

God who is perfect in wisdom and love, the LORD chooses, in this case, to give renewed assurance about His plan to deliver His people. He declares that He, who has created all things (v. 12), is bringing Cyrus to accomplish His righteous purposes. Cyrus will be God's instrument to cause that Jerusalem be rebuilt and to permit the exiles to go free (v. 13).

As so often in the prophetic revelation, the vision of the prophet focuses on near events and then looks further and gives a glimpse of events in the more distant future. The first half of verse 14 seems to be a prediction that Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sheba will come into Cyrus's hands (as in 43:3). <sup>^†</sup> This prediction was fulfilled when these lands were conquered by Cyrus's son, Cambyses. As the verse continues, it includes predictions that, so far as we know, were not fulfilled at that time. Most commentators take Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sheba here as representing the various nations of mankind and pointing to an ultimate conversion of these nations to the true God. Acts 8:27-39 tells of an Ethiopian court official who received the message of salvation and carried it back to his country. In the early years of the Christian era thriving churches were established in these regions. Later that area was to a large extent overrun by the Muslims, and much of it has remained in Islamic hands for more than a thousand years. It is hard to know whether the latter part of this verse is a prediction of those few centuries of Christian dominance in these areas or whether it points to something still future.

It seems most reasonable to consider verse 15 as part of the statement by the new converts as they marvel at their previous inability to recognize the true God and now see that He is indeed the Holy One of Israel, the Saviour.

Many interpreters differ with this interpretation of verse 15, thinking instead that it expresses Isaiah's own wonder as God's great plan unfolds (cf. Rom 11:33).

(16) They shall be put to shame and confounded, all of them; the makers of idols shall go to confusion together. (17) But Israel has been saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation.

† Cf. pp. 79-80.