

available. Under these circumstances we are certainly warranted in examining other interpretations.

2. The Critical View

The view which the critics take is that most of chapters 13-14 and of 40-50 were written at a time shortly before the end of the Babylonian captivity, when an unknown writer described the situation as he knew it. Presupposing exile and Babylonian captivity, he predicted a great deliverance as about to take place. If one accepts this view of chapters 13-14 he must say that the deliverance did not take place as predicted. When Israel was released from Babylonian captivity they did not make their captors into captives and servants. They were in no sense victorious or supreme over Babylon. There is no evidence of any king in Babylon at that time who fits the description given here or whose body was cast out in the manner described. Under these circumstances it could hardly have been written at the end of the exile, unless it were done by a false prophet who made many bad guesses that did not come to pass. From a viewpoint of destructive criticism such an interpretation is possible. From the viewpoint of the Bible believer the whole exilic theory is utterly unsatisfactory.

3. That Isaiah is not speaking of the literal Babylon, but using the term in a figurative sense

We can find an altogether satisfactory explanation if we conclude that Isaiah puts these two chapters at the very beginning of his discussion of foreign powers because he is dealing with something that sums up all the great world powers that oppose God, and that may reach its climax in one great figure that is to be the supreme enemy of God at the end of the age. For such a description the name of Babylon was quite appropriate, since it was the name of the particular power that would eventually conquer Judah (Isa. 39:6-7). In addition, Babylon had been a great power in the days before the rise of the Assyrian empire and memories of its ancient greatness may have survived, making it a natural figure for