Please note that the numbers in red brackets refer to the upcoming page number of the article. The latter will help for citation purposes. WILSON Throughout much of the history of Western thought, the biblical prophets have been understood as unique figures whose sudden appearance in ancient Israel had a profound impact on the development of Judaism and Christianity. They have been considered ethical and moral innovators whose views decisively shaped later Jewish and Christian theology. Particularly in Christian tradition, they have been seen as revealers of the future whose oracles predicted the coming of Jesus and whose words may still contain unrecognized clues to the course of world history. This understanding of the biblical prophets continues to exist today. However, during the past century the traditional view has come under increasing attack from biblical scholars, who have reexamined the biblical evidence and then proposed a number of alternative and often conflicting theories about the nature and functions of Israelite prophecy. The Hebrew Bible contains evidence to support all of these interpretations, and for this reason the scholarly debate on the nature of prophecy continues with no sign of an emerging consensus. However, scholars have increasingly recognized that an adequate understanding of Israelite prophecy can be achieved only by using extrabiblical evidence to supplement the narratives about prophetic activity and the words of the prophets that have been preserved in the Bible. The most important extrabiblical evidence comes from two different sources. The first source provides additional documentary evidence on the nature of prophecy in antiquity. During the past century archaeologists have uncovered a number of ancient Near Eastern texts that challenge the traditional notion that the Israelite prophets were unique religious figures in antiquity. In the Mesopotamian city of Mari on the Euphrates, excavators have found letters from the Eighteenth century BCE describing the activities and messages of several different types of oracle givers who bear some resemblance to the later Israelite prophets. The Mari oracles come from various gods and do not seem to have been solicited by the person to whom they are addressed. Some of the oracle givers described in the letters are ordinary individuals, but others have special titles, which indicates that these figures exhibited characteristic behavior and filled a recognized religious role in the society of Mari. Among the specialists mentioned are the "answerer" apilu, the "ecstatic" muhhu, the "speaker" qabbatum, and a member of the cultic personnel of the goddess Ishtar, the meaning of whose title assinnu is uncertain. Later texts from the time of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon r. In addition to the ecstatic, the texts mention the "shouter" raggimu, the "revealer" shabru, and the "votary" shelutu. Religious specialists resembling the biblical prophets also existed outside of Israelite territory in other areas of Palestine. This evidence suggests that prophetic activity was going on elsewhere in the ancient Near East before and during the time when prophets were active in Israel. Furthermore, the apparent diversity of these non-Israelite specialists suggests that prophecy in Israel may have been a more complex phenomenon than scholars have previously thought. This suggestion is reinforced by extrabiblical evidence from the second source, the studies that sociologists and anthropologists have made of contemporary oracle givers. These specialists form a highly diverse group that includes various types of mediums, diviners, priests, and shamans, but like the biblical prophets they all see themselves as intermediaries between the human and divine worlds. In spite of obvious differences, these figures often exhibit similar behavioral characteristics and interact with their societies in much the same way. This interaction has been analyzed extensively by anthropologists and shown to be highly complex. By delivering messages from the divine realm, oracle givers are capable of bringing about changes in their societies, but at the same time societies play a direct role in accrediting oracle givers and shaping their behavior. The modern anthropological evidence indicates that the phenomenon of prophecy can be adequately understood only when the dynamic relationship between prophet and society is fully explored. This means that any account of prophecy in ancient Israel can. For this reason it is necessary to avoid making too many statements about biblical prophecy in general. Each prophet occupied a unique place in the history of Israel and was part of a complex interaction between prophecy and society in a particular time.
and place. The history of Israelite prophecy is the history of a series of such interactions. However, once the uniqueness of each prophet is recognized, it is possible to outline some general features that characterized Israelite prophecy as a whole and to isolate some characteristics that were peculiar to particular groups of prophets. Direct information about Israelite prophecy comes from two sources: Both of these sources are difficult to interpret because of their unusual character. Only later were their words collected, written down, and finally arranged in small collections, or books. This work was done either by the prophets themselves or by their disciples. As a result of this long process of transmission and composition, it is often difficult to separate genuine prophetic material from the interpretive work of later editors. A similar sort of problem exists in the case of the prophetic narratives of the Deuteronomic history. Some of the stories, such as those concerning Elijah and Elisha 1 Kgs. As part of the incorporation process, the stories were edited at least once, and perhaps several times, in order to express the political, social, and religious views of the writers. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult to use the narratives for historiographic purposes. Because of the nature of the sources from which a description of prophecy must be derived, any attempt to reconstruct a picture of prophetic activity must necessarily involve a great deal of interpretation, and the results will often be incomplete and tentative. The prophets say very little about their experiences and even in recounting their "calls" to prophesy rarely describe more than the initial vision that they saw Is. Instead, the texts concentrate on the messages that the prophets received during their encounters with God. However, enough clues exist to suggest that Israel conceived of the prophetic experience as one that occurred when individuals were possessed by the spirit of God. As is typical in cases of spirit possession in a number of cultures, Israel interpreted the words that the prophets spoke during possession not as human words but as the words of God. The prophets were simply the channels through which the divine word came to the world. Once the prophets were possessed by God, they felt compelled to deliver the message that God wanted to communicate Am. The divine word was perceived as a "burning fire" that gnawed at them until it was delivered Jer. Because of the loss of personal autonomy associated with divine possession, the prophets did not usually view the experience positively. In the accounts of their [16] initial call, they sometimes speak of trying to avoid becoming prophets Jer. However, such attempts at resistance were always futile, and in the end the compulsion to prophesy could not be thwarted. Although the prophets themselves were apparently reluctant to describe the process through which they received their oracles, additional information on the nature of the prophetic experience can be deduced from the various titles given to these individuals and from the descriptions of their characteristic behavior. The English word prophet is ultimately derived from the Greek prophetes, a noun that means both "one who speaks forth" or "one who proclaims" and "one who speaks before" or "one who speaks of the future. However, in ancient Israel the different types of prophetic figures bore distinctive titles, although the understanding and usage of these titles varied with the group that used them and the time in which they were used. Extrabiblical occurrences of the word are extremely rare, and its etymology is uncertain, although scholars normally relate it to the Akkadian verb nabu, "to call, to announce, to name. To the south, in Judah and particularly in Jerusalem, the title was also in use as a general role label, but it appears much less frequently in Judahite literature and is often used in negative contexts. This role label appears primarily in texts originating in the south Amos, Micah, Isaiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles , and when it does not, it refers to figures located there. Judahite historical traditions suggest that visionaries were particularly active during the period of the early monarchy during the reigns of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam , when some of them were part of the roval court in Jerusalem, but references to them in the writing prophets indicate that they persisted at least until the exile 1 Chr. The title "visionary" clearly refers to the distinctive means by which these figures received their revelations, and indeed three of the Judahite prophetic books explicitly speak of the visionary origin of their oracles Am. This particular mode of divine-human communication was apparently not well regarded in the north, where prophets preferred to speak of their oracles as the words that they heard rather than the visions that they saw Hos. In some circles outside of Judah, visions may have been considered an inferior form of revelation Nm. In 1 Samuel 9: If the old story in this chapter is historically accurate, then the seer was a specialist in communicating with the divine world, presumably through visions, dreams, or divination. Late references to the seer may be archaisms 2 Ch. Better attested is the title "man of God" ish
