will be divided up, you will die in an unclean land. And Israel will surely go into captivity far from its own land.

Since we have no information about the personal life of Amaziah, there is no way of knowing if his wife became a

harlot or if his children died by the sword or if his land was divided up. However, we do know that the people were led away into captivity in 722 B.C.E.

It is possible to view this verse on two different levels. First, Amos is making a personal prophecy against Amaziah and his family, and its probable fulfillment was the result of Israel's being led away into captivity. We can assume it was fulfilled because there is no reason to suspect that Amaziah and his family escaped the effects of the exile. The exile of Israel caused hardships for many families and Amaziah's was one of them. Second, Amos is addressing Amaziah not as an individual, but is addressing all the people of Israel. Amaziah, the high priest, represents an Israelite family and what is going to happen to him is indicative of what is going to happen to nearly everyone. Their families will be destroyed and they will be taken into exile and will die there. Such a view increases the scope of Amos' oracle, for not only is Amaziah to be cut off from his immortality<sup>4</sup>, but other families are to be cut off as well. Consequently, not only would Amaziah be concerned with Amos' words, but all inhabitants of Israel would be concerned.

In this oracle, there is no indication of when the exile was to take place or where the people would be taken. For the same reasons stated above, concerning the oracle in Am 3:11, it would appear that Amos felt it would happen in the near future.

Amos predicts the coming of a disaster in Am 5:18-20:

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין אֵל אֶת יוֹם יְהוָה זֶה לָכֵן יִהְיֶה  
הוּא חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא אֹר: כִּי אֵין אֵל אֶת יְהוָה  
וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין אֵל אֶת יְהוָה  
וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

Woe for those who are waiting for the day of Yahweh! What will this day of Yahweh mean for you? It will mean darkness, not light, as when a man escapes a lion's mouth, only to meet a bear: He enters his house and puts his hand on the wall, only for a snake to bite him. Will not the day of Yahweh be darkness, not light? It will be gloom with no brightness in it.

In order to understand this oracle, it is necessary to explain the meaning of the expression "day of Yahweh." Most Christian scholars support the theory that a pre-prophetic popular eschatology existed in ancient Israel. According to this theory, "day of Yahweh" would be the day on which God would intervene in history, by destroying Israel's enemies and by raising Israel, His chosen people, up over all the nations. But this "day of God's catastrophic visitation" has not yet come.<sup>5</sup>

There is however no scriptural proof to support the theory that a popular eschatology existed. Those scholars who support a theory of such, use a curcular argument and impose a later eschatology on those people who do not have one.<sup>6</sup>

To understand what Amos meant by the term "day of Yahweh," it is necessary to look at Am 5:21-25:

וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְכִי יִהְיֶה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:



הסר מעלי החון שר'ך וזמרת נבלי'ך לא אשמח:  
 וידל כמים משפט וצדקה כטל אית'י השבחים  
 ומנוחה העשתם לי במדבר ארבעים שנה בית  
 ישראלי

I hate and despise your feasts. I do not delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offering and meat offerings I will not accept (them); neither will I accept the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your harps. But let justice flow like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness for all those forty years, O House of Israel? But you must carry Siccuth your king and Chiun your images, those idols you have made for yourselves.

It is clear from this passage that "day of Yahweh" is a festival day when the people were accustomed to offer sacrifices. It was also a day of joy that the people looked forward to, as the day when God passed judgement on the people. This festival<sup>7</sup> occurred once each year and after they had done those rituals that they thought God wanted, they assumed that they would have God's blessings for the coming year. Amos is saying here that this is not what the "day of Yahweh" will be. Rather the "day of Yahweh" will be a day of destruction and the people will go into exile. One year, when the people would naturally expect God to hear their songs and accept their sacrifices, He will not answer them the way that they expect. Rather He will give them hard times and lead them away. Amos does not say when this year

will come. Amos' prophecy was fulfilled in 721 B.C.E.

We now turn to a prophecy that is the second kind of prophecy mentioned in the introduction. This prophecy deals with the unspecified future. Amos says in Am 9:11-15:

ביום ההוא אקים את סכת עוֹיֵף הנפלת ואת פִּרְזֵיךְ  
והרסתי אקים ובניתי כימי עולם: יירשן את שארית  
אדום וכל העמים אשר נקהו שמי עֲלֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה עֲשֶׂה לָאֹת:  
הנה ימים באים לֵאמֹר יְהוָה וְלֹאֹשׁ חורש בקצור וברק ענבים במשק  
הצרֹעַ וּפְטִיכֹה הִהָרִים עֲסִים וְכָל הַגְּבוּלוֹת תִּתְחַלֵּל לְעֵינֵי: וְשָׁבְתִי  
את שבות עמי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל עָרֵי מְשָׁחוֹת וְיִשְׁבּוּ וְשָׁלוֹ כְרָמִים  
וְשָׁתוּ אֶת יַיִן וְעָשׂוּ לֵעֵת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת פְּרִיהֶם: וְנִטְעַתִּים עֹץ  
אֲדָמָתָם וְלֹא יִנְתְּשׁוּ עוֹף מֵעַץ אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נִתְּתִי לָהֶם  
אֲמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

On that day I will re-erect the fallen succah of David that is fallen and close up its breaches, and I will raise up his ruins and I will rebuild it as in the days of old, so that they may possess the remnant of Edam and of all the nations over which my name has been pronounced, thus says Yahweh who does this. The days are coming, says Yahweh, when the harvest will follow directly after sowing and the treading of grapes soon after sowing, when the mountains will drop sweet wine and all the hills will flow with it. I will drop sweet wine and all the hills will flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, plant gardens and eat their produce. I will plant them in their own country never to be rooted up again out of the land which I gave to them, says Yahweh your God.

This passage was not written by Amos, but is a later addition.<sup>8</sup>

It was probably written by a Judean in the Babylonian captivity sometime before the restoration. It is necessary to know what

Amos is predicting in order to determine whether it was fulfilled or not. If the fallen succah referred to in Am 9:11 is an image of the Temple in Jerusalem, then this prediction was fulfilled at the time of the restoration. We cannot say with certainty whether or not the harvest was as abundant as predicted in Am 9:13-14. But we do know that the people were uprooted again, contrary to the prediction in Am 9:15. If the succah of David refers to the Davidic dynasty, then this oracle is predicting the fulfillment of a promise made in

II Sam 7:10, 7:12, 7:15-16, which is addressed to David:

ושמתי מקום לעמי אישבה ונשבתו ושכן תחתיו ולא ירגע עוד  
 ולא יסיפו בני עולם לענותו כאשר בראשונה: כי ינחל  
 ימיו ושכבת את אבותיך והקמתי את זרעך אחריו אשר  
 יבא ממעך והכינתי את ממלכתו: והסדי לא יסור ממנו  
 כאשר הסרתי מעם שאול אשר הסרתי ממלכתו: ונאמן  
 בירתי וממלכתך עד עולם לפני כסאך יהיה נכון  
 עד עולם:

I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again, nor shall the wicked afflict them anymore as they did. And when your days are ended and you sleep with your ancestors, I will establish your seed after you, which shall come out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. But my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom will be established forever before Me and your throne will be established forever.

Haggai presumed that this oracle was being fulfilled in

Zerubbabel, Hg 2:23:

קיום ההוא לאמ יהוה צבאות אקח זרובבל בן שאלת'אל  
 עבדי לאמ יהוה ושמתי כחתם כי בק בחרתי לאמ

"On that day says Yahweh, I will take you, Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says Yahweh, and I will make you a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says Yahweh." Concerning the productivity of the land, Haggai says that the harvest will not be good because the Temple has not been rebuilt(Hg 1:9-10):

כנה אל הרבה ונתהפך והבאתם הבית ונתחתי בן  
 יצן מה נאם יהוה צבאות יצן בית אשר הוא הרב ואתם  
 רבים איש לביתו: עתה כן עתידכם כעל שנים שנים ונתהפך  
 כעל יבואה:

The abundance you expected proved to be little. When you brought the harvest in, my breath spoiled its. And why? It is Yahweh who speaks: Because while my House lies in ruins you are busy with your own, each one of you. That is why the sky has withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its produce.

This attempt to re-establish the line of David did not last long and soon both the Temple and the line of David disappeared. Viewed in these terms, we can say that this prophecy is as yet unfulfilled and open to the possibility of another re-establishment of the line of David at some time in the future. There is a third possible explanation of this passage and that is , if the succah of David is poetic metaphor for a utopian kind of future. In other words, the prophet is not predicting the occurrence of specific events, but rather describing what an idyllic future could be like. If this is the case, then the passage remains unfulfilled.

## SUMMARY

The entire book of Amos contains seven prophecies which we have examined. Five of these, 3:11, 5:27, 6:14, 5:18-20, and the second half of 7:17 were fulfilled after the death of the prophet, at least thirty or forty years after Amos predicted them. Am 7:17 contains two prophecies, one directed against Amaziah and one directed against Israel. The prophecy about Israel is mentioned above. The prophecy concerning Amaziah was probably fulfilled, but we do not know this for certain, so it is best to say that it is not known whether it was fulfilled or not. The remaining prophecy, 9:11-15, has not been fulfilled. However, it should be kept in mind that this passage was probably a later addition.



## NOTES

1. Am 1:2: ויבא נהוה מן ציון וישמעל מן ירושלים יתן קולו:

"Yahweh roars from Zion and makes His voice heard from Jerusalem." Amos no doubt considered Mount Zion as the dwelling of Yahweh and therefore when Yahweh speaks His words would "go out" from Jerusalem. This verse would not effect the way in which he uses the word "Israel."

Am 6:1: הוי השאלים בציון והבט חים בהר שומרון נקבי  
האשית הדלים ובאלו עתם בית ישראל:

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and to those who feel so safe on the Mountain of Samaria, those famous men of the first nation to whom the House of Israel goes (to seek advice)." Amos here is singling out a small group of men who should take note, because their actions have not gone unnoticed. It would seem that these men are present both in the north and south. Nevertheless, this reference does not tell us anymore about the word "Israel."

Am 7:12: ויבא נהוה מן ציון אל עמוס מוזהר עק ברח עק אל  
אורף ירושלה ואכל שם לחם ושם תגבא:

"Amaziah said to Amos: Go away seer, flee to the land of Judah, eat bread there and prophesy there." This is not an oracle and certainly tells us nothing about who is being addressed.

Am 9:11: ביום ההוא אקים את סכנת דודת ונגרתי  
את כרציהן והרסתי אקים ובניתי כימי עולם:

"That day I will re-erect the fallen hut of David, and repair the gaps in it, and restore its ruins and rebuild it as it was in the days of old." This oracle will be dealt with in the discussion of the second type of prophecy.

2. William Rainey Harper, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea, The International Critical Commentary, (hereinafter I.C.C.), XXIII, 44.
3. Matthew Black, gen. ed., Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Old Testament ed. H.H. Rowley, 619. Nolan B. Harmon, gen. ed., The Interpreter's Bible, The Book of Amos, exegesis by Hughell E. W. Fosbroke and exposition by Sidney Lovett, (hereinafter I.B.), VI, 785. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, trans. by Peter R. Ackroyd, 400. Johannes Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, 242.
4. The biblical concept of immortality is linked with progeny and land. If an individual loses both his children and his land, then he has lost his immortality. See: Herbert Chanan Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife - A Biblical Complex," Hebrew Union College Annual, XLIV(1973).

5. See I.B., 817-822.
6. See Lindblom, Prophecy, 316-317.
7. Lindblom identifies this festival as a New Year festival;  
Ibid, 318.
8. I.C.C., 195-196.

## CHAPTER TWO

## HOSEA

First we shall look at those prophecies that are specific and concrete, which deal with an impending historical event or concern an individual's fortunes. Then we shall examine those that deal with the unspecified future.

In Hos 1:2, Yahweh says to Hosea:

לך קח לך אשה זנות וילדי זנות כי זנה תלך  
הלארץ מאחרי יהוה:

"Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom, for the country itself has committed great whoredom by departing from Yahweh." Hosea marries and his wife gives birth to a son. Then Yahweh says to him, in Hos 1:4-5:

קרא שמו יזרעאל כי עיר נעל ופקדתי את דמי יזרעאל  
בית יהוא והשבת ימלאו בית ישראל: והיה ברם הרוח  
ושבתתי את קשת ישראל בעמק יזרעאל:

"Call his name Jezreel because in a little while..." It is necessary to examine closely the translation of the rest of this verse and verse 5, in order to determine exactly what is being predicted. The verb פקד... means "to visit upon in the sense of punishment."<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the significance of the phrase דמי יזרעאל, "the blood of Jezreel," we need to look at the history of events which took place in the valley of Jezreel.

Ahab, king of Israel, desired to possess the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel. Naboth refuses to either sell or trade his vineyard. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, devises a plan to dispose of Naboth and acquire the vineyard. On the basis of false charges, Naboth is stoned to death and Ahab takes possession of the vineyard.<sup>2</sup> Elijah goes to Ahab and says:

כה אמר יהוה הרצחת וגם ירשת ארצו כה אמר יהוה  
במקום אשר עקרו הכלבים את דם נבות יעקו הכלבים  
את דמך גם אתה:

"Yahweh says: You have committed murder and now you steal as well. So Yahweh says this: In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick your blood too."<sup>3</sup>

Elijah then continues and clarifies the sentences which he has pronounced:

הנני מבי אלקי רעה וגזרתי אחריך והכרתי אלהיך  
משתן בקיר ועצור ועלוב בשראש

"I will now bring disaster down on you: I will take away your descendants and cut off every male belonging to the family of Ahab, shut up or freed in Israel."<sup>4</sup> By killing Naboth and taking away his land, Ahab has destroyed Naboth's immortality. Consequently, Ahab is to receive a punishment which would do to him what he did to Naboth. This punishment was to take place in the valley of Jezreel, the place where Naboth was killed. But Ahab repents, so Elijah returns to him and says:

יען כי נכנס מפת אלהי הרעה בימיו בימי אלהיך  
הרעה על ביתו:

"Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster during his lifetime, but in his son's days I will bring the disaster on his house."<sup>5</sup> This prophecy would be fulfilled by Jehu.

A disciple of Elisha's anoints Jehu king of Israel<sup>6</sup> and directs him to destroy the family of Ahab.<sup>7</sup> As was predicted, the sons of Ahab were massacred in the valley of Jezreel. However, Jehu sins during his reign but because of the good he has done, his sons will sit on the throne of Israel for four generations.<sup>8</sup> After this time, his dynasty will come to an end.

The significance of the phrase, "the blood of Jezreel," lies in these events which have taken place there. Ahab cut Naboth off from his future and then Jehu cut off Ahab. The valley of Jezreel takes on the meaning of a place of punishment. Not just any punishment, but a particular kind of punishment, a cutting off from posterity.<sup>9</sup>

The word *בית* used in conjunction with the name of a king refers to the family or dynasty of the king.<sup>10</sup> This then would include all the sons of the king and any possible heirs to the throne. So here too, the expression

*בית יהוה* refers to Jehu's family, meaning his royal line and any future heirs of his to the throne.

This part of the verse:

*בקרבותי את בני ישראל על דם יזרעל*

reads in translation: "I will visit (for the purpose of punishment) the blood of Jezreel on the dynasty of Jehu."



The nature of the punishment involved is explained by the expression "the blood of Jezreel." Just as Jehu cut off Ahab from his posterity, so too will Jehu be cut off from his posterity. According to this prediction, Jehu's sons would be punished and Jehu's dynasty would come to an end. If we look at the succession after Jehu we will see that this is just what happened. Jehu was succeeded by his son Jehahaz (II Ki 13:1); Jehoahaz was succeeded by Joash, his son (II Ki 13:10); Joash by his son Jeroboam II (ii Ki 14:23); Jeroboam II by his son Zechariah (II Ki 15:8) who reigned for six months, at which time his reign was terminated by Shallum ben Jabesh. The assassination of Zechariah marked the end of the dynasty of Jehu and fulfilled the prediction.

The verse concludes:

והשבתי מלכות בית ישראל

This must also be examined in order to determine what is being predicted. The problem lies in the phrase מלכות בית ישראל. This verse in Hosea is the only place where מלכות is used in conjunction with בית ישראל. We find מלכות used in conjunction with the names of non-Jewish kings,<sup>11</sup> and with Israel,<sup>12</sup> but its meaning in these places is not altogether clear. A careful examination of verses 4 and 5 leads to two possible translations of מלכות. Either of these translations fit, when used in the above mentioned passage.

We are dealing with three phrases:

Phrase A: כי עוז מעל ופקדתי את בני ישראל על בית יהוא

Phrase B: והשבתי מלכות בית ישראל

Phrase C: ביום יהוא ושבתי את קשת ישראל בעמק יזרעאל

By looking at how they are related, not only are the two translations of  $\text{JH} \text{ } \delta \text{NN}$  derived, but also two different predictions are derived.

