

99 48:12-16

he, I am the first, I am also the last. (13) Surely my hand founded the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens. When I call to them they stand together.

These two verses again emphasize God's eternity and His power over nature.

(14) Assemble all of you and listen. Who among them has declared these things? The LORD has loved him. He shall carry out his good pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans. (15) I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and he will make his way successful.

This is the final declaration that God will send Cyrus to overwhelm the Chaldeans. It has already been discussed in detail. ^*

This prediction of the coming of Cyrus is followed by a remarkable verse that can hardly be understood without looking ahead to chapter 49.

(16) Come near to me, hear this. From the beginning I have not spoken in secret. From the time it came to be, ^26 I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit.

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether the prophet is speaking in his own person, whether he speaks as representing his nation, or whether he is presenting the words that God speaks. Thus in 42:24 the prophet seems to speak as representing the nation. The first two verses of chapter 48 could well represent the prophet as speaking, since he speaks of God in the third person. The beginning of the next verse could easily be thought of as representing the prophet pointing back to his former messages, but the last part of the verse shows clearly that the LORD, rather than the prophet, is speaking, since it says, "made them occur." Similarly, the use of the first person pronoun in 48:12-13, 15 indicates that the LORD Himself is speaking. In verse 15, the fact that the speaker declares that He Himself has given Cyrus power to overcome the Chaldeans makes it obvious that the LORD is the one who is speaking. The

*see pp. 25 -30.