

14 Isaiah Sees the Saviour

the many references to it include a number that seem to contradict one another. Sometimes it seems to be a term for the entire nation of Israel. At other times it seems to designate a single individual. As one goes through the section, carefully examining these passages in relation to their context, the answer slowly emerges, and it is fascinating to see how the various strands are woven together.

The present writer has devoted many years to the study of this section of Isaiah and has concluded that it has a wonderful unity, even though this unity sometimes lies below the surface. There are certain rather unique principles of arrangement which, if securely grasped, make the whole section meaningful and thrilling. In this book he is attempting to present clearly the insights that the Lord has given him. It is his hope that each reader may be able to see the passage in a new light and to understand the interrelation of its parts, the real unity that runs through it all, and the gradual process of thought that reaches its great climax in its thrilling account of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet 1:11).

There is a sharp break between this section and the preceding chapters. At the end of the historical section that runs from Isaiah 36 through Isaiah 39, the prophet declared that the people of Judah would eventually be carried off into Babylonian captivity. Chapter 40 begins with a declaration of forgiveness of sin and a prediction of the coming of John the Baptist. In the familiar and beloved King James Version its first five verses read:

(1) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (3) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) And the glory of the