The first possibility comes from making phrase A parallel to phrase C<sup>13</sup> and phrase B then would be an intrusion that was inserted in order to explain to the reader the nature of the punishment involved. It would be logical to assume that the reader, probably someone from the southern kingdom, would not understand the phrase,  $\delta \text{ } \delta \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \text{' } \text{' } \text{N} \text{ } \gamma$  and so a word of explanation was inserted.<sup>14</sup> Phrase A would then read in translation: "In a little while I will visit the blood of Jezreel on the dynasty of Jehu." Phrase C would then read in translation: "On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." Something which was going to happen to the dynasty of Jehu would spell the beginning of the end for Israel. The beginning of the end would be marked by a military defeat, "the breaking of the bow of Israel." The "something" is described by the phrase

$\delta \text{ } \delta \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \text{' } \text{' } \text{N} \text{ } \gamma$ . As explained above, this would mean that the dynasty of Jehu would come to an end. Since phrase B is an explanation of the  $\delta \text{ } \delta \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \gamma \text{ } \text{' } \text{' } \text{N} \text{ } \gamma$ , then it must mean an end to the dynasty of Jehu. We can now translate  $\text{JH} \text{ } \delta \text{NN}$  as "dynasty" or "royal family." Phrase B would then read in translation: "I will cause to cease the dynasty (royal family) of the House of Israel." If this is the case, then Hosea is predicting an end to Jehu's dynasty thereby bringing on the end of Israel.. And, as shown above, Jehu's son was

assassinated thus marking the end of his dynasty and after twenty-two years of internal turmoil Israel was destroyed.

The second possibility comes from making phrase A parallel to phrase B, and phrase C then is either a later addition<sup>15</sup> or a particular statement describing what is going to happen. Phrase A would read the same as above, but phrase B would read in translation: "I will cause to cease the kingdom of (the House) Israel." The translation of kingdom for מלכות is used for the following reasons. First, the standard translation for מלכות is "kingdom of."<sup>16</sup> Second, Hosea uses the expressions מלכות ישראל and מלכות יהודה to refer to the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom respectively, as political entities.<sup>17</sup> Thus an acceptable translation for מלכות ישראל would be "Israel" and מלכות יהודה would be "Judah." For the third possibility, we refer to Hos 5:1:

שמעו זאת הכהנים והקשילו בית ישראל ובית המלך כי  
לכם המשפט כי פה הייתם למכרה ולשת כרושה  
על תרור

"Hear this priests, hearken House of Israel, listen house of the king; for the judgement is against you, because you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor." Here three distinct groups are being addressed: the priests, Israel, and the family of the king. The judgement which Hosea is pronouncing is directed against each one of these **three distinct groups**. In the same way, in Hos 1:4, Hosea is addressing two of these three: the family of the king, and

Israel. Finally, if we turn to the other passages which use  $\text{מלכות}$  we see that a translation of "kingdom of" fits into the context better than a translation of "dynasty" or "royal family."<sup>18</sup> A judgement based on the context alone would not yield sufficient evidence to warrant a translation of "kingdom of" for  $\text{מלכות}$ , but in conjunction with the other reasons stated above, such a translation does seem a good one.

If we accept this possibility, then Hosea is making two predictions which were to occur simultaneously. This view is supported by the I.C.C. on Hosea: "It appears that Hosea expected the end of Jehu's dynasty and the end of the kingdom to come at the same time."<sup>19</sup> The Interpreter's Bible holds the same view: "Hosea condemns the sanguinary Jehu and declares that his house and with it the Kingdom of Israel, will be destroyed at Jezreel."<sup>20</sup>

Further evidence for considering that these two predictions were to occur simultaneously can be found in Hos 5:1. As stated above, Hosea is addressing the priests, Israel, and the family of the king. In this oracle, as in Hos 1:4, the fate of Israel and the fate of the family of the king are together in the same prediction. The family of the king is to be punished and at the same time Israel is to be punished. We already know that the punishment of the family of the king will be an end to the dynasty of Jehu and the punishment of the kingdom of Israel will be an end to the kingdom.

Use of the expression *לֵךְ קָצֵה*, "a little while," tells us that this prophecy is to be fulfilled very shortly.

We find the same expression of Ex 17:4:

וַיִּצְדַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַה אֶעֱשֶׂה לְעַם הַזֶּה  
לֵךְ קָצֵה וְסָקָנִי:

"Moses cried to Yahweh: What shall I do for this people? A little while and they will stone!" The people were angry with Moses, so Moses feared for his life. He was not concerned with what the people would do to his ten or twenty years in the future, he was worried about what they would do to him in the next few moments. The immediacy of Moses' concern is conveyed by the phrase *לֵךְ קָצֵה*.<sup>21</sup>

Further evidence for believing that this prophecy was to be fulfilled very shortly is found in Hos 5:7:

בַּיּוֹם בָּטְלוּ כ' בְּנֵי זָרִים יִצְּלוּ עֲדָתָהּ יִכְלֹסוּ חֵדָּשׁ  
אֶת חֹלְקֵיהֶם:

"They have dealt treacherously against Yahweh; they have begotten strange children; now will a month devour them and their portions." The "they" refers to the three groups mentioned in Hos 5:1: the priests, Israel, and the family of the king. Our concern here is with the use of the word

*חֵדָּשׁ*. Hos 5:1, as we have seen, tell us who is being addressed. Hos 5:2-6 tells us of the sin they have committed. And in Hos 5:7, it is made known that "a month will devour them and their portions." The word *חֵדָּשׁ* can either refer to a specific month<sup>22</sup> or a festival, or else it could be used to mean a short period of time.<sup>23</sup> It is unlikely



a calendar month since it is not used with either the name of a season or the name of a month or a number. If it refers to a festival, then what is being said is that on the day that you go up to celebrate a festival, while you expect to find Yahweh, you will receive destruction instead. But if this does not happen at the next festival, it will happen at the following festival and if not then, then it will happen very soon. The inference here is that Yahweh is going to punish them soon. This brings us to the third possibility. The word *q7n* itself, without any reference to a festival, means a short period of time. In either of these cases, the conclusion is the same: The three groups mentioned in Hos 5:1 will be destroyed (devoured) in a short period of time. Since two of the three groups mentioned in Hos 5:1 are also mentioned in Hos 1:4, we can conclude that the prophecy in Hos 1:4 was to occur within a short period of time.

We now return to Hos 1:4 and 5 and see if his prediction was realized. If we accept the first possible interpretation, then we can say that the prophecy was fulfilled, but the destruction of Israel did not come as soon as Hosea felt it would. If we accept the second interpretation then we have two predictions that were to be fulfilled simultaneously, in a very short time. What we do have is a prediction concerning Jehu's dynasty that was fulfilled and a prediction concerning the destruction of Israel that was fulfilled approximately twenty-two years later. How soon after Hosea made his

prediction concerning the dynasty of Jehu it was fulfilled, we do not know with certainty. It may have occurred in a short period of time. But we do know that Hosea's prediction concerning Israel did not occur shortly after it was made.

We now turn to a series of different passages that lend insight as to the nature of Hosea's prediction concerning the fate of Israel. In Hos 2:11-15, Hosea says:

אֶכֶן אֶשׁוּב וְלִקְחֹתִי דִגְלִי בְעֵצְתָּ וְתִירוֹשִׁי בְמִוְצָדָי וְהִצַּלְתִּי צִמְרִי  
וּפְשִׁרְתִּי לְכִסּוֹת אֶת עֲרוֹתֶיהָ: וְעֵתָה אֶלְדָּה אֶת נְכִילָתָהּ  
אֶעֱרֹץ מֵאֹהֲבֶיהָ וְאִישׁ יִצְיָנָהּ מִיָּדִי: וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי כֹף  
מִשְׁאֵה חֹמֶה חֲדָשָׁה וּשְׁבַתָּהּ וְכֹף מִוְצָדֶיהָ: וְהִשְׁמַתִּי  
לִפְנֵיהָ וְתִאֲנֶתָהּ אֲשֶׁר אִמְרָה אֶתְנֶנּוּ כְּמֶה אִי  
אֲשֶׁר נִתַּן לִי מֵאֹהֲבֵי וּשְׁמֹתַימַּי לִי עָר וְאֹכֵלֹתַי חֵית  
יִשְׁדֶּה וּפְקֻדֹתַי עֲלֶיהָ אֶת יָמֵי הַבָּעֲלִים אֲשֶׁר תִּקְטֹר  
אֲהִימ וְתַעֲצֹר נֶלְמָה וְחֵלְיָתָהּ וְתִלֵּק אֲחֵרֵי מֵאֹהֲבֶיהָ וְאֶתִּי  
שִׁכְחָה נָא יְהוָה:

Therefore I will return and take away my corn when its season comes, and my wine when its season comes and I will retrieve my wool and my flax (given) to cover her nakedness. And now I will reveal her lewdness before the eyes of her lover and none shall deliver her out of my hand. I will cause to cease all her rejoicing, her feasts, her festivals, her sabbaths and all her solemn festivals. I will destroy her vines and fig trees about which she has said: These are the rewards that my lovers have given me. I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim when she burned incense to them, and decked herself with rings and necklaces to chase after her lovers, forgetting me, thus saith Yahweh.

This passage makes it clear that not only the produce that is necessary for sacrifice will cease to grow, but the festivals themselves will also stop. In Hos 10:8, we learn that the high places used for sacrifices will be destroyed:

וְשָׂדֵה בָּמֹת אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל קֹדֶשׁ וְדָרָר יִצְדָּק  
מִלְּבָבוֹתֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּסּוּץ וְלֹא עֲדָתֶיךָ יִצְדָּק:

"The idolatrous high places shall be destroyed, the sin of Israel: "Thorn and thistle will grow on their alters. Then they shall say to the mountains: Cover us! And to the hills: Fall on us!" The people of Israel themselves will not escape harm as is shown in the following passages:

(Hos 4:5)

וְכִשְׁלֵטִי הַיּוֹם וְכִשֵּׁלֶם לַמָּוֶת (בְּיָד) עַמְּךָ יִצְדָּק  
וְדָרָר יִצְדָּק:

"You will fall during the day and the prophet shall also fall with you during the night and I will destroy your mother."

(Hos 5:9)

אֲפֹרַיִם לִשְׁמֵהּ תִּהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם תִּכְוָּחַהּ בְּשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הַבְּרָצֵרִי לֹא יִנָּחֵם:

"Ephraim shall be laid waste when the day comes for punishment: Among the tribes of Israel I have made known that which shall be."

(Hos 8:3)

זָנַח יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹאֵל אֵלֵיךָ יִרְדָּפוּ:

"Israel has rejected the good: The enemy shall pursue him."  
And finally Hos 14:1:

תאשם שחרון כי מרתה באלהיה בחרב יפלו  
 עמל יהם ירשלו והריותיו יבקעו:

"Samaria will become desolate, for she has rebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword, their infants will be dashed in pieces and their pregnant women will be ripped up." A common literary device used by the prophets is hyperbole. If taken literally, these passages would indicate that Hosea envisioned a total destruction of Israel. But if he exaggerated, in order to prove a point, which probably is the case, we would have to say that his point was the following. Israel has sinned to the point where Yahweh can no longer overlook her sin.<sup>24</sup> Israel's sin is twofold. She is doing what Yahweh wishes her not to do, plus perverting His teachings to suit her own needs. Consequently, she is to be punished. Like her sin, the punishment is also twofold. First, when the time comes for a festival, the produce necessary for sacrifice will not be present and their customary places of worship will cease to exist. Second, the people are in danger for their very lives. Part of the population will be killed, but not all. Those people who are yet alive will be carried away to exile. It is the question of exile that we turn to next.

In Hos 10:5 and 6, it is written:

עמל את בית און יגורו שכן שחרון כי אבם עמל  
 עמ וכמרו עמל יגורו עמ כבדו כי עמל עמ:  
 למ אלתו פאשור יובם מנה פמלך ירב בשש אפרים  
 יקח ויבאש ישהוא מעצרתו:

The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calf of Beth-aven: The people will mourn over it and the priests who rejoiced over it, because of its glory, (shall mourn) because it has departed. The calf itself will be carried off to Assyria as a present for the Great King. Ephraim shall receive shame and Israel will be ashamed of her own counsel.

These verses only tell us that the people will mourn over the loss of the idol, They say nothing of the fate of the people in terms of the possibility of exile. But, Hos 8:13 says:

זבחיה הבהרי יצחון בשר ואכילו יהוה לא רצם  
עתה יזכור עותם ויפקד חטאתם הנה מצרים יגלו:

"As the sacrifices of mu gifts they sacrifice flesh and eat it, but Yahweh does not want them. He is now going to remember their iniquity and punish their sins; They will return to Egypt." Hosea is here addressing the people of Ephraim (Hos 8:11). Since the tribe of Ephraim was the largest and strongest tribe in the northern kingdom, it is accepted that Ephraim is used to designate Israel.<sup>25</sup> In

Hos 9:3, Hosea predicts that the people will return to Egypt:

לא יגורו בארץ יהוה ויש אכארים מצרים ובלשור  
לנגד ילכא

"They will no longer live in the land of Yahweh, but Ephraim will return to Egypt and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria." Again in Hos 9:6, Hosea predicts a return to Egypt:

כי הנה חלכו משך מצרים תקבצם מן תקרובם  
מתמך אכספם קינאש יירשם חוח באהלהם:



"Behold they are gone because of the destruction: Egypt will gather them up. Memphis will bury them, nettles will inherit their treasures of silver and thorns will invade their tents."

Hos 9:3 gives the impression that at least some of the people will be led off to Assyria, but he states quite explicitly that the people will return to Egypt. There are three possible explanations of the use of an exile to Egypt. First, Hosea is speaking metaphorically and Egypt is used to represent either a place of bondage or a place where the people have no "high places" to go in order to worship. Second, he means that the people will actually be led away to Egypt. Third, the people will go to Egypt voluntarily in order to seek protection from Assyria.

There is one other verse that mentions a return to Egypt and that is Hos 11:5:

וְלֹא יָשׁוּב אֶל־מִצְרָיִם כִּי יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־מִצְרָיִם  
 וְלֹא יָשׁוּב אֶל־מִצְרָיִם כִּי יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־מִצְרָיִם

There are several possible translations of this verse.

First, the verse can be translated without emending the text: "He (Ephraim) shall not return to Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return (repent)." This translation would be consistent with events as they happened, i.e. Israel went into exile in Assyria and not in Egypt. But most scholars feel that this verse is corrupt and consequently the above translation does not render the sense of the verse correctly. There are two suggestions for dealing with this verse, one involves

emending the text while the other does not. If the text is not to be emended, then the  $\text{לכ}$  is thought to be used interrogatively<sup>26</sup> and the verse would then read in translation: "Shall they not return to Egypt? And (or else) the Assyrian shall be his king for they have refused to return." The problem with this suggestion is the first clause, "Shall they not return to Egypt?" is hardly consistent with the second clause. It would be better to emend the text in the following way. The first word of verse 5,  $\text{לכ}$  is really the last word of the previous verse and should be emended to read  $\text{לכ}$ .<sup>27</sup> Verse 4 would look like this:

בְּחַבְדֵּי אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶתְּחַבְדֶּם בְּעֶבְרֹת אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
כִּמְרִימֵי עַד עֵת חִיְהֶם וְאֶל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵכֶם :

This would read in translation: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, stooping down to him I gave him his food." Verse 5 would then read in translation: "He (Ephraim) must return to the land of Egypt or Assyria will be his king, for they have refused to return (to me)." This emendation is noted in the Kittel Bible and agrees with the version in the Septuagint which says: Ephraim dwelt in Egypt, and as for the Assyrian, he was his king because he would not return."

Any of these emended readings would be consistent with the other three verses which predict a return to Egypt. But how are we to understand such a return? A brief look at the political situation offers some help.

Shallum ben Jabesh, the man who assassinated Zechariah, was killed after a reign of about one month by Menachem ben Gadi. Menachem ben Gadi reigned for ten years and during his reign he paid tribute to Assyria in order to keep Assyria from overrunning the country (II Ki 15). After his death, his son Pekahiah reigned for two years. Pekahiah ben Menachem was assassinated by Pekah ben Remaliah, who reigned for twenty years. It was during his reign that Israel lost its outlying possessions. Pekah was then assassinated by Hoshea, who in turn ruled for nine years. Hoshea stopped paying tribute to Assyria and turned to Egypt for help. It was during the last year of his reign that Samaria was destroyed and the people were led away to Assyria.

