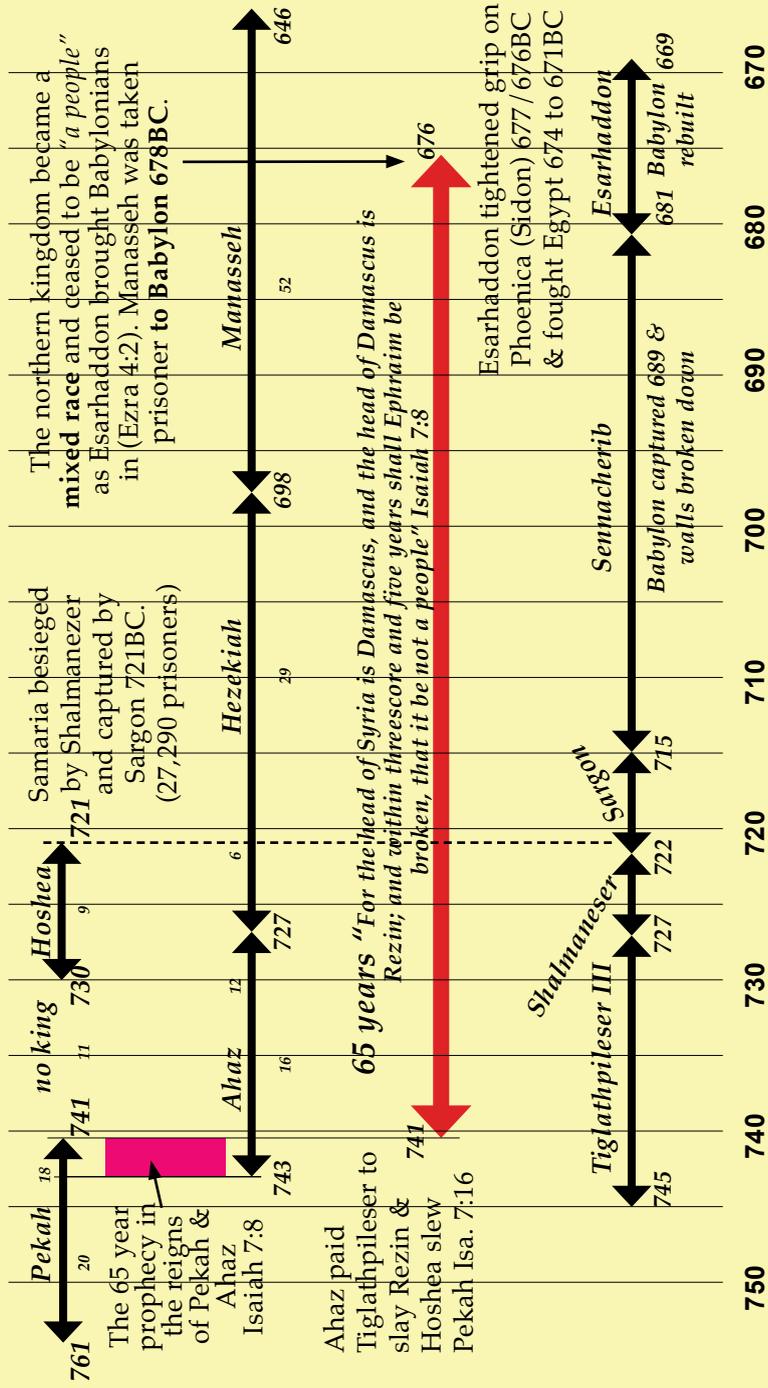


THE 65 YEAR PROPHECY OF ISAIAH 7:8



The 65 Years Prophecy

“And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it...Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz ...And say unto him...Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people” (Isa.7:1-8).

Ahaz was the King of Judah from 743 to 727BC . He was an evil king who brought Judah into disfavour with the Lord. When Ahaz became king at the death of his father Jotham, Pekah was reigning in Samaria over the northern kingdom of Israel and Tiglathpileser III was the King of Assyria. Rezin was king in Syria.

At the beginning of the reign of King Ahaz, King of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah King of the Northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) joined forces to overthrow Ahaz and instal their own king *“the son of Tabeal”* in Jerusalem. The first attack was unsuccessful but they intended to come again. Isaiah the Prophet was sent by God to reassure Ahaz that both Rezin (Syria) and Pekah (Israel) would be judged by God and that the Northern kingdom of Israel would cease to be *“a people” “within 65 years”*.

