

14
Isaiah 48

WITH THIS CHAPTER we enter the second main part of our section of Isaiah. ^25 In Part 2 most of the units of material dealing with related thoughts are longer than before. The symphonic structure, so characteristic of chapters 40 to 46, with its frequent shifts from strong expression of one emotion to equally strong expression of another, is no longer clearly in evidence, though existing in greatly modified form in chapter 48. In Part 2, reiterations of the themes of God's power, of His ability to predict the future, and of idolatry become less frequent, though all three are found in chapter 48. This chapter also contains the final reference to Cyrus.

Up to this point there has been no direct accusation of idol worship against Israel. Except for a few passages where Israel's sin was strongly condemned, the general attitude has been that on the one side there are God's people, serving Him and looking to Him for help, but sometimes tending to give way to despair because they see no evidence that help is coming; while on the other side there are the heathen, whom God condemns for worshiping idols. The Israelites are constantly reminded that these idols are powerless and cannot predict the future. At the beginning of chapter 46 it was declared that the great Mesopotamian gods were themselves to go into captivity, and all of chapter 47 describes the downfall of Babylon.

In Part 1 there were comparatively few passages in which Israel was rebuked for its sin, and most of these were presented as explanations of the reason the nation had gone into exile. With chapter 48 there is a marked change of emphasis. In this chapter the Israelites themselves are directly accused of idolatry,