The prophet Hosea was probably present when Israel lost her outlying possessions and when Damascus was taken. He would have been aware that there was a movement that advocated turning to Egypt for help. It is possible that Hosea and the people of Israel feared an Assyrian invasion and he was afraid that if the people turned to Egypt for help, then some of the population might move to Egypt to seek protection or else Egypt would swallow up Israel. It is also possible that Egypt's strength was overestimated and Hosea was really afraid that Egypt might attack and lead the people away. Or else, it is possible that he knew Assyria was about to attack and any alliances were futile since help could only come from Yahweh. In this case the threatened return to Egypt was merely an oratorical device to scare

the people. Whatever the reasons were, we can never know what exactly Hosea had in mind when he prophesied a "return" to Egypt.

As for the accuracy of his prediction; it would depend on which of these possibilities he was thinking of. If Hosea meant that the people would return to Egypt, then his prophecies were not fulfilled. If, on the other hand, he intended to frighten the people into repenting, then he failed in this endeavor as well.

Hosea did make some predictions concerning Judah, and, as we shall see, they are contradictory. Question has also been raised as to whether these passages are by Hosea or are scribal errors or perhaps even a later addition.

In Hos 1:7, it is quite plain that God intends to protect and save Judah:

ואת בית יהודה ארחם והשליחתים ביהוה אלהיהם  
ואם אלהים יצמם בקשת ואחרב ואמלחמה בסוסים ובפרשים:

"I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by Yahweh their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." This verse is a later addition as noted in the Kittel Bible. The following reasons are given for holding such an opinion. First, this verse interrupts a description of the prophet's domestic history and its connection with Yahweh and Israel. Second, the phrase "Yahweh their God," does not occur in "pre-Deuteronomic literature." Third, it reflects the deliverance of Judah in Sennacherib's time. Fourth, the phrase "not by

bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen," denies all human help and reflects an absolute confidence in Yahweh's ability and willingness to deliver his people. Such a miraculous deliverance is characteristically a late concept. And, finally, all the other references to Judah are suspicious.<sup>28</sup>

Hos 12:3 is another passage that presents a favorable attitude toward Judah:

וריה איהוה עם יהודה ואלקיהוה יעקב כדרכו  
כחאליו ישיה אל:

"Yahweh has a controversey against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways and will repay him as his deeds deserve." This verse is directed against Israel, not Judah, for the following reasons: First, "if the text is correct, Judah is given the place of prominence, even before Jacob." Second, "to accept the text is to accept the impossible combination, viz. Yahweh has a strife with Judah in order to punish Jacob." And finally, all the other references to Judah are suspicious.<sup>29</sup>

Hos 6:4 mentions Judah:

מה אעשה לך אפרים מה אעשה לך יהודה וחמסך  
כעין בקר ואל משכים הלא:

"What shall I do with you, Ephraim? What shall I do with you Judah? Your goodness is like a morning cloud, like the dew that quickly disappears." In this verse as in Hos 12:3, Judah has been substituted for Israel. We find the same substitution in Hos 6:11:



דס יהודה שרת קצ"ר ע"פ השואה' שגות ע"א:

"Judah, I intend a harvest for you too, when I return the captivity of my people."

Hos 5:5 is considered to be authentic.<sup>31</sup>

וענה דאון ישראל עפ"ן וישראל ואפרים יכשלו  
בשונם כש"ל דס יהודה ע"א:

"The pride of Israel testifies to his face, therefore Israel and Ephraim will fall in their iniquity; Judah will also fall with them." In this verse Hosea has predicted that what will happen to Israel will also happen to Judah at the same time. Thus the fates of the two kingdoms are tied together. In order to better understand what their fates are to be, it is necessary to examine the word *פעל* which is translated above as "fall." In the Qal, *פעל* means "to stumble, stagger, or totter"<sup>32</sup> but in the Niphal it means "to be thrown to the ground." The Septuagint translates *פעל* as "to be weak or sick to the point of falling down." Previously we have seen that Hosea predicted Israel's fate to be one of destruction and exile, (Hos 2:14, 5:9, 10:8, 14:1, 8:8-9, 9:3, 9:6). If this is what it means "to be thrown to the ground," (the fate of Israel) and what will happen to Israel will also happen to Judah, then Hosea is predicting that Judah will be destroyed and the people led away. According to the verse, it will happen to Judah at the same time it happens to Israel! Before examining this conclusion, let us take a look at two other verses that

mention Judah<sup>33</sup>,

(Hos 5:10)

הִין שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה כַּמַּיִם' עָלְמוֹ אֶשְׂפּוֹק כַּמַּיִם עֲבָרְתִּי:

"Woe to the princes of Judah, they are like them who move borders, (therefore) I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." And Hos 5:14:

כִּי אֶנְכִי כַשֵּׁחַל עֲלֵאֶפְרַיִם וְכַפִּיר עֲלֵי יְהוּדָה אֲנִי  
אֲנִי אֶסְרֶף וְאֶלֶק אֶשְׂאֵל וְאֶנְצִיף:

"I will be unto Ephraim as a lion and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I will tear and go away; I will take away and none shall rescue (him)."

If these passages concerning Judah are authentic, then Hosea is predicting a simultaneous destruction of Israel and Judah. But if they are not, then he is merely predicting the fall of Israel. The evidence that supports the belief that Hos 1:7 and 12:3 are later additions is convincing. In Hos 6:4, 5:10, and 5:14, it is possible that Judah was substituted for Israel, but there is no compelling evidence for this, especially since 5:15 is considered to be authentic. It would be better to say that either Judah was substituted for Israel in all these verses or else Hosea does indeed make mention of Judah. And in mentioning Judah, he predicts the downfall to coincide with Israel's.

We now turn to those prophecies that deal with the unspecified future.

(Hos 2:1-3)

וְהָיָה מִסֵּפֶר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּחוֹף הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר יִנְצֵל וְלֹא יִנְצֵל

יִסְפָּר וְהָיָה בְּמִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֵאמָר אֵלֶיךָ אֱמִי  
 אַתָּה יֵאמָר אֵלֶיךָ בְּנֵי אֵלֶיךָ חִי: וְנִקְרָא בְנֵי יְהוָה  
 וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיוּ וְשֵׁמוֹ אֵלֶיךָ הָאֵל אֶחָד וְעַלֹּן  
 הָאֵל כִּי יִהְיֶה יוֹם יִזְרְעֵל: אֵלֶיךָ אֶחָד וְעַלֹּן  
 אֵלֶיךָ חֲוֹתִיכָם רַחֲמָה:

And the number of the children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor counted. In the place where they were told; You are not my people, there it will be said to them; You are the sons of the living God. The children of Israel and the children of Judah will be gathered together and appoint themselves one head and they shall come up put of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brothers Ammi (My People) and to your sisters Ruhamah (Beloved).

This passage expresses the relationship of Yahweh to Israel in a way that is exactly opposite to the way that this relationship is expressed in Hos 1. This can be seen in the way that the names of the three children are used. In Hos 1 the name Jezreel refers to the "blood of Jezreel" and conveys the idea of punishment by cutting off an individual from his posterity, as was described above. In this passage the "day of Jezreel" is to be the day on which Israel's future will be restored. In Hos 1, the second child is called

אֵלֶיךָ רַחֲמָה, "Unloved," meaning that Yahweh will no longer have mercy on Israel. In this passage, the child will be named אֵלֶיךָ רַחֲמָה, "Beloved," because Yahweh will have mercy on Israel. In Hos 1, the third child is called

אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ, "Not My People," because Yahweh will no longer be Israel's God. But in this passage, the child will be named אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ, "My People," because Yahweh will once again be Israel's God. Thus in Hos 1, the relationship between Yahweh and Israel is as follows: Israel will have no future,

(posterity), Yahweh will neither have mercy on Israel nor will He be Israel's God. But in this passage, Israel will have both land and progeny, thus restoring her future: Yahweh will both have mercy on Israel and be her God. The question is, has the relationship just stated come about or not? In order to reach a decision, we need to look at Hos 2:18-25:

והיה ביום ההוא לאם יהוה תקרא אישי ולא תקראני עוֹלָה  
 עוֹלָה בְּעֵלַי: והסרת את שנות הבצֵלִים מִפִּי וְלֹא יִזְכְּרוּ  
 עוֹלָה בְּשֵׁמִי: וכרתתי לָהֶם ברית ביום ההוא עִם חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה  
 עִם עוֹלֵי הַשָּׂמַיִם וְרֹמֵשׁ הָאֲדָמָה וְקִשְׁת וְחֶרֶב וְחֵמְחָמָה אֶשְׁבֹּר  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ וְהַשְׂכֵּבִתִּים לִבְלֹחַ: וְאֶרְשִׁתִּיךָ אִי אֲדוֹלָם וְאֶרְשִׁתִּיךָ  
 אִי בְצִדִק וּבִמְשֹׁפֶט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים וְאֶרְשִׁתִּיךָ אִי בְּאֵמֶנֶשׁ  
 וְיָדַעְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה: והיה ביום ההוא אֶעֱלֶה לָּךְ אֶת הַשָּׂמַיִם  
 וְהִנֵּנִי יָעֻן אֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ תַּעֲנֶה אֶת הַדָּבָר  
 אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבָּר וְאֶת הַדְּבָר וְהִנֵּנִי יָעֻן אֶת יְצִרְעֵאל: וְזָרַעְתִּיךָ  
 אִי בְּאֵרֶץ וְרוֹמַתִּי אֶת לֹא רֹחֶמָה וְאֶמְרָתִי לֹא עֲמִי עֲמִי אֶתְּךָ  
 וְהָאָרֶץ אֶלְהִי:

On that day says Yahweh, you who call me Ishi, will no longer call me Baali. Because I will remove the name of the Baalim from her mouth and they will no more be remembered by their name. On that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, the sword, and war from the earth, and I will cause them to lie down in safety. I will betroth you to me forever, I will betroth you to me in righteousness, in judgement, in lovingkindness and in mercies I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and you will know Yahweh. On that day I will answer, says Yahweh, I will answer the earth. The earth will answer the corn, the wine, and the oil and they will answer Jezreel. I will sow her to me in the earth, I will have mercy' on her that had not obtained mercy, I will say to (them who were) not my people: You are my people, and they will say (you are) my God.



Hosea says that Yahweh will do all these things  
 (על־ההוא יום, "on that day." In the previous passage  
 cited, the event s described there will take place on  
 היום־הזה, "the day of Jezreel." Evidence for considering  
 "that day" to be the "day of Jezreel," comes from the  
 nature of what is being described in the passages. In  
 Hos 2:1-3, we learned that there will be a new relationship  
 between God and Israel. The particulars of this relationship  
 are described in Hos 2:18-25. Let us look at this relationship  
 point by point. First, Israel will have land and progeny, the  
 realization of this will be by means of the covenant described  
 in Hos 2:20. Second, Israel will be Yahweh's people. This  
 is realized in Hos 2:21-22. Finally, Yahweh's mercy on  
 Israel is expressed in Hos 2:25. In Hos 2:24, we have the  
 expression

היא תענה־לזבול, "they will answer Jezreel."

Here the earth and her produce, a reference to land and progeny stand in opposition to Jezreel, the place where land and progeny were cut off.

In the following verse, the verb

"I will sow her," is a play on the word היום־הזה<sup>34</sup>,

"God sows." This verse is a statement that God will carry out the true meaning of Jezreel and the meaning which it has acquired will no longer be binding.

By examining the particulars of the relationship between God and Israel, we shall see that this prophecy, as stated in Hos 2:1-3 and explained in Hos 2:18-25, has not been fulfilled. The children of Israel are nowhere near as



numerous as described in Hos 2:1. Although the names of the idols have changed, people still worship idols instead of Yahweh, as predicted in Hos 2:18-19. The kind of peace described in Hos 2:20 has not come about. Yahweh may be faithful to Israel, but Israel is not true to Yahweh. Finally, as expressed in Hos 2:25, Israel has not completely accepted Yahweh as their God.

(Hos 11:10-11)

באלותי ואסרם ואספן עליהם עמים באסרם עשתי עינתם:  
ואפרים עזעף מלמדה אהבתו עזש ואני עברתי ע  
שוב ואלה ארכיב אפרים יחרוש יהודה ישבצו יעקב:

"They will walk after Yahweh, He will roar like a lion, when He does roar, the children will tremble from the west. They will tremble like a bird from Egypt, as a dove from the land of Assyria: I will place them in their houses, says Yahweh." These verses further express the idea of Israel accepting Yahweh as their God, something that Israel has not yet done.

#### SUMMARY

The book of Hosea contains fourteen prophecies. Three of these are unfulfilled: 2:1-3, 2:18-25, and 11:10-11. Another four prophecies are unfulfilled if they refer to a literal return to Egypt: 8:13, 9:3, 9:6, and 11:15. Two prophecies are found in verse 1:4. The prophecy concerning Jehu was fulfilled after the death of the prophet, but they were not fulfilled simultaneously as was predicted. Hos 5:7

contains a prophecy directed against three groups: the priests, Israel, and the king. The prophecy against the priests was probably fulfilled by 721 B.C.E., but we cannot be sure. The prophecy against Israel was fulfilled after the death of the prophet. The prophecy against the king was fulfilled. The remaining two prophecies concern Judah. One of these, 1:7, is unfulfilled, but it is probably a later addition and subject to considerations that appear later when treating other prophecies about Judah. The other prophecy, 5:5, was unfulfilled because Judah and Israel did not fall together, although each one did fall.

## NOTES

1. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, (hereinafter B.D.B.), p. 823.

2. I Ki 21:1-6.

3. I Ki 21:19.

4. I Ki 21:21. The phrase נשטין בקיר in literal translation means "him that pisses against the wall," i.e. a male person.

5. I Ki 21:29.

6. II Ki 9:1-10.

7. II Ki 10:1-14.

8. II Ki 10:28-31.

9. In Hos 2:2 it is written:

וּבְקִרְבָּם בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִחָדְדוּ וְשָׂמוּ לָהֶם הָאֵשׁ אֶחָד  
וְעָלָם מִן הָאָרֶץ כִּי גִבּוֹל יוֹם יִזְרַעְאֵל:

"The children of Israel and the children of Judah shall be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; For great will be the day of Jezreel." The reference here is to restore that which is right. Naboth was unjustly treated, consequently the valley of Jezreel carried with it the idea of punishment because of what happened to both Naboth and Ahab. But in the future the valley of Jezreel will take on the opposite meaning. It will mean being restored to Yahweh's favor in contrast to Hos 1:9, where it says:

כִּי אַתָּה לֹא עַמִּי וְאֲנִי לֹא אֱלֹהֶיךָ

"You are not my people and I will not be your God."

10. For some examples of this, see II Ch 22:8, II Ki 8:27, and II Ki 9:7-9.

11. Jos 13:12, 21, 27, 30-31.

12. Hos 15:28.

13. 

כִּי עֹדָה נִשְׁעַן	וּבְקִרְבָּתִי	אֶת דָּמִי	יִזְרַעְאֵל	עַל בֵּית יְהוּדָה
בְּיוֹם הַהוּא	וְהִשְׁבֵּתִי	אֶת קֶשֶׁתִּי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּעֵמֶק יִזְרַעְאֵל

The above is a diagram of the relationship.

14. Because the northern kingdom was destroyed, the book of Hosea would have been preserved in the south. This being the case, the reader may not be familiar with events which took place in the north. Therefore, an explanation of such an event could have been inserted.
15. The Kittel Bible notes the verse 5 may be a later addition.
16. B.D.B., p. 575. The J.P.S. translation, the Revised Standard Version, the King James Version, and The New English Bible use "kingdom of" both in this passage and those in note 11.
17. See Hos 1:6-7.
18. Jos 13 is a description of the lands which the tribes settling beyond the Jordan were to possess. This chapter does not discuss royal families or dynasties as such, rather it describes borders in terms of cities and kingdoms.
19. I.C.C., p. 212.
20. I.B., p. 570.
21. The expression *לִצְרִיף* used to convey a sense of immediacy is also found in Je 51:33 and Is 10:25.
22. Rashi identifies the month as the month of Ab.
23. Radak says it might mean *לְמִנְיָן*, a short time, about one month.
24. Hos 1:6: *וַתַּהַר עֲדָה וַתֵּלֶד בִּתּוֹתָא לֹא רַחֲמָהּ כִּי עֲדָה אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי נִשְׁכַּח אֶתְּכֶם*  
 "She conceived a second time and gave birth to a daughter. Name her Lo Rahamah (Unloved), Yahweh said to him. No more love will the House of Israel have from me that I should in any way pardon them"
25. B.D.B., p. 68.
26. I.C.C., pp. 366-367.
27. I.C.C., p. 364.
28. I.C.C., p. 213. The Interpreter's Bible offers similar reasons for considering this verse to be a later addition:

"The promise of mercy which it conveys is foreign to a passage which tells of judgement to come and says specifically that the Lord will have no mercy; vss 2-9 deal with the Northern Kingdom of Israel, so that this mention of Judah is against the context, as is the method by which the merciful deliverance of Judah is to be accomplished." (p. 571).