There are three prophecies here that should not be confused:

- 1) That within 65 years the northern kingdom would cease to be a people (Isa.7:8) - fulfilled in 676BC
- 2) That a virgin would conceive and bear a son (Isa.7:14) - fulfilled in the birth of Christ.
- 3) That Rezin and Pekah would be slain before Isaiah’s child would be old enough to say, *“My father, and my mother”* (Isa.8:1-4) - Ma-hershal-hash-baz was born and in 741BC Tiglathpileser slew Rezin and Hoshea slew Pekah. Both *“smoking firebrands”* were put out (Isa.7:4). The time of the 65-year prophecy can be fixed because it occurred in the reign of Pekah **and** in the reign of Ahaz. Their reigns overlapped for **only 2 years** and this places the prophecy at 741BC.

In that same year Tiglathpileser came to Damascus and slew Rezin at the behest of Ahaz who paid him from the treasures in the Lord’s house (2Kings 16:8-9). Israel was under threat from Assyria and Hoshea may

not immediately have been able to take the throne. He began to reign in the 12th year of Ahaz (2Kings 17:1).

It is possible that Hoshea was in league with the Assyrians or hoped to impress them when he slew Pekah because about the 3rd year of his reign he became a servant to Shalmaneser, King of Assyria. When Shalmaneser found that he was negotiating with SO, King of Egypt he was imprisoned and Samaria was besieged for three years.

During the siege of Samaria, Sargon took the throne of Assyria and finished the siege. He took 27,290 captives to "*Halah, Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes*" (2Kings 18:11).

The capture of the capital city of Israel however was not the fulfilment of the 65-year prophecy. The remnant in the land were Jews and although greatly humbled the tribes still existed and they were still "a people" in the land.

When Sargon died Sennacherib took the throne and began a military campaign through the land of Judah in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign (713BC). Every city of Judah was taken except Jerusalem but when Hezekiah prayed God answered and 185,000 Assyrians perished in one night as the Angel of the Lord slew them. The power of Assyria was weakened by the loss of this army and Babylon revolted.

At this time we read:

"At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah" (Isa.39:1).

However, Sennacherib raised another army and put down the revolt smashing the walls and the temples of Babylon.

In 681BC Sennacherib was slain by two of his sons while worshipping in the temple of his god in Nineveh. The sons fled to Armenia and Esarhaddon reigned (681 - 669BC).

When Esarhaddon came to power, he was advised by his sorcerers to rebuild the temples in Babylon and to rebuild the city walls. This explains why wicked King Manasseh, king of Judah was taken in chains to Babylon and not to Nineveh. When Manasseh repented God allowed him to be released and returned to his throne no doubt as a servant of Esarhaddon.

At this time Esarhaddon was strengthening his grip on the Phoenician cities and Sidon was captured. This means his armies were in the northern region of Israel and when he had secured the coastal areas he

moved south to Egypt in 674. After early setbacks, Esarhaddon finally defeated Egypt in 671BC

There is one verse in Ezra 4:2 that gives us the clue as to when the 65-year prophecy was fulfilled. It was written many years later after the Babylonian captivity had finished and Zerubbabel had returned to the land to rebuild the Temple under the decree of Cyrus the Persian King.

The Samaritans had approached Zerubbabel and suggested that they would like to help him rebuild God's house.

These Samaritans occupied what had been the northern kingdom of Israel but they were not Jews. They were a mixed race of heathen who had been brought to Samaria by the Assyrians and Zerubbabel refused to allow these heathen idolators to have anything to do with the rebuilding of God's house but they said:

"Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither" (Ezra 4:2).

We know where these people came from:

"And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel" (2Kings 17:24).

Esarhaddon was rebuilding Babylon, Manasseh was taken to Babylon (2Chron.33:11-13), and these people were brought by Esarhaddon from Babylon; it all indicates that the people were taken to Babylon as slave labour in the rebuilding program and Babylonians were brought in to populate the land of Israel.

Esarhaddon secured the area north of Israel in 676BC so it seems certain that it was at that time he sent the people of the land to Babylon as slave-labour and brought the Babylonians to Israel at that time. **That is when the northern kingdom of Israel "ceased to be a people" in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:8. It was 676BC, exactly 65 years after the prophecy was given.**