

Jerusalem that Ephraim had combined with Syria, hearts trembled like the trees of the forest shaken with the wind (7:2). But Isaiah declared that Rezin and the son of Remaliah were nothing but two smoking stumps of torches. (7:4). But Assyria, in which Ahaz confided, was to be feared (7:17). However, when Assyria had fulfilled its mission in Israel and Judah, and now in wicked arrogance would possess the city of Jerusalem, and so swallow up Judah as it had done Ephraim, it was said: "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way ~~thou~~ which thou camest." (37:29) And so it came to pass. What human wisdom could see danger for the theocracy in that embassy of Merodach-Baladan? The prophet sees the danger. He gives warning--he announces that Babylon will have the king of Judah and those that belong to ~~it~~ him as captives in the midst of it."¹ Along with the ~~eg~~ character of the prophet we should mention the character of the prophecy itself--a though too often neglected by even conservative scholars. Apart from all questions of likelihood, when when Isaiah was prophesying the future of Jerusalem under the hand of God he could not but say that it would withstand Assyrian assault but would fall before Babylon, from whom it would eventually be delivered. True, he did not need to envision so distant a future. He could, consistently with prophecy, have stopped with the Assyrian invasion, as did Amos; but ~~the~~ difference is just here, that Isaiah as a matter of fact did outline the Assyrian wave (cf. II Ch. 32:32; II K. 19: 35; Isa. 37:36, if not the succeeding verses, which some declare are glosses), and did live to see a Babylonian revolt from Assyria under Merodach-Baladan² if not the rebuilding of Babylon in the first year of Esarhaddon.³ His prophetic attention therefore would

1. Lange, Commentary, pp. 182

2. Which was put down in 713 (Barton, op.cit., p. 472).

3. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. II, p. 246. Merodach-Baladan carried out a second revolt which was put down by Sennacherib in his 8th campaign (ib.p.151,152) eleven years before Esarhaddon's rebuilding in 680 B.C. (ib.p.245).