29. I.C.C., pp. 378-379. The Interpreter's Bible also points out the absurdity of punishing Jacob because the Lord has a controversy with Judah. (p. 694).
30. I.C.C., p. 291.
31. I.C.C., p. 270.
31. B.D.B., p. 505.
33. The only reasons given for not accepting these verses as authentic is to say that the passage deals with Israel and any mention of Judah is merely an intrusion. There seems to be no textual or scribal errors on which to base an emendation.
34. B.D.B., p. 283.



## CHAPTER THREE

## MICAHA

In Mi 1:6, Micah describes the destruction of Samaria:

ושמתי שחרון עמי השדה למאכל ציכרם והדדתי לעמי  
אבניה ויסדיה אלדה:

"I will make Samaria a heap in the field, a place for the planting of vineyards. And I will pour down the stones into the valley, and I will uncover her foundations." In II Ki 18:9-11, we find the following account of the taking of Samaria:

ויהי בשנה הרבעית למלך חזקיהו ה'א השנה השביעית  
להושע בן-אלה מלך ישראל שאלמנאסר מלך-אשור  
על שחרון ויצר עליה: וילכדה מקצה שלש שנים בשנת  
של חזקיהו ה'א שנת תשע להושע מלך ישראל ולכדה  
שחרון: ויטל מלך-אשור את ישראל אשור וינחם בחלה  
ובחבור נהר אבן וערי נדי:

In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which is the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah King of Israel; Shalmanesser King of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. At the end of three years they took it, in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea King of Israel, Samaria was taken. The King of Assyria carried away Israel to Assyria and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river Gozan and in the cities of Medes.

This account tells us that the city was besieged and taken and that the people were carried away into exile. There is no mention, however, of a destruction of the city. In fact,

there is no description of a destruction as severe as the one described by Micah until John Hyrannus destroyed Samaria (Antiquities of the Jews), by Josephus, book XIII, 10:3).<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned above, hyperbole is a rhetorical device frequently employed by the prophets. If Micah is using hyperbole, then there is no discrepancy between his prophecy and what actually happened, but if he meant his words to be taken literally, then his prophecy was only partially fulfilled. We have no way of knowing with certainty how he meant his words to be taken, but it is possible to say which of these two options is the most likely.

We can begin by trying to determine what was Micah's purpose in saying this prophecy. In Mi 6:7-8, it is written:

הִירְצָה יְהוָה זֵבֵחַ אֵילָנִים בְּרֵבֵבוֹת לְחֹלֵי שָׁמֶן הָאֵלֶּן  
בְּכוֹרֵי כֶּשֶׂדִּי כִּרְיֵבֵלִי חֲסֵאֵל נְכֹשִׁי: הֵלֵךְ אֶל אֱלֹהִים  
מִה טוֹב וְהָיָה בְּיָדָם נֶחֱמֵק כִּי אִם עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט  
לְאֹהֲבֵי חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנֵּךְ עֲכָת עִם אֱלֹהֶיךָ

Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good and what Yahweh requires of you, to do justly to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

From this passage it is clear that Micah is speaking out against sacrifice as the kind of worship Yahweh wants. Micah also speaks out against idol worship, a custom that was prevalent enough to warrant concern.<sup>2</sup> Sacrifices would have been performed in many different high places around the county and the use of idols would have been widespread. But

as might be expected, it was Samaria that was thought of as the prime offender. As such, if one was to attack the use of sacrifices and idols, then one would attack Samaria. For Micah, this was indeed the case, as seen in Mi 1:5:

הַפֶּשַׁע יִעֲקֹב כָּל זֶה וְכֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי פֶשַׁע יִעֲקֹב  
הַלֵּל שֶׁמֶרֶן וְהַיְּהוּדָה הַלֵּל יִרְשָׁלַם:

"The transgression of Jacob is all this and also the sins of the house of Israel. What is the sin of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What are the high places of Israel? Are they not Jerusalem?" Micah predicts that the "transgression of Jacob" will be stopped by the destruction of the idols, as in Mi 1:7:

וְכָל פִּסְלֵיהֶם יִכְרֹם וְכָל אֲתֹנֶיהֶם יִשְׁרֹם בְּאֵשׁ וְכָל צִבְיָהּ  
אֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

"All the idols thereof will be broken to pieces, and all her earnings will be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay desolate; for they have been collected with prostitutes' earnings and prostitutes' earning will be again." If the idols are to be "lay desolate" and "broken" and Samaria is the prime example of idol worship, then we would expect Samaria to be made desolate and destroyed. In Mi 1:6, it is just such a destruction that Micah is predicting for Samaria. If we return to our original question of whether or not Micah is using hyperbole, we can say that it is most likely that he is not. In fact, if all the idols were to be laid desolate, one would expect that the city would have to be completely destroyed in order for this to be carried out.

Micah also saw Judah as practicing the same kind of worship as Israel, and therefore subject to the same punishment. Just as Samaria was the prime example of sacrifice and idol worship for Israel, so Jerusalem was the prime example for Judah.<sup>3</sup> Just as the idols of Samaria were to be "laid desolate" and an end made to their unacceptable behavior, so too in Jerusalem an end would come to their unrighteousness.<sup>4</sup> In the same way, that the end would be brought about by a destruction of Samaria, so to the end would come by a destruction of Jerusalem, as seen in Mi 3:12:

לכן האלפים ציון שדה תחרש וירושלם ע"י תהיה והר  
הבית לבנות יחר:

"Zion, for your sake, will be as a plowed field, Jerusalem will be a heap, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Micah has predicted a complete and total destruction of both Samaria and Jerusalem. Samaria was not destroyed until approximately 109 B.C.E. and Jerusalem was not destroyed until 587 B.C.E. It is not unusual for a prophet to make his prophecy conditional. What does it mean to make a prophecy conditional. When a prophet says for example, a city or a country will be destroyed, and he does not say you can change your ways and be released from the prophecy, he is saying that God has no choice but to do what He has said. On the other hand, when a prophet adds a statement to his prophecy saying that if you repent, God will not carry out the destruction, the prophet is saying that God has a choice of bringing

destruction or not, depending on the actions of the people. By repenting, the people do not force or coerce God into acting; the choice is still with God, but by repenting, the people have given God reason to change His mind. If Micah's prophecies were conditional, then we might be able to say that the people repented and then God changed His mind and did not destroy them immediately. But such is not the case. In fact, just the opposite is true. Micah writes as if the fate of the people is sealed. In Mi 1:9, he says:

כי אלטה נכותיה כי באה ער יהודה לא ער ער  
עמי ער ירושלם:

"Her wound is incurable, it reaches into Judah; it is come into the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem." Mi 3:4:

אנ יצקו אל יהוה ולא יענה אותם ויסתר פניו מהם  
בעת ההיא כאשר הרעו מעלליהם:

"Then they shall cry to Yahweh, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time because they have done evil in all their doings." In Mi 6:13:

ואם אנ החליתי הכותק השמם ער חלאותק:

"I will also make you sick in my striking you and in making you desolate because of your sins." As far as Micah is concerned, the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem is inevitable. There is nothing that the people can do to stop the destruction. As we have just seen, within the book of Micah itself there are no conditions attached to either the prophecy about Samaria or the one concerning Jerusalem. In the book of Jeremiah, however, the prophecy concerning



Zion and Jerusalem, (Mi 3:12), is quoted and as we shall see, it becomes conditional.

Jeremiah prophesied against Judah and Jerusalem and like the oracles of Micah, he too predicts destruction and devastation, as can be seen in the following examples:

(Jer. 4:5-7)

הַגִּידוּ ביהודה ובירושלם השמיצו ואמרו ותקעו  
שופר בארץ קהלו מלאו ואמרו האספו ונגא'או  
אל ערי המצור: שאו-נס ציונה העיטו אל  
תצמדו כי רעה אנכי מבטא מצפון ושבר גדול:  
עלה אריתה מסבכו ומשחית ערים נסע יצא  
ממקדשם ארצק פשנה עריק תצ'נה  
מאין יושב:

Announce it in Judah, declare it in Jerusalem:  
And say, Blow the trumpet in the land, cry gather  
together and say, assemble yourselves and let us go  
into the fortified cities. Set up the standard  
toward Zion, seek refuge, do not delay, because  
I will bring evil from the north and a great  
destruction. The lion is up from his thicket and  
the destroyer of nations is on His way. He has  
come from His home to make your land desolate,  
your cities will be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

(Jer. 9:10)

ונתתי את ירושלם לעלמים מעון תנעם  
ואת ערי יהודה אתן שמה מב' יושב:

"I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a jackal's liar, and  
I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

(Jer. 15:5-9)

כי מי יחמל עליך ירושלם ומי יעזר לך ומי יסור  
לשאל ללשם לך: את נטשת אתי נאם יהוה אחר  
תלכי ואל את יצי עליך ואשחיתך נא אתי העומ:

ואנרם במצרה בשערי הארץ שכלתי אבדתי  
את עמי מדרכיהם ולאן שב: עז 13  
אלמנתי מול ימים הבאתי להם על אמ בחור  
שדד בצהריה הפלתי עליה פתאום עיר ובהלות:  
אלמלכה ילדת השבעה נכחה נפשה באה שמה נניא יהוה:  
בדד נאם באשה וחסרה ושאריתם חסרה אתן לפני איביהם

Who will have pity on you Jerusalem, who will grieve for you and who will ask how you are? You yourself have forsaken Me, says Yahweh. You have gone backwards. Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you. I am weary of repenting. I will winnow them with a pitch fork in the gates of the land. I will deprive (them) of children, I will destroy My people, (since) they return not from their ways. Their widows are increased to Me more than the sand of the seas. On the mothers of young men I have brought the destroyer at noonday. I have caused anguish and terror to fall upon her suddenly. The mother of seven grows faint and breathes her last. It is still day, but already her sun has set, shame and disgrace are hers. And the remainder of them I will deliver to the sword before their enemies, says Yahweh.

Unlike Micah, Jeremiah says that this destruction will only occur if the people do not repent:

(Jer 4:4)

המלאו ליהוה והסרי ערלות לבבכם איש יהודה וישיב  
ירושלם כן תצא כאל חמתי ובערה ואין נכבה  
נפני רע מעלליכם:

"Circumcise yourselves for Yahweh. Take away the foreskin of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my anger come forth like fire and burn with no one to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds." Jeremiah's warnings go unheeded and there is no indication that the people intend to change their behavior until Jer 26. It is in Jer 26 that the prophecy of Micah is quoted under the

following circumstances. In Jer 26:2, God says to Jeremiah:  
 כה אמר יהוה צבא בחדר בית-יהוה וצבאת על כל ערי יהודה  
 והבאים להשתחוות בית-יהוה את כל הדברים אשר צויתן  
 לדבר אליהם אל תלך דבר: אחי ישמעאל וישבן  
 איש מקרב הרעה ונחמתי את הרעה אשר אנכי  
 נושא לעשות להם מפני רע מעלליהם:

Stand in the court of the Temple of Yahweh.  
 To all the people of the towns of Judah who came  
 to the Temple of Yahweh in order to worship, you  
 must speak all the words I have commanded you  
 to tell them; Do not omit one word. Perhaps  
 they will listen and each turn from his evil way.  
 If so, I shall repent and not do the evil which  
 I intended to do to them because of the evil of  
 their deeds.

Here again, it is apparent that the destruction of Judah and  
 Jerusalem will result only if the people do not repent.

Jeremiah does as Yahweh directs: He stands at the entrance to  
 the Temple and predicts the destruction of the Temple.<sup>5</sup> But  
 rather than bring the people to repentance, Jeremiah incited  
 them to anger. He is quickly seized and brought to trial.

The priests and the prophets want him put to death. But  
 Jeremiah does not answer his accusers, rather he turns to the  
 princes and the people saying to them:

(Jer 26:12-13)

ויאמר ירמיהו אל כל השרים ואל כל העם לאמר יהוה שלחני  
 להנבא אל הבית הזה ואל העיר הזאת את כל הדברים  
 אשר שמעתם: ועתה היטבן דרכיכם ומעלליכם ושמעו בקול  
 יהוה אל־היכם וינחם יהוה אל הרעה אשר דבר עליכם:

"Yahweh sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which you have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your deeds and obey the voice of Yahweh your God and Yahweh will repent and not do the evil which He spoke against you." The princes and the people are now convinced that Jeremiah is speaking in the name of Yahweh and they tell the priests and the prophets that he should not be killed. Certain Elders then speak in Jeremiah's defense and in verses 18 and 19 say:

מִיכָה הַמֹּרָשִׁי הָיָה נִבֵּא בְּיָמֵי יְהוֹשָׁפָט וְיְהוֹרָם  
 כָּל עַם יְהוּדָה אָמַר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה נִבְּאָה בְּיוֹן שָׁדָה תַּחֲרֹשׁ  
 וְיִרְשָׁלַם עֵימָּה דָנָה יְהוָה וְהָר הַבַּיִת אֲבָנֹתָ יִעָרְיָה וְהַמִּתָּהּ  
 חֲזָקִיהָ מִלֶּק יְהוּדָה וְכֹל יְהוּדָה חֲלָא יְהוָה וְיַחֲלֵ אֶת  
 כָּל יְהוָה וְיִנְחַם יְהוָה אֶל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָלִינוּ וְאֶת  
 עֲשֵׂי רָעָה גְדוֹלָה עִלְּנוּ נַפְשֹׁתֵינוּ:

Micah the Morashite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah King of Judah. He spoke to all the people of Judah and said: Yahweh says this, Zion will be as a plowed field, Jerusalem will be a heap, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. Did Hezekiah King of Judah, and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear Yahweh and entreat Yahweh and Yahweh repented and did not do the evil which He had spoken against them? Thus we might bring great evil against our souls.

This argument must have swayed the crowd, because they did not kill Jeremiah.

According to Jer 26:1, this "trial" took place at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. That would date this passage at around 609 B.C.E. Micah was active just prior to the destruction of Samaria, possibly around 730 B.C.E.

Consequently, at least one hundred years would separate Micah's prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem from its use in the defense of Jeremiah. Jer 26 may be a later generation's interpretation of an earlier event.

The author of Jer 26 would have been aware of Hezekiah's reign and his reforms.<sup>6</sup> He would also have known about Micah's prophecy. The Elders point out that because Hezekiah repented and brought about reform, Yahweh thought about the destruction He had predicted, and changed His decree. Hezekiah's actions did not force God to change His decision, but rather they gave God a reason for making such a change.

The use of Micah in the defense of Jeremiah has taken Micah's prophecy out of the realm of the inevitable and moved it into an area where God can then decide whether He wants to destroy Jerusalem or not. Ultimately, Jerusalem was destroyed, but God chose to do so. He was not compelled by the actions of man. As seen above, Micah's prophecy does not appear to be conditional, but this account from the book of Jeremiah has made Micah's prophecy conditional.

We now turn to those prophecies that deal with the unspecified future. First, we shall deal with Mi 4, and then Mi 5:

והיה באחרית הימים יהיה הר בית יהוה נכון בהוש החרים ונשא  
הוא מלכות וערו עמיו עמים והלכו אים רבים למנו פכו ונעלה  
אל הר יהוה אל בית אלהי יצק ויוע מרכיו ונלכה בארחתו  
כ מצין תכל תורה וזגר יהוה מירושלם: ושפט בין עמים רבים



והוכיח לאומים עצמים ער רחוק וכתרתו חרבת ירום

על אומים וחטאתיהם עמחרות על יסאן ער אל ער

חרב ולא יעמרון ער מלחמה: וישבו איש תחת עפרו

ותחת רגליו ואין מחריב כי כפי יראה צבאות צבא  
כי כל העמים ילכו איש בשם אליו ואנא נא בשם יראה אלהי ע

It will come to pass in the days to come (at the end of days) that the mountain of the House of Yahweh will be established on the tops of the mountains and it shall be exalted above the hills and all peoples shall flow unto it. Many nations shall come and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the House of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. Because the law will go out from Zion and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and rebuke strong nations far off. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither will they learn war anymore. But each man will sit under his vine and under his fig tree and no one will make him afraid. For all peoples will walk in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of Yahweh our God for ever and ever.

This passage in Micah parallels closely Is 2:2-4.<sup>7</sup> This raises the question of authorship of this passage. It would be an exercise in futility to try to determine whether this passage is authentic to Micah or Jeremiah. Just for the sake of convenience, let us assume it is Micah's, knowing full well that the authorship is open to question.

In this passage, Micah is predicting that at some time in the future, Yahweh's Temple will be the center of worship. It will be recognized as the center and the source for all judgements by all the nations of the world. When this happens, war will cease and everyone will live in peace.

