

43 40:6-8

reference to the great climax that our section reaches in its predictions of Christ in chapter 53. Yet there is very little in the chapter that is specifically connected with particular events, and in its latter part the center of attention seems to revert to the problems of the Exile.

(6) A voice is saying, Proclaim. ^5 Then he said, What shall I proclaim? All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The principle of "symphonic structure" is well illustrated by the sharp transition between verses 5 and 6. Perhaps the great declaration in verse 5 about the revelation of God's power and glory arouses a certain skepticism in the minds of some listeners. They say to themselves, How do we know that God will do these great things? In answer, a voice is ordered to call attention to human frailty. Man has his brief period of life and then, in most cases, is completely forgotten.

The Israelites in exile saw the great power of the Babylonians. All visible signs of God's existence and power had disappeared. The Temple had been destroyed. The walls of Jerusalem had been torn down. The people had been forcibly removed to places hundreds of miles away. A voice now declares that all this human power that looks so great is actually as weak as grass. When the LORD blows on it, it will disappear.

Today the site of ancient Babylon is almost devoid of people. Its greatness has vanished except in places where archaeologists have dug up some of the signs of its ancient glory.

Thus verses 6-8 emphasize the frailty of man and the fact that all his glory lasts only a limited time. In contrast, the end of verse 8 declares the permanence of God's Word.

(9) Get yourself up to a high mountain, O Zion, who brings good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, who brings good news: Lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God! (10) See, the Lord God will come