

A Prophecy Against Ashur and P'leshet (P'leshet) Yesha'yahu 14:24-32

In my last post, we learned that God promises to restore **Isra'el**, and after they have rested, they will sing **A Taunt-Song Against Bavel ~ Part 2** in **Yesha'yahu 14:12-23**. In this post, we learn of **A Prophecy Against Ashur and P'leshet** in **Yesha'yahu 14:24-32**.

A Prophecy Against Ashur (Assyria)

The prophecy shifts focus from **Bavel** to the northern center of Mesopotamian power, **Ashur**. **Ashur** was the nation that under **Tiglath-pileser III** reduced the size of the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** in the 730's BCE. In 722 BCE, under **Shalmaneser**, **Ashur** deported all the northern kingdoms citizens. But God will bring even this strong kingdom to an end.

²⁴ Adonai-Tzva'ot has sworn, "Just as I thought it, it will occur; just as I planned it, so it will be. ²⁵ I will break Ashur in my land; I will trample him down on my mountains. Then his yoke will fall off them; his burden be removed from their shoulders."

On a human level, **Ashur** seemed invincible, but God assured His people of His determination to judge the **Ashurim** people. The judgment appears to refer to the destruction of **Sennacherib's** army outside **Yerushalayim** in 701 BCE. The yoke was a common metaphor for political servitude.

²⁶ This is the program planned for all the earth; this is the hand stretched out over all the nations. ²⁷ Adonai-Tzva'ot has made His decision. Who is there that can stop Him? He has stretched out His hand. Who can turn it back?

The obvious answer to the questions in verse 27 is NO ONE! Jon Courson opines that the **who** is a reference not only to **Ashur**, but also the Antichrist. ¹

A Prophecy Against P'leshet (Philistia)

The prophecy against **P'leshet** is the first in a series of oracles against nations that were immediate neighbors of Israel. Indeed, **P'leshet** occupied part of the promised land in a region west of **Yerushalayim** on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The book of Genesis records the interaction between the patriarchs and the **P'lishtim** (Genesis 10:14; 21:32,34), but it was not until the period of the united monarchy that we hear of a sizeable presence of **P'lishtim** in the region. Both Sha'ul and David waged war against them.

The chronology of this period is very complicated, and it is not easy to determine the year of **Achaz's** death. Some chronological systems overlap **Achaz** and his son **Hezekiah** in a coregency, with **Hezekiah** being the lead ruler. His death may have come as early as 726 BCE or as late as 715 BCE. The earlier one is supported by 2 Kings 17:1.

²⁸ In the year that King Achaz died, this prophecy came: ²⁹ Do not rejoice, P'leshet, any of you, that the rod which struck you is broken; for out of the snake's root will come a viper, and his offspring will be a flying fiery serpent.

¹ Jon Courson's Application Commentary Old Testament Volume 2.

P'leshet had been under the control of **Y'hudah** during the reign of **Uzziah**, which took up the whole first half of the eighth century. It regained its independence during the reign of **Achaz** and became the aggressor. With the rise of the Neo-**Ashurim** empire, **P'leshet** came under attack just as the rest of the nations did. **Tiglath- Pileser** targeted Gaza in his campaign of 734 BCE, and the cities of **P'leshet** thus became tribute-paying vassals. When **Sargon** came to the throne, the **P'lishtim** attempted to break free of **Ashur**, but in 720 BCE **P'leshet** again came under attack and Gaza renewed its loyalty. In 712 BCE **Sargon** again had to come west to subdue the revolt led by **Ashdod**. **Sennacherib's** campaign in 701 BCE brought changes on the thrones of several of the **P'leshet** cities. Through most of the eighth and seventh centuries, the **P'lishtim** shared the fate of their neighbors in **Y'hudah**. ²

³⁰ While the firstborn of the poor graze and the needy lie down in safety, I will kill off your root with famine and slaughter the rest of you. ³¹ Howl, gate! Cry, city! Melt away, P'leshet, all of you! For a smoke is coming from the north, with not a straggler in its ranks. ³² And what is one to answer the messengers of the nation? That Adonai founded Tziyon, and there the poor of His people will find refuge. ~ Isaiah 14:24-32 (CJB)

The cloud of dust coming from the north will be none other than the **Ashurim** army that will destroy **P'leshet**.

In my next post, we will continue in our study of **Yesha'yahu** by examining **A Prophecy Against Moav** in **Yesha'yahu 15**.

² The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.