ha-Elohim, which appears in northern sources, particularly in the old prophetic legends of the Elijah-Elisha cycle in the Deuteronomic history 1 Kgs. This label may have originally been applied to people who were thought able to control divine power and use it in various miraculous ways, but its usage was eventually broadened to include anyone who had a special relationship to God. When the designation "man of God" became an honorific title, any specifically prophetic connotations that it may have had were presumably muted or lost. The title is attested only in the Elijah-Elisha stories and seems to have been used for a relatively brief period in northern Israel c. The sons of the prophets were clearly members of a prophetic guild that had a hierarchical structure headed by a leader with the title "father. Members of the group sometimes lived together and shared common meals 2 Kgs. It has been suggested that the sons of the prophets were ecstasies, but there is no evidence of such behavior in the narratives about them. There are two reasons for the existence of this behavior. First, Israelite society set definite limits on the kinds of behavior that its prophets could exhibit. In most social situations violent or uncontrolled actions were not tolerated, and when they occurred, they were considered a sign of mental illness or possession by evil powers. Prophets who wished to be considered genuine therefore had to keep their behavior within recognized boundaries or risk being considered insane. Second, members of social groups in which prophets operated had to face the problem of determining when divine possession was actually present. They needed to have some grounds for assigning a prophetic title to a particular individual. One of the ways in which they solved this problem was to examine the behavior of people in the past who were known to have been genuine prophets of God. In some cases it was seen a sign of divine legitimation and favor Nm. The word ecstasy is usually understood to refer to a type of trance behavior marked by psychological and physiological symptoms such as a reduction of sensitivity to outside stimuli, hallucinations or visions, a garbled perception of surrounding events, and an apparent loss of conscious control over speech and actions. The intensity of ecstasy and its specific characteristics vary depending on the individual being possessed and the group in which possession occurs. The actions of an ecstatic prophet may range from apparently uncontrolled physical activity to completely normal physical activity, and his speech may range from unintelligible nonsense syllables to perfectly coherent discourse. Sometimes ecstatic behavior in Israel was incapacitating or dangerous 1 Sm. Thus Hosea and Isaiah gave their children symbolic names that foretold the fate of the nation Hos. Isaiah reportedly walked naked through the streets of Jerusalem for three years to drive home the point that the Assyrians would lead the Egyptians into captivity Is. Jeremiah smashed a pot before his listeners to dramatize the destruction what would soon occur in Jerusalem, and he later wore a wooden yoke before the king to reinforce an oracle counseling surrender to the Babylonians Jer. A few of these acts seem to move beyond symbolism into the realm of magic. When Elisha commanded the Israelite king Joash to strike the ground with his arrows, the number of times that the king struck the ground determined the number of victories that Israel would have over Syria 2 Kgs. However, in spite of these examples of sympathetic magic, the working of miracles was not normally a component of prophetic behavior in Israel. However, this practice does not seem to have been widespread. As part of their characteristic behavior, some prophets may have used stereotypical speech patterns and shaped their oracles in certain traditional ways. The existence of a distinctive northern oracle pattern is suggested by the fact that the Deuteronomic history and the prophetic literature dependent on it Jeremiah often quote prophetic oracles that have a tripartite structure. Following the accusation, an announcement of judgment is addressed directly to the accused. The announcement is usually introduced by a stereotypical "messenger formula," such as the following: If this pattern is not simply a literary convention of the Deuteronomic authors, then what is often called the "announcement of disaster to individuals" may have been a characteristic feature of the speech of Ephraimite prophets. Other Israelite prophets also announced disaster to individuals and to the nation as a whole, but their oracles did not conform to rigid patterns. Judahite prophets may have once used stereotypical forms of speech, but if so, the patterns had broken down by the time the oracles were recorded in writing. Early Judahite writing prophets such as Amos, Micah, and Isaiah seem to have favored distinctive judgment oracles beginning with the cry "alas" Heb.
Benjamin Sommer Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation Benjamin D. Sommer Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. Spring, , pp. Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http: Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission. JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. Other scholars have challenged this thesis. Already in , Ephraim Urbach collected evidence of the vitality of prophecy in the Second Temple and rabbinic periods, and more recently scholars such as David Aune, Thomas Overholt, and Frederick Greenspahn have argued that prophecy continued after its supposed demise. Scholars Press, 45, 97 though he argues that a limited form of prophecy continued among the Levites [pp. Fortress, 3 0 6 7 ; John Barton, Oracles of God: A Biblical Studies Reader in Hebrew; ed. Eerdmans, , esp. Jewish Theological Seminary, These scholars force us to attend to relevant texts that were not fully explored earlier. When we ask whether Israelite prophecy declined, we need not wonder whether some people after the exile claimed that God had spoken to them; from the time of the exile to the present day some individuals have made that claim. Rather, historians need to investigate attitudes or perceptions among postexilic Jews. The question to be posed is: Did Jews in the Second Temple period tend to accept the possibility that God still communicated with the Jewish people by speaking directly to certain individuals? I think the answer to this question must be negative; the work of scholars such as Urbach, Aune, Overholt, and Greenspahn does not suffice to dislodge the view that Jews in the Second Temple period viewed prophecy as having ceased. In order to defend the earlier consensus, I intend to address three questions in light of the more recent work. First, do ancient texts themselves assert that prophecy declined? Second, how can we explain the evidence gathered by these scholars in their attempt to show that prophecy did not decline? Third, why did Jews during the Second Temple period stop believing in the continued existence of prophecy? The Possibility of Late Prophecy according to the Ancient Texts Greenspahn has challenged the notion that ancient texts posit the end of prophecy early in the Persian period. He claims that "careful analysis will show that the available texts rarely assert that prophecy had come to an end, tempo- rary or otherwise. The sense of a decline had appeared already in 1Maccabees, whose author writing in the late second century BCE presumes that prophecy is a thing of the past and perhaps of the future but not of the present. The presence of individuals claiming to speak for God i. A similar notion appears in 1 Macc and 1Macc 2 Apocalypse of Baruch. The passages differ, however. The verse in 1 Samuel tells us only that prophecy at that time was "rare" I? The wording in 1 Maccabees is more insistent: Aune claims that these verses refer to the absence only of a "clerical" prophet Prophecy, This assertion is question- able, since Klijn, in OTP 1. He cites passages such as b. Schechter; Vienna, , in which various types of prophecy all fall under the term ei7p;r mi, and Midr. For further discussion of this connection in rabbinic and targumic literature, see Sopher, Vorstellung, Even if this is the case, the words immediately following make clear the rabbinic notion that prophecy had ceased. The presence of this tradition in several texts indicates that it is not the opinion of an individual but reflects a widespread notion-ne commonly accepted and repeated in rab- binic Judaism. The belief in the end of prophecy, contra Greenspahn, was well known among the rabbis, as it was in prerabbinic forms of Judaism reflected in 1 Maccabees and 2 Apocalypse of Baruch. Nevertheless, some documents from the end of the Second Temple period do refer to the activity of prophetic figures, and this would appear to vitiate the view that prophecy ceased sometime after the return from the Babylonian exile. Josephus refers to several possible cases of prophecy in the era preceding the destruction of the Second Temple. In their bizarre behavior and in their pronouncements they greatly resemble biblical prophets J. Jesus, son of Ananias, who appeared in Jerusalem four years before the war. Although Josephus does not call this Jesus a prophet, he seems to regard him as more than a charlatan 1. Josephus calls 13 Sopher demonstrates the widespread nature