This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

Micah continues in verses 6-8 to talk of the future:

ביום ההוא נאם יהוה אספה בצלעה והנהיה אקצה  
 ואשר הרעתי: ושמתי את הצלעה לשארית והנהיה לאוי  
 עצום ומלך יהיה עליהם בהר ציון מצודה ועד עולם: ואתה  
 חמץ עבר עכשיו בת ציון עדין תאמרת ובאה החמשה  
 הראשונה ממלכת לבת ירושלים:

On that day, says Yahweh, I will gather those who stumble and I will gather together those who were driven out and those whom I have afflicted. I will make those who stumble a remnant and those who were cut off a strong nation, and Yahweh will rule over them from Mount Zion from then and forever. And you, Tower of the Flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, will come to you, the first sovereignty. The kingdom (will come) to the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah is here predicting a return to Zion and the restoration of the dynasty that ruled before the people were "driven out." This theme is picked up in Mi 5, as we shall see, and the question of its fulfillment will be dealt with there.

Micah continues in verses 9 and 10:

עתה למה תריע רע המלך אין בק אם יוצנך אבד כי  
 החזיק חיל כיוצא: חולי ואחי בת ציון כיוצא כי עתה  
 תצאי מקריה ושכנת בשדה ובאת עד גבל שמתנצלי שם  
 ידאוך יהוה מכל איביך:

Why do you cry aloud? Is there no king with you? Are your counselors lost that pains should grip you like a woman in labor? Be in pain and cry out, daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you will go out from the city and dwell in the field. To Babylon you will go, there you will be rescued, there Yahweh will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

If we view this passage literally, then it was fulfilled because the people were taken to Babylon and then brought back to Jerusalem. But such a view does not fit in with the context of the rest of the Chapter. If we view Babylon as either an example of the lands where the people were taken or as metaphorically representing any land where Israel resides, this passage fits in better with what come before and after. Verses 6-8 tell us that the people were driven out and cast off, Babylon then represents one of the many places to which they were driven, or else it symbolizes all different lands. If this is the case, then Micah is predicting a return that has not yet happened. The belief that Israel will be scattered among many different nations and then the worship of Yahweh will be established, is also found in Mi 5:6-14:

והיה שארית יעקב בקרב עמים רבים כאלף את יהודה כרבים  
 עמי עשב אשר לא יקוה לאיש ולא ייחל לבני אדם: והיו שארית  
 יעקב באים בקרב עמים רבים כארמה בבהמות יער ככבד העדרי  
 צאן אשר אם עבר ורמם וטרף ואין מציל: תרם יפק עמ כריק וכל  
 איביק יכרתו: והיה ביום ההוא נאם יהוה והכרתי סוסיק מקרבך  
 והאבדתי מרכבתך: והכרתי ערי אורצך והרסתי כל מבצריך:  
 והכרתי כשפים מידך ומעושימ לא יהיו לך: והכרתי פסיגין  
 ומצבותיך מקרבך ולא תשתחוה עוד למעשה ידך: ונתת  
 אשיריך מקרבך והשמדתי עריך: ועשיתי באש ובחמה נקם  
 את האויס אשר לא שמוע:

The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many nations as a dew from Yahweh; Like raindrops on the grass, that taries not for man nor waits for the sons of man. The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many nations as a lion among the beasts of the forest; as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goes through, treads down and tears to pieces and no one can deliver. Your hand will be lifted up over your adversaries and all your enemies will be cut off. On that day, says Yahweh, I will cut off your horses from the midst of you and I will destroy your chariots. I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds. I will cut off witchcrafts from your hand and you will have no soothsayers. I will cut off your graven images and your idols out of your midst. You will no longer worship the work of your hands. I will pluck up your sacred poles out of your midst, I will destroy your cities. I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations which did not obey.

Here Micah is predicting that after the people are scattered, worship of Yahweh will be established and all other idolatrous forms of worship will be destroyed. When this is to take place is told in Mi 5:1-5, as we shall see.

We now return to the remainder of Mi 4, where it says:

ועתה נאסכו עמך גוים רבים האמרים תחנך אותנו בציון  
 עינינו: והנה לא יעשן מחשבות יהוה ולא יבינו עצתו כי  
 קבצם כעמיר ארצה: קומי וגושי בת ציון כי קרנך אש  
 כרמל ופרסדניך אשם נחלשה והצקות עמית רבים והחרמת  
 ליהוה בצעם וחלים לאדון כל הארץ: עתה תתגדדי בת  
 גבור מצור שם עמית בשבט יכו עמית חרבות שכל  
 ישראל:

Now many nations are gathered against you.  
 Let her be defiled, they say, let out eyes see  
 the destruction of Zion. But they do not know  
 the thoughts of Yahweh, neither do they understand  
 His counsel, for He will gather them like sheaves  
 on the threshing floor. Arise, daughter of Zion,  
 and thresh; for I will give you horn of iron and  
 hoofs of brass for you to trample down many  
 peoples, I will consecrate their grain to Yahweh,  
 and their treasures to the Lord of the whole  
 earth. Now gather yourselves in troops, daughter  
 of troops. They have laid seige against us,  
 with a rod they strike on the cheek, the judge  
 of Israel.

Here Micah is predicting the destruction of those who gloated  
 over both Israel's dispersement and Jerusalem's destruction.  
 But it is they who will ultimately be destroyed. This  
 passage gives the particulars of how Yahweh will redeem Israel  
 from the hands of her enemies.

In this Chapter, Micah speaks of the future: *גאון רי"מ*  
 The end of days: *(ביום ה' / On that day (he does*  
 not specify when this will will come), all this will come  
 to pass. We do know that what he has predicted has not been  
 fulfilled, to this day. This is not to say that it will  
 not be fulfilled at some later time, but for now, it remains  
 unfulfilled.

In Mi 5:1-5 there is a prediction concerning the  
 re-establishment of the dynasty of David:

*ואותו בית אבדתי בציר אלהות באדם ירדתי  
 מי יצא לעלות מושל בישראל ומצאתיו מקדם מימי עולם:  
 אכן תרם עד עת ירדתי ירדתי ויתר אחיו ישאבן עד בני  
 ששה: וצמח ורעה בעל ירוה בלעלן שם ירוה אל רי'*



וישכן כי עתה יגדל עז אבסר ארץ: והיה זה  
שלא אשור כי יבא בארץ וכי יקרב בארמנותיו

והקמנו עמו שבעה רעים ושמונו נסיכי ארם: ארם  
את ארץ אשור בחרה ואת ארץ נחור בבת חיה  
והציל מאשור כי יבא בארץ וכי יקרב בגלותו:

But, you, Beth-lehem Ephratah, even though you are little among the thousands of Judah, out of you one will come forth for me, that is to be ruler in Israel. His origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old. Therefore He will give them up till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth. Then the remnant of his brothers will return to the children of Israel. He will stand and feed in the strength of Yahweh in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God, they will live for now he will be great to the ends of the earth. There will be peace. If Asshur should come to our land and if he should tread in our palaces, then we will raise up against him seven shepherds and eight leaders of men. They will waste the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Nimrod in its entrances, he will deliver us from the Assyrian, when he comes to our land and when he walks in our borders.

In verse 1 Micah addresses Beth-lehem, the birthplace of David, and says that someone whose ancestry goes far back, will be born there and he will rule over Israel. This is a reference to the re-establishment of the line of David. In Am 9:11-15, we examined a similar prediction and dealt with the question of its fulfillment.<sup>8</sup> In verse 2 we find the phrase <sup>יגדל</sup> "תנמ עז עתידה", "therefore he will give them up till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth." This particular phrase places the rest of the verses in Mi 5

in a frame of reference in regard to time. As described above, verses 6-14 will only come about after the re-establishment of the dynasty of David. Thus this prophecy is as yet unfulfilled. In Mi 5:4-5, we are told that when the time comes, Israel will be in a position to defend herself in contrast to the present, when she is in no position to ward off attackers. These verses give us an insight into the kind of future that Micah is predicting.

Both Mi 4 and 5 are as yet unfulfilled, but they are open ended and in this way there is always the possibility that they will be fulfilled at some future time.

#### SUMMARY

The entire book of Micah contains four prophecies. Two of them, 1:6 and 3:12, were fulfilled; 1:6 in 109 B.C.E. and 3:12 in 587 B.C.E. This is the case if we understand Micah to mean what he said literally. Two of the prophecies, Chapters 5 and 6, are unfulfilled.

## NOTES

1. The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, trans. by William Whiston, p. 396.

2. Mi 5:12.

"I will cut off your idols and your graven images out of your midst, and you will no more worship the work of your hands."

3. Mi 1:5.

4. Mi 3.

5. Jer 26:6.

6. II Ki 18.

7.

והיה באחרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית יהוה זראש  
ההרים ונשא מלצות אנהו אפיו כל העמים: והלכו  
עמים רבים לכו ונעלה אל הר יהוה אל בית אלהי  
יעקב וירע מדרך ונלכו בארחתיו כי מציון תצא  
תורת וגבר יהוה מירושלם: ושפט בין העמים  
והוכיח לעמים רבים וכתרו חרבותם לאתים  
וחניתותם למחרות לא ישא לאי אל עי חרב  
ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה:

In verse 2 there are three differences in the text. First, the word נכון is in a different position. In Micah, it appears between the words יהוה and זראש. In Isaiah it comes between הימים and זראש. In Micah the word מלצות appears between אנש and מלצות, but it does not appear at all in Isaiah. Micah ends with the word עמים while Isaiah uses the expression כל העמים. In verse 3, Isaiah uses עמים רבים while Micah uses the expression לוי רבים. In verse 4, Isaiah uses the word אים while Micah uses the word עמים. Also in verse 4, Isaiah uses the expression והוכיח לעמים רבים while Micah uses the expression והוכיח לעמים רבים וכתרו חרבותם לאתים.

8. See pp. 12-14.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## ISAIAH

As with the previous three prophets, we shall begin with those prophecies which deal with specific events and then we shall deal with those prophecies that speak of the unspecified future.

Is 7:1-8:8 is a series of prophecies that deal with Israel, Syria, Assyria, and Judah. Certain events in the history of each of these countries were to coincide with the first three stages in a child's life: birth, infancy, and childhood. The child is to be named Immanuel, "God is with us," and like Isaiah's own children, Immanuel is symbolic. Isaiah was not concerned with predicting when Immanuel was to be born, or who his parents would be, rather he used the child's life to represent symbolically certain events. Consequently, we are concerned with these events and how they relate to the stages of Immanuel's early life. We shall not deal with trying to identify who Immanuel was or with the circumstances of his birth.

We need to look at events just prior to Isaiah's prediction in order to understand why he made such a prediction. Israel and Syria form a coalition against Assyria and want Judah to join. Judah is reluctant to join and desires to follow an independant policy. Judah figures that by paying tribute to Assyria, they will be left alone to govern themselves.

Israel and Syria decide to march against Judah in an attempt to force Judah to join the coalition, Is 7:1:

ויהי בימי אחז בן יותם בן עזיהו מלך יהודה ששה רצ"ן  
מלך ארם ופקח בן רמליהו מלך ישראל ירושלם מלחמה  
ששה ולא יכלו להלחם עמה:

"In the days Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, King of Judah, Rezin the King of Syria and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it." Because Syria and Israel are camped outside of Jerusalem, Ahaz is worried that he might be forced to join the coalition. Isaiah wants Ahaz neither to join the coalition nor to pay tribute to Assyria. Yahweh directs Isaiah to meet Ahaz and say to him:  
(Is 7:7)

כה אמר אונן יהוה לא תקום ולא תהיה:

"Thus says the Lord Yahweh: It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." But such a statement is not enough to reassure Ahaz. Ahaz is reluctant however to be given a sign that what Yahweh has said will come to pass, but Isaiah gives him a sign anyway. In verses 14-16 he says:

לכן יתן אונן הוה לכם אות הנה העלמה הרה וילדת בן  
וקראת שמו עמנו אל: חמאה ודגש יאכל עד צאתו מאוס ברע  
ובחור בטוב: כ בטור יצע הער מאוס ברע ובחר בטוב תצלח  
והאזנה אשר אתה קף מנע שני מלכיה:



Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:  
A young woman will conceive and bear a son and he  
will be named Immanuel. He will eat butter and  
honey, until he knows to refuse evil and choose  
good, the land whose two kings terrify you will  
be deserted.

Ahaz's immediate concern is that he will be forced to  
join the coalition. As we have seen above in verse 7, Yahweh  
has said this will not happen, but Ahaz needs further proof,  
so Isaiah gives him a sign. By the time Immanuel is born,  
Ahaz will no longer need to fear being forced to join the  
coalition. This would mean that relief would come within  
nine months of the interview. Not only is Ahaz to be delivered  
from the coalition, but both Israel and Syria are to be  
deserted or abandoned. We are told in verse 16 that before  
the child knows right from wrong, Israel and Syria will be  
deserted. This would take place two or three years after  
the birth of Immanuel.

In Is 8:3-4, this sign is repeated, but in this instance  
the child is Isaiah's own son:

ואקרב אל הנביאה ותהר ותלד בן ויאמר יהוה אלי קרא  
שמו מהר שאל חש בז: כי בארם יבוע והער קרא אביר אלמי  
ישא את חיל דמשק ואת שאל שחרין לפני מלך אשור:

I went to the prophetess, she conceived and gave  
birth to a son. Yahweh said to me: Call his name  
Maher-Shalel-hash-baz. For before the child knows  
how to say father or mother, the riches of Damascus  
and the spoil of Samaria will be carried off before  
the King of Assyria.

The message here is the same as above; Samaria and Damascus  
will be sacked by Assyria two to three years after the birth  
of the child.

As predicted, Judah did not join the coalition, but the sacking of Samaria and Damascus did not happen simultaneously. In 734 B.C.E. Tiglath-Pileser III invades Israel and marches down the coast as far as Wadi-El-Arish (the river of Egypt). In 733 B.C.E. he turns back and attacks Israel again, deporting the inhabitants and attacking different cities. Pekah, King of Israel, is assassinated by Hoshea ben Elah (II Ki 15:30), Hoshea realizing the danger that Samaria is in, quickly surrenders and pays tribute to Assyria before Samaria could be destroyed. Tiglath-Pileser then turns on Damascus and destroys it in 732 B.C.E. Israel, however, continues to pay tribute until 724 B.C.E., when she rebels and after three years of being seiged, Samaria is taken in 721 B.C.E.<sup>1</sup> While Isaiah had predicted that Samaria and Damascus would be sacked when Immanuel was two or three years old, this was not the case. Damascus was sacked, but it was not until ten years later that Samaria was sacked. Had Hoshea not payed tribute to Assyria, then both Samaria and Damascus would have surely fallen in 732 B.C.E., but he did pay tribute, and this postponed the destruction of Israel.

As stated above, Isaiah wants Ahaz to rely on Yahweh and not to depend on either the coalition or tribute to Assyria as a means to maintain Judah's independence. Consequently, he states his prophecy in terms of the child Immanuel. In this way, his oracle could be easily remembered.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these oracles against Israel and Syria in Is 7-8, Isaiah also prophesies against Judah. In both Chapter 7 and 8,

right after Isaiah gives the sign, he then pronounces an oracle of destruction against Judah, Is 7:17-25:

יבִּיגַל יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ וְעַל עַמֶּךָ וְעַל בֵּית אֲבִיךָ יְמִימָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא בֵּאֵל  
 עֲמִיּוֹם שׁוּר אֲפֹרִיט מֵעַל יְהוּדָה אֶת מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא  
 יִשְׂרָק יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת אֲשֶׁר בִּקְצֵה יַאֲרֵי מִצְרַיִם וְלִצְבֹּרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ  
 אַשּׁוּר: וּבֵאֵל וְנָח כָּל־מִבְּחַיֵּי הַבְּתוּלוֹת וּבְנִקְיָרֵי הַסִּלְעִים וּבְכָל  
 הַנְּעֻצִּים וּבְכָל הַנְּהַלְעִים: בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יִלְחָח אֲנִי בְּתַעַר  
 הַשְּׂכִירָה בַּעֲבָרֵי נָהָר בְּמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶת הַרְאֵשׁ וְשַׁעַר הַרְעִלִים  
 וְאֵם אֶת הַנֶּקֶן דַּנְּסָפָה: וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יַחִיָּה אִישׁ עֲשֵׂלָה בִּקְרֵי  
 וְשֹׁדֵד צִיָּאן: וְהָיָה מִרְבֵּעַ עֲשׂוֹת חֶלֶב יֵאָכֵל חֲמֵאלָה כִּי חֲמֵאלָה  
 וּבָשׁ יֵאָכֵל כֹּל חֲנֻתָּר בִּקְרֵה הָאָרֶץ: וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא  
 יְהִי כֹל מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה שֶׁמֶץ אֵלֶּף עֶבֶן בְּאֵלֶּף כֶּסֶף לְשֹׁמֵר  
 וְלַשִּׁית יִהְיֶה: בַּחֲצִימִם וּבִקְשֵׁת יִבֹּא שִׁנָּה כִּשְׁמִיר וְשִׁית־תִּרְיֵה  
 כֹּל הָאָרֶץ: וְכָל הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּצְדָּר יִצְדָּרוּן לְתִבּוֹאָה שִׁנָּה יְהוֹת  
 שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית וְהָיָה שְׁלֵלָה שׁוֹר וְלִמְרֹמֶם שֶׁהָ:

Yahweh shall bring on you, on your people and on your father's house, times such as have not come since Ephraim broke away from Judah, even the King of Assyria. That day Yahweh will whistle for mosquitos from the Delta of the Egyptian Nile and bees from the land of Assyria. They will come and settle in the desolate valleys and in the holes in the rocks and on all thorns and all bushes. On that day the Lord will shave with a razor that is hired from beyond the river, the King of Assyria, the head, the hair of the feet and it will take off the beard too. That day each man will raise one cow and two sheep, and because of the abundance of the milk that they will gibe, he will eat butter all who are lift in the country will eat butter and honey. That day, where a thousand vines used to be, worth one thousand pieces of silver, all will be briar and thorn. Men will enter with bows and arrow, because the whole

country will become briars and thorns. On any hillside dug with a hoe no one will come for fear of briars and thorns; it will be pasture for cattle and grazing for sheep.

