

There is nothing extremely unusual in this prediction that Babylon is to be overthrown. In the course of time most of the ancient cities were conquered by their enemies. Soldiers from Babylon had already destroyed Jerusalem, the Jews' own capital city. Its people had been led off into captivity. The declaration that Babylon would also be destroyed might encourage them, as they kept their faith in God and knew that He would eventually deliver them from Babylon and bring them back to their homeland. But if this had been all that was said, it would not be particularly important as evidence of God's power to predict the future.

However, in the description of the eventual situation of the Babylonian cities we find a very unusual and specific statement: "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby."

When Jeremiah wrote there were great cities along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which had been centers of commerce and civilization for centuries. Day after day, year after year, thousands of people would go in and out of these great cities. Governments and situations might change, but these cities continued. If one should be destroyed it was sure to be rebuilt before long, since the rivers made the area both fertile and accessible. Yet Jeremiah said that her cities would become "a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby."

Jeremiah did not make this prediction about Palestine but about Babylonia. If he had made it about Palestine we would have to say that it has not yet been fulfilled. In 1929, long before the recent developments in the state of Israel, I went a few miles north of Jerusalem to a little hill called Tell el-Ful, which means "hill of beans," since Professor William F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University, who was then Director of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, had told me that he believed that it contained the remains of Saul's headquarters. Looking out from the top of Tell el-Ful, one could see the edge of what was then the little town of Jerusalem, far to the south, but in all other direc-