of this idea Vorstellung. On the attempts of Greenspahn, Blenkinsopp, and Urbach to assert that Pharisees and rabbis believed that prophecy continued in their own day, see below. 15 Urbach discusses the passage at length "When," 4. 16 The men discussed in Ant. From this we may con- clude that Jews of the time were prepared to accept claims to the prophetic office as genuine. Finally, Josephus indicates that the Essenes enjoyed the ability to foretell the future 1. John the Baptist was regarded as a prophet according to Matt. Evidence That Prophecy Did Not Persist throughout the Period Several types of texts, then, suggest that prophecy existed during and per- haps even after the Second Temple period. In addition, Josephus may have sug- gested that some Pharisees had prophetic powers, but the texts involved are ambiguous. Blenkinsopp argues that Josephus "did know of charismatic, prophetic Pharisees" "Prophecy," He cites several passages to support this claim, but none of these passages is fully convincing. It is not clear to me whether the prediction described in these pas- sages is a mantic one or simply an astute political forecast. Blenkinsopp also refers to Ant. That people asked whether Jesus was a prophet nonetheless indicates that they entertained the possibility that a prophet might exist at that time. Four lines of reasoning sup- port this view. First, the clear examples of prophecy during the Hellenistic- Roman period cited by scholars such as Urbach and Greenspahn which are limited to the first century CE represent not the continuation of prophecy but revivals of a tradition viewed as dormant. These revivals were precipitated by a belief that the eschaton was imminent and do not contradict the notion that prophecy had ceased at an earlier date. Second, most ostensible examples of prophecy during the post-Persian era represent nonprophetic forms of divine- human contact. Texts from the period regarded these forms of contact as dis- tinct from, and inferior to, prophecy. Third, texts from this period indicate that Jews believed that prophecy waned and finally came to an end shortly after the exile. Fourth, alleged evidence of prophecy among the rabbis is not convincing. I shall examine each of these in greater detail. This is sig- nificant, because the existence of prophecy at the end of days can be reconciled with the notion that prophecy had declined earlier in the Second Temple period. Although postbiblical Jewish texts consistently attest to the belief that prophecy is a thing of the past, they also suggest that it is a thing of the future. The end of days and the coming of redemption, they claim, will be accompa- nied by the return of prophecy. Thus, one rabbinic tradition holds that when the temple was destroyed. Tanhuma B6hacci16tka6, end; the same notion appears in Num. The rabbis clearly were refemng here to the destruction of the First Temple and the building of the Third, since b. Yoma 21b and its many par- allels cited above indicate that the holy spirit was present in the First Temple but absent from the Second. For additional rabbinic texts on the return of prophecy in the eschaton, see Schafer, Vorstellung, . Further, some rabbis maintained that after the amval of the Messiah, all Jews would enjoy the gift of prophecy Num. The idea that prophecy has departed from Israel but will return at the end of days seems to underlie 1 Macc 4: In light of this, most of the examples of prophecy in Josephus and the NT are not surprising. Almost all the examples in Josephus come from the time immediately preceding the great revolt in CE, a revolt that had strong messianic overtones. Similarly, for those who saw Jesus as the Messiah or even as the forerunner of the Messiah it was natural to assume that prophecy had reappeared. That some people viewed Jesus or John the Baptist or certain members of the community as prophets need not imply that they believed in an unbroken chain of prophecy going back to the preexilic era. Rather, members of the early Christian community presumed that the arrival of the Messiah sparked the renewal of a tradition that had long been dormant. The connection between prophecy and messianism in Judaism of post- Persian times becomes clearer in light of later Jewish history. The idea that prophecy returns before the eschaton affected more recent Jewish messianic movements. The theocratic perspective of 1 Maccabees in fact may encourage the notion that prophecy can exist only in an ideal future: Barnett stresses the eschatological aspect of the sign-prophets who encouraged masses to follow them to salvation during the three decades prior to the destruction "Jewish," esp. The same is true of the prophets of doom who populated Jerusalem in the years leading to the revolt. After him and because of him, the early Christian community could have prophetic figures e. Princeton University Press, e. In linking the re- appearance of prophecy to the arrival of the Messiah, the Sabbatians followed sound rabbinic doctrine. It is significant that Nathan himself explicitly linked his prophetic proclamation to the public appearance of the Messiah. Nathan described his first vision thus: Their assertion that the Rebbe had the prophetic gift may seem surpris- ing to anyone familiar with b. In the thought
of the most "prophetic" of mystics, Abraham Abulafia ca. These attempts to bring on 29 Cited and translated by Scholem, Trends, ; I have added the translation of the last three Hebrew words, which Scholem left out. For another version of the text, see Scholem, Sabbetai, SUNY Press,
It was not a shift induced by purely sociological or geographical changes, but rather a change brought on by the power and providence of God. Early Hebrew thought was based solely on the God of Sinai, and their relationship to God had always gravitated around their wandering through the wilderness, following His presence. This concept was illustrated in passages such as Numbers 11, where Moses imparts the prophetic spirit to 70 elders in order to distribute the burden of leading the nation. The Mosaic aspect of community diminished significantly during the transition from Sinai to Canaan. As we move into the 9th and 8th centuries, we see quite a remarkable shift. A new prophetic breed is raised up by God as a voice to the kings and kingdoms of the world. These primitive prophets were the heart, soul, and conscience of Israel. They were the compasses and they were the only ones who had the necessary words to steer the kingdom into destruction or prosperity. It is well received that these judges were the forerunners of the modern Israelite prophetic movement, and even Saul exhibited traits similar to that of the charismatic judges prior to being anointed as king. The Father of the Israelite Prophetic Movement So, now we come the problem of the exact point of origin for the prophetic movement. I would have a hard time believing that the tradition extended past Samuel, although there could have easily been prophets before him. Samuel is, in my mind, the founder and leader of the primitive prophetic movement in Israel. Obviously these prophets were organized into itinerate teams. Robinson sees Samuel as a Seer, holding the opinion that they were, at that time, distinct. Of the classes of religious persons mentioned at the close of the last chapter, two claim our special attention because of their importance for the development of the religion of Israel. These are the See and the Ecstatic. Whilst in later times the two classes coalesced, they were originally largely independent. They were possessed of different powers and where characterized by different functions and different behavior. He lived as a humble Seer, often using his gift to help people locate their animals or indicating other things by the Spirit. How he began to develop the ecstatic prophetic movement he fathered is unknown. However, the movement of the monarchy seemed to initiate the majority of the charismatic