

to a mighty spiritual being rather than to any known king of Babylon.

### *8. The fall of the king of Babylon*

Within this passage there is a description of the fall of the king of Babylon. He is described in 14:19-20 as one who is cast out of his grave like an abominable branch, thrust through with a sword, and not joined with his ancestors in burial. Elsewhere he is pictured as humiliated, cast aside, brought down into the pit (14:9, 15). There is no king of the neo-Babylonian empire of whom we can say that such a fate befell him. We know that it did not come to any great boastful king who ruled over that empire, and certainly not to Nebuchadnezzar, the only one who comes anywhere near fitting the description in this chapter. It is hard to find in Babylon any fulfillment of this prediction.

Thus we have noticed the lack of specific references to Babylon in these chapters, and we have seen that their description of the king does not fit any known Babylonian king, while the prediction of the fate of the king and of the land hardly tallies with what happened to the actual Babylon. Surely there is a vital problem of Bible interpretation before us.

### *B. Consideration of Various Hypotheses*

It is a vital principle of Bible interpretation that we take whatever is clear and stand upon it and then go from the clear to the obscure. We should not try to explain an obscure point before first examining other passages which are clear. We should take our stand on what is definite and positive in the Word of God, and not upon superficial interpretations or unwarranted inferences. This does not mean that we are not to make hypotheses. Hypotheses and guesses are often extremely useful. There is no objection to making guesses provided they are labeled as guesses. When we have a group of data to consider, whether in a scientific field or in the field of Bible interpretation, we should follow proper procedure. After careful study of the