In this passage, Isaiah is predicting that both Assyria and Egypt will overrun Judah. The devastation that they will cause will be so great that the land will revert back to the way it used to be. Instead of eating the produce of the fields the people will eat honey and butter, a food that was eaten prior to large scale cultivation of the land. Land that had been under cultivation will now only be good for pasture and grazing.

In Is 8:7-8, Isaiah says:

ואכן הנה אנכי מציפה עמיהם את נחל הניר והעצבים והרבים  
את מלך אשור ואת כל כבודו ואתה שם כל אפיקיו והלך עמך כל  
עמיתיו: וחלש זיהוה שטף וצבר עב צואר ישיע והיה  
נאות כנפ'ו מלא רחב ארצך עמואל:

The Lord will bring up against you the mighty and deep waters of the river, the King of Assyria and all his glory, and it will come up over its channels and overflow its banks. It will pass through Judah, it will flow over and pour out, it will reach even to the neck and its wings will be spread over the whole breadth of your country, I Immanuel.

While Is 7 mentions Egypt and Assyria, Is 8 only discusses an Assyrian invasion. The fate of the people of the Judah and Jerusalem will be humiliation, death and exile for those still left. Their humiliation and death are described in Is 3:1-4, 16-18, 24-26:

(3:1-4)

כי הנה יהאדון יהוה צבאות מסיר מירושלם ומיהודה



משכן ומשעשע כל משען עזם וכל משען חים: גבור

ואיש מלחמה שופט אנכי וקוסם וזקן: שר חמשים

ונשלא כנים ויועץ וחכם חרשים ונבון עזש: ונתתי

לערים שריהם ותעזאליים ימשלו בהם:

(3:16-18)

ויאמר יהוה יען כי גבהו בעת ציון ותלכש

נטוות גרון ומשקרות עינים הלוק וטפף תלכש וברגליהם

תעכסש: ושלח אגני קדקד בעת ציון ויהוה פתהן יצרה:

ביום ההוא יסיר אגני את תבואת העכסים והשביסים והשחרנים:

והיה תחת בשם מק יהיה ותחת חלון הה נקפה (3:24-26)

ותחת מצשה מקשה קרחה ותחת פתי גיל מחלרת שק כיתחת ירי:

מתיק בחרה יפלו וגבורתך במלחמה: ואלו אבולו פתחיה

ונקתה לארץ נשבה:

For the Lord Yahweh will take away from Jerusalem and Judah every stay and support, support of bread and support of water, the hero, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the elder, the diviner, captain, noble, counselor, sorcerer, and soothsayer. I will give them boys for princes and raw lads to rule over them. Yahweh said: Because of the haughtiness of the daughters of Zion, the way they walk with their heads held high with enticing eyes, the way they mince along, tinkling the bangles on their feet, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion and uncover their nakedness. That day the Lord will take away the ankle ornaments, tiaras, pendants, bracelets, and veils. Instead of scent, a stink; instead on a belt, a rope; instead of hair elaborately done a shaven scalp; and instead of gorgeous dress, a sack, and brand marks instead of beauty. Your men will fall by the sword. your heroes in battle. Her gates will lament and mourn and she will sit on the ground desolate.

The evil of the people of Judah is predicted in Is 5:13:

לכן גלה עמי מגלי דעת וכבו מתי רצח והחלל צחה

צנה:



"Therefore my people will go into exile because they have no knowledge, their honorable men are famished and their people dried up with thirst." The exile of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is predicted in Is 8:14-15:

והיה מנקדש ואילבן גליל וכל צור מכשוף גשני בתי ישראל עכח  
והמקדש ע'ושח ירושלם: וכשכלום רבים ונפלא ונשגב ונקיש ונלכדו:

"He will be a sanctuary, but a stumbling-stone and a rock that brings down the two houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. By it many will be brought down many fall and be broken be trapped and made captive."

In Is 7:17-18, Isaiah has predicted that the devastation of Judah will be carried out by Egypt and Assyria. Is 8 says the deportation will be done by Assyria. Nowhere is there any indication of when all this is to take place. The fact that Isaiah predicts the destruction of Israel and Syria just before he predicts the destruction of Judah does not tell us when Judah would be destroyed. It appears that Judah would be destroyed after the destruction of Israel and Syria. But how soon after? We may be able to answer this by looking at Assyria's role in the destruction. It is quite clear from Is 10:5-7, that Assyria is being used by God as a "tool" to punish Judah:

הוי אשור שט אפרימטה רוא ביזם זעמי: זגאי חנף אשור  
ועד עם עברתי אצווע אישעל שלם ועל כל ולשימר מרמס כחמר  
חוצות: ורוא לאכן יענה ועל כל לאכן יחשב כי אהשמיך גלגל  
ולחכרית אים לא מעט:

Assyria is the rod of my anger, the staff of my wrath is in his hand. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, against the people of my wrath I will give him charge, to take the spoil and the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. But he he did not intend this, his heart did not plan so. No in his heart was to destroy, to go on cutting nations to pieces without limit.

In verses 8-11, the King of Assyria brags of his might and his deeds:

כי יאמר הלא שרי רחצו מלכים: הלא ככרכמיש כמע  
אלא כארפד חמת אמ לא כנמשק שחרון: כאשר  
נצאה ידו למחלכת האלים ופסיליהם מירושלם ושמרון:  
הלא כאשר עשיתי לשחרון ולאליליהם כן אעשה לירושלם ולעצביה:

He said: Are not my princes all kings? Is not Calno like Carchemish? Hamath like Arpad, Samaria like Damascus? As my hand has reached out to the kingdoms of the idols, richer in idols than Jerusalem and Samaria, as I have dealt with Samaria and her idols, shall I not treat Jerusalem and her images the same?

Verse 12 then tells that God will punish Assyria:

והיה כי יבצע אונן את כל מעשהו בהר ציון ובירושלם אפק  
עם פרי גזל לבב מלך אשור ועם תפלות רום ציני:

"When the Lord has completed his whole work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, He will punish what comes from the boastful heart of the King of Assyria and his arrogant insolence."

The punishment that God has in mind for Assyria is expressed in verses 24-27:

לכן כה אמר אונן יהוה צבאות אל תירא עמי ישב ציון מאשור  
בשבט יככה ומטהו יטא עליהם בגרן מצרים: כי עוף מצר מצר

73 וכלה נעם ואפי' על מכה יתם: ועורר עירן יהוה צבאות שול

כמכת מצרין בצור עורב ומטהו על הימ ונשאן בצרק מצרים:

והיה ביום ההוא יסור סבלו מעל שכמך ועל מאלו צלורק

והכל על מפת שמי:

So Yahweh says: My people who live in Zion do not be afraid of Assyria, he will strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, after the manner of Egypt. In a very little while My indignation will end and My will destroy them. Yahweh will whirl the whip against him, like the time He struch Midian at the rock of Oreb, like the time He stretched out the rod against the sea after the manner of Egypt. That day, his burden will be taken from off your shoulder and his yoke from off your neck and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing.

According to Isaiah, Assyria was to have the following role in these events. First, Assyria was to be instrumental in the destruction of Israel and Syria.<sup>3</sup> After this has occurred Assyria was to devastate Judah<sup>4</sup> and lead away into captivity those who remained.<sup>5</sup> Finally, after Assyria had carried out her cission, she herself would be destroyed.<sup>6</sup> In Is 10:25, Isaiah uses the expression

כי עיר נל

"a little while," to describe when Assyria would be punished.

It would appear that Isaiah expected these events to follow this order and happen fairly soon. But, in fact, this was not the order of events as they happened. The year 625 B.C.E. marks the beginning of the disintegration of the Assyrian empire. In 612 B.C.E., Ninevah is captured and three years later an attempt to retake Haran fails, and within a few years the Assyrian empire is ended. But Jerusalem is not taken until 597 B.C.E. and the people deported not to Assyria,

but to Babylon. Consequently, Assyria was punished before the inhabitants of Jerusalem were led away, a reversal of the events as predicted. Not only was the order of the events changed, but Assyria was not the country which exiled the people of Judah.

Chapters 13 through 23 are a series of oracles against various "foreign" nations. We shall deal with Chapters 13, 14, 20, and 23. Chapter 13 is an oracle against Babylon and Chapter 14 is a parable or satire against the King of Babylon. Since both chapters deal with Babylon, they will be treated together.

The question that arises in relation to Chapters 13 and 14 is the following: In these two chapters, is Isaiah referring to Babylon or Assyria? Is 13:1 is as follows:

נִשְׂאָן בָּבֶל אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן אֲמוֹז׃

"An oracle on Babylon, seen by Isaiah the son of Amoz."

Is 14:4 states:

וְנִשְׂאָתָה הַמֶּלֶךְ הַזֶּה עַל מִלְּךָ בָּבֶל וְאֶחָדָתָה אֵיךְ שָׁבַת לְעַשׂ

שְׁבִיָּה מְדַבֵּר׃<sup>7</sup>

You will recite this parable against the King of Babylon and say: How the tyrant has ceased! How his arrogance has ended!"<sup>7</sup> On the surface, both of these chapters appear to be directed against Babylon. But H.L. Ginsberg offers convincing proof that this is not the case. Chapter 14 is really an oracle on the death of Sargon.



In view of Sargon's notorious Babylonsim, whose manifestations included a three years' residence in Babylon and the stressing of both his Babylonian titles and of his benefactions to the inhabitants and temples of the southern metropolises in an account intended for foreigners (the Cyprus Stela), it would not be remarkable if Isaiah regarded Babylon (a city whose name was presumably far more familiar to him see Gen 10:10, 11:1-9 than Caleh see Gen 10:11-12 let alone Dur-Sharrukin, of which he probably never heard) as the center of the Assyrian empire!...every line of the poem protests against its being interpreted as a vision of the future. It sounds like nothing so much as a spontaneous reaction to a death which, gratifyingly, has taken place. We shall see that it is actually an oracle on the death of Sargon.<sup>8</sup>

H. Tadmor examines Sargon's son Sennacherib's investigation into the sin of his father, which would account for Sargon's not being buried. Under the reign of Sargon, the Babylonization of Assyrian culture reached its peak. Sargon did this by introducing the worship of Babylonian gods. This then would be the sin of Sargon. Sennacherib himself took an anti-Babylonian position as a reaction to his father's strongly pro-Babylonian position. Sennacherib reintroduces the worship of Assyrian gods so that he will not be guilty of the same sin of his father.<sup>9</sup> Sargon's sin and Sennacherib's reaction to it, point up the fact that Assyria was so much like Babylon that it would not be unusual for Isaiah to call Assyria Babylon. This would support Ginsberg's view as stated above. These arguments account for considering Chapter 14 to be directed against Assyria. As for Chapter 13, it too is directed against Assyria for the following reasons.



First, as Tadmor and Ginsberg point out, it would be logical for Isaiah to call Assyria Babylon, given the information above. Second, certain verses in Chapter 13 are a more fitting description of Assyria than of Babylonia. The events described in verses 19-22 describe the conquest of Ninevah,<sup>10</sup> the capital of Assyria, better than the conquest of Babylon, the capital of Babylonia:

והיתה בגל צבי מנמכות תפארת און כשדים בחרבכת אלהים  
את סגם ואת עמרה: לא תשב לנצח ולא דושכן עד דור ודור  
ולא יהם שם צימ ומלאו בתיהם אוים וסכנו שם בנות יענה וסעירם  
ירקנו שם: וענה איים באלמעותו ותים בהיכלי ענך וקרוה לבוא  
ערה ויניה לא נשכו:

Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' excellency, shall be like God's overthrowing of Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, neither will it be lived in from generation to generation. Neither will the Arabian pitch tent there, neither will the shepherds feed their flocks there. But wild beasts of the desert will lie there. And their houses will be full of owls; and ostriches will live there and satyrs will dance there. And jackals will cry in their desolate castles and hyenas in the luxury of their palaces. Its day is almost up, its day will not last long.

When Cyrus took Babylon, however, it was without a fight and there was no widescale destruction as described in these verses (Verse 17)

הנני מעיר עליהם את מדי אשר כסף לא  
יחשב וזהב לא יחפז בו:

"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who think nothing of silver, who take no pleasure in gold." When Assyria

fell, the Medes were instrumental in the destruction.<sup>11</sup>

In Chapter 13, Isaiah has predicted the downfall of Assyria and the destruction of her capital. As we have seen above, in Chapter 10 Ninevah was captured in 612 B.C.E. and within approximately six years the Assyria was no longer an empire. This means that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, but not until 75 to 100 years after he made them.

Ashdod had been incited to rebel against Assyria by Egypt. Isaiah felt it was futile to depend on another country for help and he did not want Judah to follow Ashdod's example and seek aid from Egypt. As result of this, he makes the following prediction in Chapter 20:

בשנת בא תרדמן אשדודא בשלח ארמו סרסאן מלך אשור וילחם  
באשדוד וילכדה: בעד תהיא דבר יהוה ביד ישעיה בן אמוץ  
לאמר לך ופדחת השק מלך מתנך ועלך תחלף מלך רעליך ויעש  
כן רלך ערום ויחלף: ויאמר יהוה כאשר הלך עבדי ישעיה ערום ויחלף  
שלש שנים אורח ומופת על מצרים ועל כוש: כן יעלף מלך אשור את  
שבי מצרים ואת עלות כוש נערים ונקנים ערום ויחלף וחשופי שר  
ערום מצרים: וחתי ובשו מכוש מבטם ומן מצרים תבארתם: ולאמר  
'שם הארץ הנה ביום ההוא הנה כה מבטל אשור נעל שם לעברה  
להנצל מפני מלך אשור ואין נחלף אשור:

In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the King of Assyria sent him, he fought against Ashdod and took it. At the same time, Yahweh spoke through Isaiah, son of Amoz. He said to him: Go and take the sackcloth off your waist and take the sandals off your feet. He did so and walked about naked and barefoot. Yahweh then said: As my servant Isaiah has walked about naked and barefoot for the last three years- a sign and wonder for Egypt and Ethiopia. So will the King of Assyria lead away captives from Egypt and Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, their buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt. And they will be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectations and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitants of this island will say on that day: Look, such is our expectation, where will we flee for help to be delivered from the King of Assyria. And how shall we escape?

Isaiah has predicted that the King of Assyria will take captives from Egypt and Ethiopia. In verse 4, the expression "young and old" is a *heriady*s and is used to indicate that no distinction will be made concerning who will be taken captive. This means that the captives will not be limited to just the ruling class, but rather a large number of people from all classes will be taken. The I.C.C. makes the following comment: "His expectation that Assyria would take captive and carry into exile the people of Egypt and Ethiopia was not fulfilled; it was a full generation after the capture of Ashdod before an Assyrian army even entered Egypt."<sup>12</sup> Large numbers of the general population of Egypt and Ethiopia were never deported. In 667 B.C.E. Assurbanipal crushed a revolt in Egypt and took some rebel princes to Nineveh to be executed. But the kind of deportation predicted by Isaiah never materialized. Thus, this prophecy is unfulfilled.

Chapter 23 is an oracle against Tyre and Sidon. In verses 9-11, Isaiah makes the following pronouncement;

יהוה צבאות יעצה לחלל דאון כל צבירי ערקל כל נכבדי ארץ:  
 עברי ארצק כיאר בת דרשיט אין מנחשו: ידן נטה אל רים  
 הר גיל מנחכות יהוה בזה אל כען לשמך מעטרה:

Yahweh has decided to humble the pride of all her glory and humiliate the great ones of the world. Overflow the land like a river, O daughter of Tarshish, the harbor<sup>13</sup> is no more. He has stretched out His hand over the sea to overthrow its kingdoms: Yahweh has given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy its strongholds.