activity in the post-judge period. Samuel was, in many ways, the first patriotic prophet of Israel. In previous times, Israel had no established monarchy and their existence was very similar to the nomads and wandering tribes of the Ancient Near East. He is the prophet of the people and it is his responsibility to prophetically discern the man who would be the leader of the people. It is important to remember as we come to the election narrative, that the previous leaders of the judge-period were all supernaturally gifted in one way or another. Thus, I agree with the succinct statement made by John Bright: This one shall rule over my people. Saul initially approaches Samuel to find his lost donkeys, but Samuel, under the anointing of Yahweh, has discerned that Saul has both of the characteristics needed to be the king of Israel: However, as is the nature of the Hebrew of 1 Samuel, the Septuagint may be able to give us keys to unravel the text. Either way, the word itself always exists as the extra strength or might of an individual, stretching past normal ability. Whatever the textual semantics may be, this first description helps us identify Saul with our second characteristic of charismatic anointing from God. As Samuel grew in honor, he was elevated to the head position of the prophetic bands and communities of the times. These prophets were characterized by two main qualities: The first factor that contributed to the outbreak of this fresh charismatic movement was the institution of the monarchy. The idea that the king was selected by means of charismatic unction must have provided patriotic inspiration for those hidden revelators and secret prophets to finally disclose their revelations to guide the new nation with its newly instated kingship. Saul, from the beginning of his kingship, is involved with the prophets. The earliest texts mentioning the primitive prophets link many of them to kings: Ahab called forth many prophets of Baal to aid his royal court, once again indicating that prophets were often connected with the kings. The second factor, the cessation of the central shrine, is probably the most crucial to understanding the ministry of the prophet. While the prophet and priest
were distinct roles in Israelite society, there were certain roles and functions that were shared between the two. Samuel is a good example. He then moved to discover his prophetic gifts, and subsequently moved into full time ministry as a Seer. This point is evidenced clearly as we move into 1 Samuel The beginning of 1 Samuel 10 is the anointing of Saul as king of Israel, and the latter portion of the chapter is the prophetic experience of Saul just thereafter. First, Samuel prophetically reveals to Saul the nature of the encounters that he is about to have. He reveals first that Saul will come across two men who will tell him that his donkeys have been found. George Caird lays out the principle of this expression: Going up to God is a very striking expression to denote going to worship, and it leaves no doubt that the central element in ancient worship was communion, in which the worshippers knew themselves to be in the presence of God. Finally, Samuel describes to him the band of prophets who will further develop his experience. The fact has been so confirmed by modern scholarship that many modern translations actually believe the ecstatic element is engrained in the text itself! For example, The Prophets, translates 1 Samuel  Saul, in his desperation to locate and capture David, hears of his location at Naioth in Ramah. Saul tries twice more, but the effect is the same. Saul sees this reality demonstrated as he himself is overtaken by the prophetic spirit and ecstatically prophesies naked all day and all night. Samuel oversaw the spiritual operations of the ecstatic bands that were prophesying in this instance. It consisted of a fit or attack, which affected the whole body. Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, and wild leaping contortions resulted. These might be more or less rhythmical, and the phenomenon would present the appearance of a wild and frantic dance. At other times there was more or less complete constriction of the muscles, and the condition became almost cataleptic. The vocal organs were sometimes involved; noises and sounds were poured out which might be unrecognizable as human speech. Although there are scholars who do not believe the Israelite prophets were ecstatic [37], to attempt a denial of their exposure to ecstatic prophecy through the Mari and Canaanite sects would be foolish. This concept of ecstasy fits in perfectly with the Israelite prophets because the Israelite prophet knew his life was not his own. He belonged completely to the Lord. Ecstasy involves the breaking in of the divine power of Yahweh on the prophet, causing him to speak completely out of constraint from the Presence of God. Philo of Alexandria wrote that, A prophet does not utter anything whatever of his own, but is only an interpreter, another suggesting to him all that he utters; he is enraptured and in an ecstasy; his own reasoning power has departed and has quit the citadel of his soul, while the divine spirit has entered in and taken up its abode there, playing the instrument of his voice in order to make clear and manifest the prophecies that the prophet is delivering. Jeremiah poetically describes this constraint when he says: The fire of the word of Yahweh burned with such intensity that the prophet was absolutely defenseless to its influence. So, it is not such a stretch for us to say that the Spirit of God could come upon a prophet in a way in which their will was submitted to the influence of divine revelation. Stephen Winward says it best: Hebrew Prophecy Now that we have put forth the opinion that the Israelite prophets operated out of ecstasy, it would be beneficial to investigate the particular linguistic terms used for prophecy in the Hebrew language. We know that the Hebrew language was one of many in the Ancient Near East, and it developed with assistance from Canaanite, Accadian, and Ugaritic tongues. We also know that prophecy was not foreign to the Ancient Near East prior to our earliest written references to the primitive Israelite prophets. Some of the most convincing of the early prophetic texts in the Ancient Near East come from the city of Mari along the Euphrates. I would venture to say we are. The Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon agrees with Genesius and sees ecstasy as an inherent aspect of the word. The development of scholarship over the past 50 years has delivered mixed opinions, so the concept obviously deserves further study. Prophetic Community The second factor we are inclined to investigate when studying the Hebrew Prophets is the concept of community. Community was one of, if not the most emphatically accentuated aspects of Hebrew ideology. Individualism, in Hebrew thought, was not superior to communalism. Each man in the community was bound to the community with regards to his physical and spiritual needs. For the Israelite, covenant and community are two concepts that cannot be separated. In keeping with this methodology, scholars have linked many of the early prophets to certain towns and prophetic centers around Israel. It is clear from the books of Chronicles and Kings that temple operations were viewed as having charismatic anointing from God. The interpretation of revelation was a role that the prophet was intended to fulfill in the Hebrew culture. Whether the word was
good or bad, the prophet must be faithful to reveal it to the community. He warns both the community and the watchman regarding the surrounding circumstances of obedience to divine revelation. If the watchman tells the people, and they refuse to heed the divine warning, their blood is on their own heads. A prophet, therefore, is one who enlightens the people to the reality of the impending circumstances he has seen or heard in his revelations. So, according to Ezekiel the watchman has an equal responsibility in the community: This means that Moses interpreted the revelation as depending on the action of the community in response to the word of Yahweh. How the people acted upon what was revealed determined whether blessings would overtake them, or the curse of the Law would fall upon them. However, one cannot discuss it enough. The relevance of one of the largest prophetic movements in history cannot be overstated. We need to study and observe the ways that the Lord has revealed himself through prophets and seers in Biblical times to refine and promote pure and powerful prophetic ministry today. As we have seen, prophecy cannot work to its fullest effect without the participation of the community in believing and obeying the statutes of the prophetic promise. Even as New Covenant believers, prophetic ministry in the Old Testament holds much wisdom and insight into how prophecy functioned then, and how it can function best in the midst of our times. Prophecy in Ancient Israel. Fortress Press, Smith gives a good analysis of the relationship between the Mosaic customs that were integrated into Canaanite customs already in existence.
