

extremely unlikely that many writers would write in such a unified style.

Now an important feature in the understanding of the book is to know something of its historical background. We will not take time today to go into that at much length. I hope that you are all familiar with the general features of the time of Izziah. He wrote during the reign principally of three different kinds. In the beginning of the book he speaks of his vision in the days of Izziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. For practical purposes we can disregard Izziah and Jotham. They do not play any great part in the book. On the other hand it seems extremely likely that he wrote a goodly portion of the book during the reign of Manasse who follows Hezekiah. We thus have a great portion of the book written in the reign of Ahaz a wicked king, who had little use for Izziah and did not give him free access to the palace. We have another portion written in the days of Hezekiah, the good king, who tried to follow God with his whole heart and was always glad to hear the Word from Izziah. And then we have the latter portion written in the days of Manasse, a king who was far more wicked even than his grandfather Ahab, a man who persecuted the followers of God and who introduced all sorts of abominations and even idolatry into the very precincts of the temple itself. According to a Jewish tradition Izziah was pursued by the men of Manasse and fleeing from them in the woods he hid himself within a hollow tree. Then this tree is said to have been torn asunder by these men so that the body of the prophet was sawed in two. This is of course only a tradition and we cannot be at all sure that it is true, but it shows how they regarded the days of Manasse and what an idea they