The Cambridge Bible makes the following comment about Chapter 23: "It is true that Tyre did not then suffer the complete overthrow which is here contemplated."<sup>14</sup> In fact, it was not until the city was captured by Alexander in 332 B.C.E. that this prophecy was fulfilled. Attempts were made, however, to subjugate the city. During the five year period between 727 and 722 B.C.E., Shalmaneser blockaded Tyre but he did not succeed in destroying its stronghold. Tyre was again blockaded by Esarhaddin in 672 B.C.E. Asshurbanapal did conquer the city sometime between 585 and 573 B.C.E., but he did not reduce the city nor did he destroy the harbor. Tyre was still intact and an active trade center in 570 B.C.E.

We now turn to a series of passages that deal with events which took place around the year 700 B.C.E. These passages deal with the Assyrian invasion of Judah and the possibility of an attack on Jerusalem.



From II Ki 18:3-4, we learn about Hezekiah's reform:

ויעל הישר יערי יהוה ככל אשר עשה דוד אביו: הלא הסיר  
את הבמות ושבר את הנצבת ונרת את האשרה ונרת לחש  
הנחשת אשר עשה משה כי עבד הימים ההמה היו בע ישראל  
מקדשים לא ויקרא לו נחשת:

He did what was pleasing to Yahweh, just as David his father had done. He removed the high places, broke the images, cut down the sacred poles, and smashed the bronze serpent which Moses had made; For up to that time the children of Israel had offered sacrifices to it and called it Nehustan.

After Hezekiah had carried out his reforms he rebelled against Assyria.<sup>15</sup> The rest of Chapter 18 and Chapter 19 describe Sennacherib's capture of certain fortified cities of Judah and the impending attack on Jerusalem. But these chapters present something of a problem. It is not clear if the account in II Ki is presenting several different versions of the same event or if it is describing only one event. The reason that this is a problem for us is, as we shall see, Isaiah makes contradictory prophecies concerning the fate of Jerusalem.

In II Ki 18:13-16, we have the following account:

ובגאון עשרה שנה למלך חזקיה עשה סנחריב מלך אשור עם  
כל ערי יהודה הבצורות ויתבסס: וישלח חזקיה מלך יהודה אל  
מלך אשור לכישה למאמר חטאתי שוב מצלי את אשר נתן עלי אשכנ  
וישם מלך אשור עם חזקיה מלך יהודה שלש מאות ככר כסף ושלשים  
ככר זהב: ויתן חזקיה את כל הכסף הנמצא בית יהודה ובאצרות  
בית המלך: בעת ההוא קצץ חזקיה את צלעות ביכל יהודה ואת  
האמנות אשר צפה חזקיה מלך יהודה ויתנם למלך אשור:



In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib King of Assyria attacked the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Then Hezekiah King of Judah, sent this message to the King of Assyria at Lachish: I will submit myself to whatever you impose on me. The King of Assyria exacted three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold from Hezekiah King of Judah, and Hezekiah gave him all the silver in the House of Yahweh and in the treasury of the royal palace. It was then that Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the Temple of Yahweh and from the pillars which Hezekiah King of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the King of Assyria.

According to Bright, this account in II Ki 18:13-16, parallels Sennacherib's own account of the campaign of 701 B.C.E. Bright claims "no mentionable conflict exists between the two."<sup>16</sup> In this passage, Sennacherib has not laid siege to Jerusalem, he came only as far as Lachish. Hezekiah has surrendered and agreed to pay any tribute that Sennacherib names. Sennacherib asks for tribute and Hezekiah pays. Bright contends that this account describes one military campaign, while the rest of Chapter 18 and all of Chapter 19, describe a second campaign, which probably took place around 688 B.C.E. He also claims that we are given two different accounts of this second campaign. One account consists of II Ki 18:17-19:9a, and the second consists of II Ki 19:9b-19:35.<sup>17</sup> But his arguments are no more convincing than those who claim the Chapters 18 and 19 contain several different accounts of the same military campaign. All we can say is that Bright has constructed a theory that is no more probable than the theory that we are dealing with one campaign. There is not enough information to determine the accuracy of these two theories.

In 18:17- 18:37, Sennacherib sends a representative to Hezekiah to demand the surrender of Jerusalem or else face destruction. According to Bright, this is the description of another campaign, while others say that Sennacherib was not satisfied with the tribute paid and so decides to attack Jerusalem. Upon hearing Sennacherib's demands, Hezekiah sends for Isaiah in order to seek advice. Isaiah says to him in II Ki 19:32-34:

אֲכֹל כִּי אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה אֵל מֶלֶךְ אֱשׂוּר עָלָא יְבֹא אֵל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת  
וְלֹא יִהְיֶה שָׁם חָיִל וְלֹא יִקְדָּמֶנּוּ מִן וְלֹא יִשְׁבֹּק עָלֶיהָ עֲלֵה זֶדְדָּרָק  
אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא יִשׁוּב וְאֵל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת עָלָא יְבֹא לְאִם יְהוָה וְהַנְּתִירָהּ  
אֵל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעַן וְלִמְעַן צִדִּיק עֲבָדֶיךָ:

This then is what Yahweh says about the King of Assyria: He will not enter this city nor shoot an arrow there, nor confront it with shield, nor cast an earthwork against it. By the way that he came on he will return, he will not enter this city, it is Yahweh Who speaks. I will protect this city and save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

This same oracle is found in Isaiah 37:33-35. The idea that Yahweh will protect Jerusalem is reiterated in Isaiah 31:4-9:

כִּי כִּי אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה אֵלֵי כְּאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ וְהַכְּפִיר עַל טָרְפוֹ אֲשֶׁר  
יִקְרָא עָלָיו מִלֵּא רָעִים מִקּוֹלָם לֹא יִחַת וּמִחֲמוֹם לֹא יִעָרֵב כִּן יִרָד  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עֲלֵה זֶדְדָּרָק וְעַל עֲבָדֶיהָ: כִּי צָרָה עָפֹת כִּן  
יֵאָן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲנִי וְהַצִּיל פֶּסַח וְהַחֲלִיט: שׁוּבָא לְאֲשֶׁר  
הִעֲמִיקוּ סָרָה בְּטַיִם יִשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי יִזְוֶה הָאֵל יִמְאֹסוּן אִישׁ אֶלְיָה יִכְסֹּפוּ וְלֹא יִלְיִ  
זָהָב אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם יִדְיָכֶם חֲטָא: וְנִפְלֵא אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲרָה לֹא אִישׁ וְחָרָה  
עָלָא אֲדָמָה תִּכְאֹכֵל וְלֹא מִפְּנֵי חָרָה וּבַחֲוָרִין לֹא יִהְיֶין: וְסִילֵן מִמֶּנּוּ

יִצְחָק וְחֵתוּ מִן שָׂרֵי נָפֶת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אָוֹרַח בְּצִיּוֹן

וְהָיָה אֵל בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

For this Yahweh has said to me: As a lion or a lion cub growls over its prey and even when a whole band of shepherds gathers against him, he is not frightened by their shouting or alarmed by the noise they make, so will Yahweh descend to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill. As birds flying so will Yahweh protect Jerusalem, He will protect it, rescue it, spare it, and save it. Come back to Him from whom the children of Israel have revolted. For on that day every man will throw away his idols of silver and gold, which you have made with your sinful hands. Assyria will fall by a sword that is not man's, and the sword not of man will devour him. He will flee before the sword and his young men will become enslaved. He will cross over to his stronghold for fear and his princes will be afraid of the ensign, says Yahweh whose fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem.

The oracle in II Ki 19:32-34 (Is 37:33-35) says that Jerusalem will not be besieged. Is 31:4-9 predicts that not only will Yahweh save Jerusalem, but "Assyria will fall by a sword that is not man's," implying a "miraculous" deliverance. And we find that this is exactly what the account in II Ki tells us happened. II Ki 19:35:

וַיְהִי בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיֵּצֵא מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה וַיִּקַּח בַּחֲסֵי אֲשׁוּר מֵאֹה שְׁמוֹנִים

וּמֵאִישׁ אֶחָד וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ בְּקֶרֶךְ וְהָיָה כֹּלָם כַּדָּרִים מְתֵימִ:

"That same night the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

As we have seen, Isaiah predicted that Jerusalem will not be sieged directly and from the account in II Ki this is what happened. Isaiah predicted that Yahweh will save Jerusalem by a "miracle" and from II Ki we learn that this is what happened. In contrast to these oracles predicting that there will be no siege, we find the following oracle in

29:1-4:

הוי אריאל אריאל קרית חנה דוג סבו שני ערש חלים ינקבו: והצקותי  
 אריאל והיתה תאניה ואניה והיתה אריאל: וחנית כדור ערש  
 ונרת ערש מצב והקמתי ערש מצרר ושפלת מארץ תצברי ומעפר  
 תשח אמרתק והיה כאלו מארץ קולק ומעפר אמרתק תצב:

Woe to Ariel, Ariel<sup>18</sup>, the city where David dwelt. Let a year or two pass, let the festivals make their full round then I will bring into straits (lay siege) Ariel and there will be moaning and bemoaning. And you will be an Ariel to me. I will camp against you round about and will lay siege against you with palisades and mount siege-works against you. Thrown down you will speak from the ground your words will be muffled by the dust. Your voice will rise from the earth like ghost's, you will speak from the dust in a whisper.

Further on in 29:13-14 it says:

ואמר אדני יצן כלש העם הלה בפיו ובשפתיו כדצנ ולבו רחוק ממני ותהי  
 יהותם אתי מצות אנשים מאמרה: לכן הני יעץ אלה פלגו את העם הלה  
 הפלגו ופלגו דאברה חכמת מכאיו וביתכניו תסדנתר:

The Lord has said: Because this people approaches me only in words, honors me only with their lips, while their heart is far from me and their fear of me is taught by the precept of men. Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men will be hid.



Yahweh's disgust with the behavior of the people is

further expressed in 30:9-17:

כי עמ מרי הוא בנים כחשים בנים לא אבן שמוע דורות ירוה: אשר אמרו  
 אלהים לא תבואו אלנו ולא תרחצו לנו נכחות דברו לנו חלקות חזו מה תבואו:  
 סורו מני דרך חזו מני השביתו מפניע את קדוש יש הוא: אכן כה אמר קדוש  
 יש הוא יען מאוסכם בגבר הנזה ותבטחו בעשק ונאז ותשעע עלי: אכן יהיה  
 לכם העון הנזה כפרף נבל נבזה בחומה נשגבה אשר בתאם גפתי יבוא  
 שברה: ושברה כשבר נבל יצורים כתות לא יחמל ולא יחצא במכרתו חרש  
 אחרות אש מיקוד ולא חשף מים מלכל: כי כה אמר אונן יהוה קדוש יש הוא  
 בשלה ונחת תושעון בהשקט ובטחה דנהיה גבורתכם ולא אגיתם ותאמרו  
 לא כי עמ סוס נוס עמ כן דנקוסון ועמ קל נרכב עמ כן יקל רב פים: אלא  
 אחז מפני גערת אחז מפני גערת חמשה דנסו עז אמ נותרתם כתרן  
 על הוא ההר ונשם עמ הגבעה:

This is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of Yahweh. To the seers they say: See no vision. To the prophet: Do not prophesy the truth to us, tell us flattering things, prophesy deceits, turn aside from the way, leave the path, take of Holy One of Israel out of our sight. Thus the Holy One of Israel says: Since you despise this word and prefer to trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on these, then your guilt will prove to be for you a breach on the point of collapse, the bulge at the top of the wall whose breaking comes suddenly at an instant. He will break it as the breaking of potter's vessel is broken in pieces. He will not spare, so that here will not be found in the fragments one sherd big enough to take to the fire from the hearth or scoop water from the cistern. For thus says the Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you will be saved, your strength in complete trust, but you will have none of it. You said: No, we will flee on horses. Therefore you will flee and you add: We will ride on the swift. Therefore will



they who pursue you be swift. A thousand will flee at the rebuke of one and when five threaten you will flee, until you are left as a beacon on the top of a mountain and as an ensign on a hill.

These two latter passages, Is 30:9-17 and Is 29:13-14, leave no doubt that Yahweh is about to take strong action against the people. What is described in these passages did not occur in 700 B.C.E., but they did happen in 587 B.C.E. If these oracles were pronounced prior to Sennacherib's invasion, it must have looked as if they were about to be fulfilled. But such was not the case. If these oracles were pronounced after the invasion, then it is possible that Isaiah expected Assyria to return and exile the people as we have seen above. But this was not the case. For it was Babylonia which eventually fulfilled these prophecies in 587 B.C.E.

In 29:1-4, Isaiah has predicted that Jerusalem will be besieged within a year or two. There is unfortunately no way to date this particular oracle so we do not know if it was pronounced before or after the invasion of 701 B.C.E. We also cannot be sure whether the account given in II Ki, which we have examined, speaks of one invasion or two. Thus there are several different ways to view this oracle in Chapter 29. There is one other factor that must be considered. In our discussion of the account in II Ki of the invasion, we said that Jerusalem was not besieged, thus fulfilling Is 37:33-35 (II Ki 19:32-34). It is possible however, to show that Jerusalem was besieged although siege towers and ramps were not built directly against the walls of the city. Sennacherib's advance into Judah left him in control of the cities and

territory around Jerusalem<sup>19</sup> leaving Jerusalem virtually isolated. Sennacherib encamps with his main force at Lachish, approximately thirty miles from Jerusalem. II Ki 18:17:

approximately thirty miles from Jerusalem. II Ki 18:17;  
 וישלח מלך אשור את תרדן ואת רב סרים ואת רב שקה מן אכיש אל  
 המלך חזקיהו בחיל כבד ירושלם ויעל ויעלו ירושלם ויעלו ויעלו  
 ויעלו בתימלת וברכה ונעלמו אשר במסלת שדה כוש:

The King of Assyria sent Tartan, Rab-saris, and Rab-shaken with a large force from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. They went up and came to Jerusalem and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is the highway of the fuller's field.

There is no indication that they met any resistance, thus indicating that Sennacherib had control of the territory between Lachish and Jerusalem. This force did not lay siege to the city, but came to tell Hezekiah Sennacherib's terms. There would be no need to lay a direct siege to Jerusalem because the city was isolated. In this way one could say that Jerusalem was under siege.

The account in II Kings gives us the following picture of what has happened. Sennacherib's army is camped approximately thirty miles from Jerusalem. He controls the territory around the city but he does not build siege towers or ramps against the city walls. He sends some of his generals with a strong force to ask for the surrender of the city.

If the orcale in 29:1-4 was pronounced prior to 701 B.C.E., then we would have to say that it was partially fulfilled. Sennacherib did camp around the city, but he did not assault the walls directly. This would be the case regardless of

whether II Kings describes two campaigns or one. If it was pronounced after 701 B.C.E. but prior to 688 B.C.E., we again would have to say that it was partially fulfilled. If it was pronounced later than this, then it was not fulfilled until 587 B.C.E., which would be more than two years after it was pronounced. One might speculate that we do not have the full account of what happened. If there were two campaigns, it is possible that during one of them, Sennacherib did begin a direct siege of the city. This would fulfill Isaiah's oracle in Chapter 29. But during the second campaign, he did not directly besiege the city, thus fulfilling the oracle in Chapter 37.

One can see that it is possible to take the account in II Kings and Isaiah's two oracles and come out with the view that one oracle was fulfilled while the other was not. Or that one was fulfilled while the other was only partially fulfilled. Or that both were fulfilled since they refer to different campaigns. Or that the oracle in Chapter 29 has nothing to do with the events of 701 B.C.E., and was not fulfilled two years later as predicted.

Chapters 9, 11, and 19, in Isaiah, contain prophecies which can be viewed as dealing with either specific events or with the unspecified future. The language which Isaiah uses is such that it would be impossible to say with certainty whether Isaiah is predicting that a certain individual is to perform certain actions or if these events are to happen in the future. First, we shall look at these prophecies in terms

of specific events and then we shall see how they could refer to the unspecified future.

We have said above that Isaiah was not concerned with predicting who Immanuel's parents would be. We also said that we would not try to identify who Immanuel was. We cannot be sure if Isaiah had the birth of a real child in mind, or if, as we have said, he used Immanuel's birth symbolically. This issue is raised here because in Is 9:5, Isaiah speaks of the birth of a child:

כי ילד ילד לע בן נתן לע ותהי חמשה עשר שנה ויקרא  
שמו כעל יועל אלם דבור אבי ער שר שלום:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government is upon his shoulders, and he will call His (God's) name Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Here, as in Is 7:14, we are not told who the child's parents are nor is the child identified by name.