Chapter 4: More Biblical prophecies fulfilled by Israel

A retrospective of Breaking Israel News reveals that so many remarkable and unprecedented events occurred in, conforming to prophecy and bringing the world closer to the Messianic era. Other articles presented hints of prophecies that are still waiting to be revealed in their entirety.

See Article History Prophecy, in religion, a divinely inspired revelation or interpretation. Although prophecy is perhaps most commonly associated with Judaism and Christianity, it is found throughout the religions of the world, both ancient and modern. He is, in that sense, the mouthpiece of his god. In a broader sense, the word can refer to anybody who utters the will of a deity, often ascertained through visions, dreams, or the casting of lots; the will of the deity also may be spoken in a liturgical setting. The prophet, thus, is often associated with the priest, the shaman, a religious figure in tribal societies who functions as a healer, diviner, and possessor of psychic powers, the diviner foreteller, and the mystic. That call is viewed as coming ultimately from a deity and by means of a dream, a vision, or an audition or through the mediation of another prophet. When the call of the deity is mediated through a prophet who is the master of a prophetic group or an individual follower, such a call can be seen as a mandate. Furthermore, such mediation means that the spirit of the prophet master has been transferred simultaneously to the disciple. In the case of cult prophets, such as the prophets of the gods Baal and Yahweh in ancient Canaan, the call may be regarded as a mandate of the cult. Prophets were often organized into guilds in which they received their training. The guilds were led by a prophet master, and their members could be distinguished from other members of their society by their garb such as a special mantle or by physical marks or grooming such as baldness, a mark on the forehead, or scars of self-laceration. The nature of prophecy is twofold: In many cases both aspects are present. The goal of learning certain prophetic techniques is to reach an ecstatic state in which revelations can be received. That state might be reached through the use of music, dancing, drums, violent bodily movement, and self-laceration. The ecstatic prophet is regarded as being filled with the divine spirit, and in that state the deity speaks through him. Ecstatic oracles, therefore, are generally delivered by the prophet in the first-person singular pronoun and are spoken in a short, rhythmic style. Prophets in ecstatic trances often have experienced sensations of corporeal transmigration as did the 6th-century-bce Hebrew prophet Ezekiel and the 6th–7th-century-ce founder of Islam, Muhammad. Such prophets are esteemed by coreligionists to have a predisposition for such unusual sensations. The functions of the prophet and priest occasionally overlap, for priests sometimes fulfill a prophetic function by uttering an oracle of a deity. Not only do the roles of the prophet and priest overlap, but so do the roles of the prophet and shaman. His art is to augur the future on the basis of hidden knowledge discerned almost anywhere, as in the constellations astrology, in the flight of birds auspices, in the entrails of sacrificial animals haruspicy, in hands chiromancy, in casting lots cleromancy, in the flames of burning sacrifices pyromancy, and in other such areas of special knowledge see also divination: Other forms; shamanism. Mystics and prophets are similar in nature in that they both claim a special intimacy with the deity. But while many religious traditions hold that the mystic strives for a union with the deity, who usurps control of his ego, the prophet never loses control of his ego. On occasion mystics have delivered messages from the deity, thus acting in the role of a prophet, and have been known to use ecstatic trances to reach the divine or sacred world; e. Types of prophecy Types of prophecy can be classified on the basis of inspiration, behaviour, and office. Divinatory prophets include seers, oracle givers, soothsayers, and diviners, all of whom predict the future or tell the divine will in oracular statements by means of instruments, dreams, telepathy, clairvoyance, or visions received in the frenzied state of ecstasy. Predictions and foretellings, however, may also be the result of inspiration or of common sense by the intelligent observation of situations and events, albeit interpreted from a religious point of view. Of broad importance to the religious community is the cult prophet, or priest-prophet. Under the mandate of the cult, the priest-prophet who may be an ordinary priest is part of the priestly staff of a sanctuary, and his duty is to pronounce the divine oracular word at the appropriate point in a liturgy. The difference between a cult prophet and a prophet in the classical sense is that the latter has always experienced a divine call, whereas the cult prophet, pronouncing the word of the deity...
under cultic mandate, repeats his messages at a special moment in the ritual. Because of the timeless character of cultic activity, however, every time he prophesies, his message is regarded as new. Missionary or apostolic prophets are those who maintain that the religious truth revealed to them is unique to themselves alone. Such prophets acquire a following of disciples who accept that their teachings reveal the true religion. The result of that kind of prophetic action may lead to a new religion, as in the cases of Zarathustra, Jesus, and Muhammad. The founders of many modern religious sects also should be included in this type. Another type of prophet is of the reformatory or revolutionary kind looking to the past and the future, closely related to the restorative or purificatory type looking to the past as the ideal. The best examples are the classical prophets from the Hebrew Bible Old Testament; e.g., Many of those so-called literary prophets were working to reform the religion of Yahweh, attempting to free it from its Canaanite heritage and accretions. In the Arab world Muhammad is included in this category. The social sympathy found among such prophets is rooted in their religious conscience. What may have been preached as religious reform, therefore, often took on the form of social reform. This kind of prophecy is also found in India and Africa, where prophets in modern times have arisen to restore or purify the old tribal religious forms, as well as the customs and laws that had their sources in the older precolonial religious life. Many of those movements became revolutionary not only by force of logic but also by force of social and political pressure see eschatology. Though there may be several categories of prophecy according to scholars, no sharp line of demarcation differentiates among these different types. Any given prophet may be both predictive and missionary, ecstatic as well as reformatory. Prophecy in the ancient Middle East and Israel The ancient Middle East In ancient Egypt, charismatic prophecy apparently was not commonplace, if it occurred at all, though institutional prophecy was of the greatest importance because life was regarded as depending upon what the gods said. Some ancient texts contain what has sometimes been regarded as prophetic utterances, but those are more often considered to be the product of wise men who were well acquainted with Egyptian traditions and history. Among Egyptian sages, historical events were thought to follow a pattern, which could be observed and the laws of which could be discerned. Thus, times of hardship were always thought to be followed by times of prosperity, and predictions were made accordingly. In Egyptian mantic divinatory texts there are prophetic sayings, but the particular concerns of those texts are more political than religious. Some are fictitious, and many are considered to have been prophesied after the event has already taken place. The Mari prophets believed to be inspired spoke the word of the god Dagon just as Israelite prophets spoke the word of Yahweh. The messages could also contain admonitions, threats, reproofs, accusations, and predictions of either disaster or good fortune. The Mari texts are important in the history of prophecy because they reveal that inspired prophecy in the ancient Middle East dates back 1, years before Amos and Hosea 8th century BCE in Israel. Though he might possibly have had visions, he was not in actuality an ecstatic. The art of divination became very elaborate in the course of time and required a long period of training. The ancient Iranian prophet and religious reformer Zarathustra also known by his Greek name Zoroaster; died c. He may have been, however, an ecstatic priest-singer, or zaotar, who used special techniques especially intoxication to achieve a trance. Zarathustra found the priests and cult of his day offensive and opposed them. Messianic prophecies of the end of the world are found in Zoroastrian literature, but those are more a literary product than actual prophetic utterance. Prophets were a common phenomenon in Syria-Palestine. In an Egyptian text 11th century BCE, Wen-Amon a temple official at Karnak was sent by the pharaoh to Gebal Byblos to procure timber. While Wen-Amon was there, a young noble of that city was seized by his god and in frenzy gave a message to the king of Gebal that the request of Wen-Amon should be honoured. In another instance, an Aramaic inscription from Syria records that the god Baal-shemain told King Zakir 8th century BCE through seers and diviners that he would save the king from his enemies. Those chapters reveal the close connection between sacrificial rites and divine inspiration. In the Book of Jeremiah, it is said that prophets, diviners, and soothsayers were in the neighbouring countries of Judah: Since so little is known about those prophets, the question of the uniqueness of Hebrew prophecy is difficult to assess see also Middle Eastern religion. When the Israelites settled in Canaan, they became acquainted with Canaanite forms of prophecy. The structure of the prophetic and priestly function was very much the same in Israel and Canaan. In Israel, prophets were connected with the sanctuaries. Among the
Temple prophets officiating in liturgies were the Levitical guilds and singers. Other prophetic guilds are also mentioned. Members of those guilds generally prophesied for money or gifts and were associated with such sanctuaries as Gibeah, Samaria, Bethel, Gilgal, Jericho, Jerusalem, and Ramah. Jeremiah mentions that the chief priest of Jerusalem was the supervisor of both priests and prophets and that those prophets had rooms in the Temple buildings. Divination in the pre-Exilic period was not considered to be foreign to Israelite religion. The literary prophets also have been viewed as being antagonistic toward the cultus. Modern scholars recognized, however, that such an analysis is an oversimplification of an intricate problem. In the cases of Nathan and Gad there are no indications that they represented some new development in prophecy. Much of his prophetic career was directed against the Tyrian Baal cult, which had become popular in the northern kingdom Israel during the reign mid-9th century BCE of King Ahab and his Tyrian queen, Jezebel. The emergence of classical prophecy in Israel the northern kingdom and Judah the southern kingdom begins with Amos and Hosea 8th century BCE. What is new in classical prophecy is its hostile attitude toward Canaanite influences in religion and culture, combined with an old nationalistic conception of Yahweh and his people. Included in such ideas was the view that Yahweh was a jealous God who, according to the theology of the psalms, was greater than any other god. Yahweh had chosen Israel to be his own people and, therefore, did not wish to share his people with any other god. When the prophets condemned cultic phenomena, such condemnation reflected a rejection of certain kinds of cult and sacrifice, namely, those sacrifices and festivals directed not exclusively to Yahweh but rather to other gods. The prophets likewise rejected liturgies incorrectly performed. The classical prophets did not reject all cults, per se; rather, they wanted a cultus ritually correct, dedicated solely to Yahweh, and productive of ethical conduct. Amos, whose oracles against the northern kingdom of Israel have been misunderstood as reflecting a negative attitude toward cultus per se, simply did not consider the royal cult of the northern kingdom at Bethel to be a legitimate Yahweh cult. Rather, like the prophet Hosea after him, Amos considered the Bethel cult to be Canaanite. Prophets of the ancient Middle East generally interjected their opinions and advice into the political arena of their countries, but in that regard the classical Hebrew prophets were perhaps more advanced than other prophetic movements. In that situation, the prophets preached doom and judgment, and even the complete destruction of Israel. Usually, however, the prophets allowed some basis for hope in that a remnant would be left. The future of that remnant Israel lay in the reign of an ideal king as described in Isaiah, indicating that the prophets were not antiroyalists. Though they could and did oppose individual kings, the prophets could not make a separation between Yahweh and the reign of his chosen king or dynasty. Their messianic ideology, referring to the messiah, or anointed one, is based on old royal ideology, and the ideal king is not an eschatological figure one who appears at the end of history. In that respect, the prophets were nationalistic. They believed that the ideal kingdom would be in the promised land, and its centre would be Jerusalem. With the Exile of the Judaean to Babylon of BCE, prophecy entered a new era.
Chapter 5: The Land of Israel in Prophecy

Buss (for example, who operated in conjunction with institutions such as the temple and court. 4. Kelle: The Phenomenon of Israelite Prophecy in Contemporary Scholarship late twentieth-century scholarship. used crosscultural parallels to foreground the issue of the prophets’ relationship to other social institutions within ancient.