Is 9:6 tells us of his reign:

לסדנה חמשה ולשלום אין קל ער כסא דוד ועל NN מלכותו עתה  
אתה אלסדנה חמשה ובצדקה מלכה וער עולם קנאת עתה צללות  
תעשה נאמר:

"There will be no end to the increase of his dominion and peace, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and forever, the zeal of Yahweh will do this."

Is 11:1-4 tells of the birth of another child:

ויצא חטר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפלה: ונחה עליה רוח יהוה רוח

חכמה ובין רוח עצה ולגורה רוח צאת ויראת יהוה: והריו  
 ביראת יהוה ולא למראה עיניו ישפט ולא למשמע אזניו יוכיח:  
 ושפט בצדק דלים והוכיח במישור לעני אורף והכה אורף בשבט  
 בין וברוח שפתי יחית רשע:

A shoot springs forth from the stem of Jesse, a branch grows from his roots. The spirit of Yahweh rests upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh. He will be filled with a spirit of the fear of Yahweh. He does not judge after the sight of his eyes, he gives no verdict after the hearing of his ears. But he judges the poor with righteousness and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. His mouth is a rod that strikes the earth, his sentences bring death to the wicked.

In the light of Hezekiah's reforms, Isaiah may have had him in mind when he wrote this passage. If this is so, then the child mentioned in Is 9:5 would also be Hezekiah. It would then be logical to conclude that the עלמה in Is 7:14 would be the queen and the child, Immanuel, is Hezekiah. If we accept the idea that these three references to the birth of a child all refer to Hezekiah, then we could conclude that Isaiah thought that Hezekiah would be the one who would carry out what is described in Chapters 11 and 19.

If we view Is 11:6-16 as a plan of action to be carried out by Hezekiah, we would reach the following three conclusions. First, Hezekiah would unite Israel and Judah, as described in Is 11:6-8:

ואר לאב עמ כבש ומר עמ דגו ירבה וצלה וכפיר ומריא יחגו  
 אשר קטן נהג במ: ובה ובה ררעיע יחגו ירבה ילדיהן לאריה



כִּיקָר יִבְכּוּ רֵגֶל וְשֶׁעֶז יִנָּק עַל חֵר פֶּתֶן וְעַל חֵר פֶּתֶן וְעַל חֵר פֶּתֶן  
יָדָן הַדֶּבֶר:

The wolf lives with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the kid, calf and lion feed together with a little child to lead them. The cow and the bear feed, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's den the young child puts his head.

The imagery used in these verses describes a reunification of Judah and Israel. This view is supported further on when it says in verses 13 and 14 of the same Chapter:

וְהָיָה קִנְיָן אֶפְרַיִם וְזָרָה יְהוּדָה יִכְרְתוּ אֶפְרַיִם לֹא יִקְנָה אֶת יְהוּדָה  
וְיְהוּדָה לֹא יִזְרֹת אֶת אֶפְרַיִם: וְעָבְדוּ בְּכֶתֶף פֶּלִשְׁתִּים יְחֻצוּ יְבֻזָּא אֶת  
בְּנֵי קֶדֶם אֲדָמָה וְמוֹאָב מִשְׁלֹחַ יָדָם וְכֵן עָמֹן מִשְׁמָעֵתָם:

Then Ephraim's jealousy will come to an end and Judah's enemies will be put down: Ephraim will no longer be jealous of Judah nor Judah any longer the enemy of Ephraim. They will sweep down westwards on the shoulders of the Philistines and together they will pillage the sons of the East. They will lay their hand on Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon will obey them.

Here, it will be through Hezekiah's rule that the uniting of Israel and Judah will take place.

Second, after the kingdoms are reunited, the people who have been led away will be gather up, as in verses 11 and 12:  
וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִסְאֵף אֲדָמָה שְׂנֵית יִבְזוּ אֶת שָׂרָר עַמּוֹן אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאָר  
מֵאֲשֹׁר וּמִצֻּרִים וּמִפְּתָחוֹ וּמִכּוֹשׁ וּמִצִּיֹּן וּמִשְׁנַעַר וּמִחֲמַת וּמֵאֵי יְרֵיחוֹ:  
וְשָׁאֵל נֶפֶשׁ לִגְדִים וְאִסְאֵף נְדָחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִפְצוֹת יְהוּדָה יִקְבֹּץ מֵאֲרָבָע  
כְּנָפֹת הָאֲרָץ:

On that day, Yahweh will set His hand again the second time, the remnant of His people, which will be left, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elan, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. He will set up an ensign for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Third, the kingdoms have been reunited and the exiles restored to the land there will be civil war in Egypt, Is 19:2:

וְיִסְכַּחְרֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם וְיִלָּחֶם אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ וְעִיר בְּעִיר  
וְמַלְכוּת בְּמַלְכוּת:

"I will stir up the Egyptians against each other and they will fight every man against his brother, friend against friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom." The result of this devastating civil war will be that the Egyptians will fear Yahweh and convert to the worship of Him.<sup>20</sup> Once this is done, then the process will be completed and Israel, Egypt, and Assyria will be a blessing in the midst of the world.<sup>21</sup>

If these prophecies concern specific events, then Isaiah's prediction that Hezekiah would unite Judah and Israel was not fulfilled. Neither was his prediction that the exiles would return, fulfilled. As far as Israel, Egypt, and Assyria becoming a blessing is concerned, this was not realized. Finally, the process of the conversion of the Egyptians did begin in five cities,<sup>22</sup> but it did not spread throughout the land. If, on the other hand, Isaiah was referring to five Jewish colonies in Egypt, then his prophecy was fulfilled because we are able to point to five definite cities where Jews settled and had a strong influence.

The view that Chapters 9, 11, and 19 contain prophecies which deal with specific events is not as improbable as it first might appear. As we have seen, Isaiah thought that Assyria was God's instrument and after Assyria had done her task she would be punished. At this point, he felt that the exiles would return and that under a strong king, Israel and Judah would be reunited. The next stage would be peace in the area followed by the worship of Yahweh. The words of Is 19:25 would then be applicable:

ברוך עמי מצרים ו Assyria יצירה ו Israel  
:עלתי ירשלה

"Blessed be My people, Egypt, Assyria My creation, and Israel My heritage."

A later reader would be aware of Hezekiah's reforms as well as the actions of his successor Manasseh. Since the specific events predicted did not happen and the language used by Isaiah is not entirely clear, Chapters 9, 11, and 19 can be viewed as containing prophecies which deal with the unspecified future.

Is 9:5-6 and Is 11:1-4 predict the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty. This issue has been dealt with in the Chapter on Amos.

Is 11:6-9 predict a universal peace, a time when natural enemies will live together in harmony. Verses 10-16 predict a return of all those who were exiled from the land. Their return will not be to the land they left, but rather to a reunited Israel and Judah. Neither universal peace nor a return to a peaceful and united Israel has happened.

Is 19:16-25 predict the worship of Yahweh in Egypt as well as peace between Israel, Egypt, and Assyria. But such a state has not yet come about.

We now examine one prophecy which deals exclusively with the unspecified future, Chapter 2. Since Is 2:2-4 closely parallels Micah 4:1-3, it has already been dealt with in the Chapter on Micah. The remaining verses in Chapter 2, 6-22, are a description of *יוֹם יְהוָה*, "the day of Yahweh." We need not concern ourselves with the imagery used here; It is sufficient to say that a day of this description has not yet occurred.

#### SUMMARY

The book of Isaiah contains sixteen prophecies which we have examined. Is 7:14-16 and 8:3-4 predict the simultaneous sacking of Israel and Syria by Assyria. The sackings occurred, but not simultaneously. Damascus was sacked in 732 B.C.E. and Sammaria ten years later in 721 B.C.E. In Is 7:17-18, Isaiah predicts that Assyria and Egypt will exile the people, while Chapter 8 mentions only Assyria. In truth, neither exiled the people. In Is 10:12, Isaiah predicts that Assyria will be punished after she exiles the people. In truth, Assyria was punished first. In Is 10:25, Isaiah's prediction occurred one hundred years after it was predicted and not in "a little while," as predicted. If Chapter 13 refers to Assyria, it was fulfilled seventy-five to one hundred years later. If it refers to Bablon, it was fulfilled 175 to 22 years later. Chapter 20 predicts the exile of the people of

Egypt and Ethiopia, and was not fulfilled. The destruction of Tyre, as predicted in Chapter 23 of Isaiah, did not occur. The prophecies concerning the events around 700 B.C.E. can be viewed as having been either fulfilled or unfulfilled, as we have seen. If we view Chapters 9,11, and 19 as dealing with the unspecified future, then Chapters 9,11,19, and 2 are unfulfilled.



## NOTES

1. John Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 272-273. (hereinafter Bright).
2. Lindblom, Prophecy, p. 160.
3. Isaiah 7:16, 8:4.
4. Is 7:17-25, 8:7-8.
5. Is 3, 5:13.
6. Is 10:12, 10:24-27.
7. The word קִרְבָּן should be emended to read קִרְבָּן  
See the Kittel Bible, p. 627, B.D.B., p. 551 and 923.
8. H.L. Ginsberg, "Reflexes of Sargon in Isaiah after 715 B.C.E.," Journal of the American Oriental Society, LXXXVIII, no. 88, (1968) p. 49. In this article,  
Ginsberg translates Chapter 14:4b-21 on pp. 51-52 as follows:  
"How is the taskmaster vanished, tyranny ended! Broken is the staff of the godless, the rod of oppressors; that smote peoples in wrath, with stroke unceasing, the belabored nations in fury, unsparing beating! All earth is calm, untroubled, and shouts for joy. Even pines rejoice at your fate and cedars of Lebanon: Now that you have lain down, there shall none come up to fell us. Sheol below with a start prepared for your coming; rousing for you the shades of all earth's chieftains, making to rise from their thrones all kings of nations. All speak up and say to you: Even you have been stricken as we were, have become just like us! Your pomp is brought down to Sheol and the strain of your lutes! Maggots are to be your bed and worms your coverlet! How are you fallen from heaven, O Luminous, son of Dawn! How are you felled to earth, O vanquisher of nations! Once you thought in your heart: I will scale the sky! I will set my throne above El's stars! I will mount the back of a cloud- I will match Elyon: I will sit in the Assembled Gathering in the Highest Heaven! Instead, you are brought down to Sheol, to Lowest Pit. They who behold you stare, they peer at you closely: Is this the man who shook the earth, who made realms tremble, who make the world like a waste and wrecked its towns, who chained to his palace gate all the kings of nations? Yet they were all laid in honor each in his house, while you were left unburied like loathsome carrion, like a trampled corpse in the clothing of slain gashed by the sword who descend to the depths of the pit. You shall not have a tomb like those others; because you destroyed countries, you murdered peoples! Let nevermore

be remembered the breed of evildoers! Prepare a shambles for his sons for the guilt of their father. Let them not arise to possess the earth; then the world's face shall be covered with towns."

9. H. Tadmor, "The Sin of Sargon," Eretz Israel, Archeological, Historical and Geographical Studies, V, (1958) pp. 150-162.
10. Bright, p. 315.
11. Ibid.
12. George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, The International Critical Commentary, (hereinafter I.C.C.) XVIII:1, p. 343.
13. The word נִסְנָה presents something of a problem. As it stands, it means girdle. B.D.B., p. 561 suggests that the text is not intact. The I.C.C. suggests that a metathesis has taken place and that the original word was either שָׁנָה (as in verses 11 and 14), "stronghold" or שָׁנָה, "haven or harbor." There is no way of knowing which was the original word. But since Tyre was a port city, if her harbor was destroyed it would mean an end to her strength and her productivity, thus either שָׁנָה or שָׁנָה could refer to the harbor.
14. A.F. Kirkpatrick, gen. ed. The Cambridge Bible, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters I-XXXIX, X:1, p. 173.
15. II Ki 18:7.
16. Bright, p. 297.
17. Ibid, pp. 296-308.
18. B.D.B., p. 72.
19. Is 10:28-32, II Ki 18:13.
20. Is 19:16-23.
21. Is 19:24-25.
22. Scholars are divided as to the significance of the mention of the five cities in verse 18. Some say that the conversion of five cities is a prelude to the conversion of all Egypt. Others say that the five cities are merely Jewish colonies in Egypt. Concerning the five cities, the I.C.C. says: "The writer may well mean five definite cities, though these need not necessarily be Heliopolis, Leontopolis, Migdol, Daphnae, Memphis." (p. 334).

### CONCLUSION

The four prophets we have examined make predictions about both specific events and the unspecified future. Each prophet has a number of predictions of both types that are unfulfilled. It would be significant if we could determine what percentage of those predictions which we have examined are unfulfilled. But before we can do this, one problem must be confronted. The problem is whether predictions which were fulfilled after the lapse of a considerable period of time should be considered fulfilled or unfulfilled.

Regarding this problem, those prophecies which were not fulfilled until a lapse of two to four generations are considered to be unfulfilled if there is some indication that the prophet thought they would be fulfilled sooner. Those which were not fulfilled until after four generations are considered unfulfilled unless a later time was stipulated.

Keeping this problem in mind, we shall see that our percentages will not be absolute, rather they indicate that a sizeable proportion of prophecies are unfulfilled and consequently any definition of the word prophet must take this into account.

We have examined seven prophecies in the book of Amos. Five of them can be considered to be unfulfilled because their fulfillment was delayed beyond the time when Amos

expected them to be fulfilled. One prophecy has not been fulfilled as of now. The one remaining prophecy lacks sufficient information to determine whether it was fulfilled or not. Thus we have a total of six unfulfilled prophecies out of the seven examined. This means that 85% of Amos' prophecies were unfulfilled.

The book of Hosea contains fourteen prophecies which we have examined. Nine of these prophecies were unfulfilled, another four were fulfilled and it is not known whether the one remaining prophecy was fulfilled or not. Thus we have a total of nine unfulfilled prophecies out of the fourteen examined. This means that 64% of Hosea's prophecies were unfulfilled.

The book of Micah contains four prophecies, two of them were unfulfilled and the other two can be considered unfulfilled, if they are taken literally. Thus it is possible to compute two percentages. If we include these two we have a total of four unfulfilled prophecies out of the four we examined. This means that 100% of Micah's prophecies were unfulfilled. If we exclude these two prophecies then 50% of Micah's prophecies were unfulfilled.

The book of I Isaiah contains sixteen prophecies which we have examined. Ten of these prophecies were unfulfilled, another three deal with events around 700B.C.E. and can be considered to be either fulfilled or unfulfilled, and the remaining three prophecies present two possibilities: all



three were unfulfilled or else two were unfulfilled and one was fulfilled. Thus it is possible to compute four different percentages depending on which different possibilities are accepted. This means that if all sixteen prophecies were unfulfilled then 100% of I Isaiah's predictions were unfulfilled. If on the other hand we conclude that twelve prophecies were unfulfilled then 75% of his prophecies were unfulfilled. If fifteen of his prophecies were unfulfilled then then 93% of his prophecies were unfulfilled. If thirteen of his prophecies were unfulfilled then 81% of his predictions were unfulfilled.

Regardless of whether we take the larger percentage or the smaller percentage, we see that the percentage of prophecies unfulfilled is significant. They indicate that all the predictions made by these prophets did not come to pass. Consequently, any discussion of the prophet must take unfulfilled prophecies into account when a definition is formulated.



## APPENDIX: PREDICTIONS CHARTED

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PROPHET	ORACLE	SPECIFIC EVENT	UNSPECIFIED FUTURE	UNFULFILLED	UNKNOWN	FULFILLED	FULFILLED AFTER PREDICTED TIME (IN GENERATIONS)		
							WITHIN 2	WITHIN 2-4	AFTER 4
Amos	3:11	x		x				x	
	5:18-20	x		x				x	
	5:27	x		x				x	
	6:14	x		x				x	
	7:17 on Amaziah	x			x				
	7:17 on Israel	x		x				x	
	9:11-15		x	x					
Hosea	1:4 on Jehu	x				x			
	1:4 on Israel	x				x	x		
	5:5 on Israel	x		x			not simultaneous with Judah 5:5		
	5:5 on Judah	x		x					not simultaneous with 5:5 Israel
	5:7 on priest	x			x				
	5:7 on king	x				x			
	5:7 on Israel	x				x	x		
	8:13 9:3 9:6 11:5 a literal return to Egypt	x		x x x x					
	2:1-3 2:18-25 11:10-11		x	x x x					
Micah	1:6	x							x
	3:12	x						x	
	4		x	x					
	5		x	x					

[illegible]

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## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Amos- Am

Micah- Mi

Hosea- Hos

Haggai- Hg

Isaiah- Is

II Kings- II Ki

I Chronicles- I Ch

Jeremiah- Jer

II Samuel- II Sam

Exodus- Ex

Joshua- Jos

Genesis- Gen