Sitemap Bible prophecies fulfilled by the nation and people of Israel Many of these Bible prophecies either found fulfillment during the first century or began to find fulfillment at that time. They include the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the exile of the people from the land of Israel. The commentaries below are from the second edition of the book, Prophecies, by George Konig and Ray Konig, who are the authors and copyright holders of the material. The commentaries are reprinted here with written permission from the authors. The third edition, revised and expanded, of Prophecies: Ancient Biblical prophecies that foretold the future is available through Amazon. Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed Bible prophecy: During the first century Prophecy fulfilled: His prophecy was fulfilled about 40 years later when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and tore down the Temple. The destruction was so complete that even the foundations of the Temple were dug up, according to Josephus, an historian who wrote about the destruction. About 40 years after Jesus delivered that prophecy, it began to find fulfillment. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in the year 70, and again in the year During the first destruction, Josephus, an historian who lived during the first century, claimed that 1. During the second destruction, Cassius Dio, an historian who lived during the second century, claimed that , Jews were killed, and that 50 fortified towns and villages were destroyed. The exiled Jews were taken to countries throughout the Roman Empire and eventually scattered and re-scattered throughout the world. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Jesus explained why Jerusalem would be destroyed Bible prophecy: Although some people did accept Jesus as the Messiah, many people rejected him. In fact, the rejection was strong enough that Jesus was executed a short time after uttering the prophecy. About BC Prophecy fulfilled: The Babylonians also destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, in B. Within these verses, Daniel provides a chronology by which certain events would occur. First, the Jews would return from captivity and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. Afterwards, an "anointed one," or Messiah, would appear, but he would be rejected. Then, Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed, again. These events later played out during the century in which Jesus had announced that he was the Messiah. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. Zion would be "plowed like a field" Bible prophecy: Sometime between BC Prophecy fulfilled: The Romans destroyed it again in AD to crush a second Jewish rebellion for independence. According to a text in the Gemara - a collection of ancient Jewish writings - the Romans ran a plow over Zion on the 9th day of the Jewish month of Ab. This prophecy was fulfilled in literal detail. Incidentally, there was a Roman coin minted during that era that shows an image of a man using a plow. The coin was intended to commemorate the founding of the pagan Roman city called Aelia Capitolina on the site of Jerusalem. The Romans sometimes minted coins showing the plowing motif as a symbol of the establishment of a new Roman city. Judaists fast go without food on the 9th day of the Jewish month of Ab sometimes spelled Av in remembrance of five historic events that are recorded as occurring on that date. One of those events is the plowing of all or part of Jerusalem by the Romans. No disaster will come upon us. As early as BC Prophecy fulfilled: They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. The Romans oppressively ruled over the land of Israel for a century before the Jews waged two wars for independence, the first beginning in 67 AD and the second beginning in about AD. Both wars resulted in great destruction to the land and people of Israel. An ancient historian named Cassius Dio claimed that the Roman army had razed to the ground villages throughout Israel. If the figure is to believed, then it might be including settlements, along with cities and towns, throughout the land. The prophecy also speaks of an eagle in reference to the army that would swoop down upon Israel and reduce it to a state of desolation. As we learn from historians, including Tacitus who lived during the first century, the
Romans marched with standards - poles adorned with the eagle figurines - held high above their heads, as though the eagles were in flight. Another feature of the prophecy is that it speaks of armies being gathered from the ends of the earth. The Romans had armies scattered throughout parts of Europe, Africa and Asia. To quell the Jewish uprising, some troops had to be called in from as far away as the British Isles. They will leave you no grain, new wine or oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined. Israel would become a wasteland Bible prophecy: At different times in history In Deuteronomy This prophecy certainly was fulfilled. The land has been described many times as having been a sparsely populated wasteland, as recently as the late s and early s. American writer Mark Twain wrote this, in , about the land of Israel, which at the time was called Palestine: Palestine is desolate and unlovely It is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land. The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur-nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. The Jews would be scattered to other countries Bible prophecy: Between BC Prophecy fulfilled: At different times in history In Ezekiel When Ezekiel delivered this prophecy, he was in Babylon with many other Jews who had been exiled from their homeland and taken as captives to Babylon. But, after the Babylonian Captivity, many Jews had returned to their homeland only to be exiled and scattered by the Romans. The Romans, in the hopes of preventing the Jews from ever organizing another attempt to secure sovereignty for their homeland, scattered the Jews to several different countries. The plan successfully contributed to the worldwide dispersion of Jews. Even so, millions of Jews returned to their ancient homeland during the past century and successfully re-established independence for Israel in
This chart includes only the major prophetic figures of the Old Testament period. The period following BC, beginning with Hosea and Amos, is often referred to as the classical period of prophecy and those prophets as writing prophets.

More Byte Show Interviews Many readers of the Bible have misunderstood a variety of important prophecies because they have not paid close and strict attention to geographical terms used by the prophets which show where their prophecies would take place. It is common practice to gloss over place names as being relatively unimportant to modern readers of the Holy Scriptures. By not comprehending what the geographical terms mean and failing to look them up in an ordinary dictionary of encyclopaedia of the Bible has resulted in a sad display of ignorance by many prophetic interpreters, and this includes some of the top people in the field today. It is time to slow down, and be aware of all the geographical terms associated with the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. When this is done, a great deal of enlightenment will come on the scene which will make the prophecies come alive with pertinent information for us who live at this period known as the End of the Age. This article will point out some significant prophetic indications regarding the land of Israel that will help us understand what will happen in that area of the world in the few years just ahead of us. And significantly, what happens in the Middle East will profoundly influence the lives of all of us who live in Europe, America and the rest of the world. All should be aware of these prophecies. There is an old hymn that many of us may be familiar with titled "There is a balm in Gilead. The primary thing I was after was the location of this geographical region near the land of Israel. When no one immediately seemed to know the answer, I then proceeded to give them a prophecy in which the area of Gilead was prominently featured. The prophecy was that found in Zechariah chapter ten. I began to show them what the prophecy stated would happen in the region of Gilead not long before the messianic kingdom of Christ would be established in the land of Israel. When I finally gave the answer in relation to the prophecy in Zechariah most people on the bus expressed astonishment at what the prophecy stated. And well might astonishment be shown because it shows that a major settlement of Jews will establish themselves in a critical and strategic region of the Middle East in which there are no Israelite settlements at the present. But vast numbers of Jews especially those who will come out of the north countries into the Holy Land are destined to swarm into this region of the Middle East and the area will become a part of the land of Israel. Let me relate the essential teaching of the prophecy to all of you reading this Prophetic Report. The first thing that should be noticed is the fact that the last six chapters of Zechariah are very different in style and teaching from the first eight chapters. Most commentators who study the text closely have noticed this. The geographical terms and expressions are reminiscent of those found in prophecies of the late 7th or early 6th centuries before Christ, and indeed this is the very time period in which the last six chapters of the Book of Zechariah were written. It was Jeremiah the prophet. It is important to realize that it was Jeremiah who prophesied these last six chapters because they can then fit in with some of the prophecies of Jeremiah about the reestablishment of the people of Israel in the Holy Land before the Kingdom of God is implemented on earth when Christ returns the second time. This is when the people of Ephraim the ten tribes of Israel which had been taken captive by the Assyrians in the 8th and 7th centuries before Christ will be brought back from the north country to team up with Judah to form a united Israel once again like Ezekiel prophesied in Ezekiel chapter. In this prophecy, Jeremiah said: It was the northern ten tribes of Ephraim the House of Joseph which were taken into captivity by the Assyrians and led away into the countries of the north. But the House of Judah was taken into Babylon and into Egypt where they remained until after the Babylonian Captivity and some returned to Judah the Holy Land while many continued in Babylon and Egypt and became mighty peoples in those areas. But in the time of James the half brother of our Lord, he directed his epistle to all the twelve tribes which were located in the dispersion James 1: The apostle Paul was well aware of the location of all twelve tribes of Israel which were in his time scattered in various countries around the Mediterranean and the Parthian Empire. According to Paul they all were praying to the God of Abraham and keeping as best they could the teachings of Israel Acts. In no way, were the early British people the "lost ten tribes of Israel. I have studied this matter extensively and have found
conclusively that the theory is sadly wanting in historical or biblical teaching. The simple truth is, there have always been two major divisions within the people of Israel: These latter people became more mixed with native races often Arabic or Edomite peoples than those of the House of Joseph who found themselves in the north quarters from the Holy Land. As the Holy Scriptures state: Later, about a hundred years before Christ, the Arabic tribe of the Itureans became circumcised and took up Jewish religious principles Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews It is well known that the Edomites out of whom came King Herod were converts to Judaism and became Jews in the century before Christ. This mixing of Jews around the Holy Land with the native peoples of Syria, Edom and parts of Arabia and North Africa led to many of the Jews taking on an "Arabic" or what we call today "Middle Eastern" racial characteristics. They are known today as Sephardic Jews. On the other hand, those who lived in areas where the surrounding populations were white European types when any mixture took place retained or attained more "European" characteristics. These latter are known as Ashkenazi Jews because they settled in the general area of Europe first designated to Ashkenaz in the table of nations mentioned after the flood of Noah. The patriarch called "Ashkenaz" went to the general region that later became known as Germany and Poland. It is the Ashkenazi Jews those who went to the north quarters from the Holy Land who have most of the political power in the State of Israel today. These people represent the remnants of the House of Joseph Ephraim whereas the Jews that remained in the Babylonian and Mediterranean areas of the east and south along with those of Spain represent the remnants of the House of Judah and they are the Sephardic Jews today. These two main divisions and there are a host of other diverse ones for example the Ethiopian Jews are clear converts to Judaism with hardly any original "Jewish blood" in them represent the principal peoples of the descendants of Jacob today, and often they do not see eye-to-eye with one another in their political or social outlook. But in spite of these racial mixtures and differences, the people who adhere to the basic concepts of Judaism as expressed through their attachment to the Law of Moses are to be reckoned as "Jews. It speaks of a time when the House of Judah and the House of Joseph will return to the Holy Land from their great dispersion that took place in the time of the Assyrians and the Babylonians when they return as we find in chapter eleven , they will enter into a league with one another to be a single nation once more. But after a short while that bond of togetherness will be broken and they will begin to fight with one another. This civil war among the two divisions of Israelis described in greater detail in Zechariah It will result in a final war staged by the nations of the world against Jerusalem and then Christ Jesus will return from heaven with the Mount of Olives splitting into two parts Zechariah But go back to chapter ten and see the areas that those of the House of Judah and the House of Joseph are to settle once they come back from the north country Ephraim and from Egypt and North Africa Judah. Here is what the prophecy states: I will hiss for them [Ephraim and Judah as a keeper does his bees], and gather them; for I have redeemed them: And I will sow them among the people [of the Holy Land]: I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt [Judah], and gather them out of Assyria [Ephraim]; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them [they will overflow the lands]. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down [in all the Holy Land] in his name, says the Lord. Chapter eleven starts out with Lebanon being defeated by the incoming Israelites and already, now at the end of , Israel occupies southern Lebanon with its army and the "oaks of Bashan" that is the Golan Heights which Israel captured from Syria in the Six Day War in will be under their control. But not only will parts of Lebanon and the Bashan area the Golan Heights be settled with the incoming masses of Israelites arriving from all regions of the world, but Israel will also possess the region of Gilead. The Bible clearly prophesies that God "will bring them into the land of Gilead" Zechariah And what is Gilead? It takes in all of the lands east of the Jordan River up to the outskirts of Aminan, the capital of Jordan. When Ramona and I were in Jordan two years ago, we rented a taxi and went down into the Jordan valley and then back up the slopes towards Anunan. The Arab taxi driver was an elderly Muslim man who was formerly from Jerusalem. His answer rather plaintively was "no. One day the Israelis will be here too and settling it as they are the West Bank. The fact is, people of the Middle East can read the prophecies. They know what Zechariah They also know that the people of Israel are following the statements of the prophets precisely. He told us all confidently that the prophecies of the prophets were all coming to pass and that Israel was simply fulfilling what God had
long ago prophesied. He told us that while we ban Bible teaching in our schools in America, in Israel all children are taught from it from the first grade onward. He said it is the book that guides them in their everyday activities and in their plans for the future. And while we at A. I am personally convinced that we are seeing, just like the Minister of Religious Affairs told us in Jerusalem, the prophecies being fulfilled right in front of our eyes. I am simply pointing out what the prophecies state that are guiding Middle Eastern peoples particularly the Israelis. Besides that, the Bible also shows that there will be a Palestinian State. These areas were always Philistine territories even at the height of the Solomonic Empire and they are destined, according to prophecy, to be in the hands of the Philistines that is, the Palestinians just before the Second Advent. Those ten nations mentioned in Psalm 83 will equal the ten nations mentioned in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. There are some momentous times just ahead of us in the Middle East. And what will happen there will influence the political, social and religious events even in Europe, the Americas and the rest of the world. Let us keep our eyes on the Middle East. The prophecies of the Bible are soon to be further fulfilled for the whole world to see. Martin 1 See Dr.