Cyrus conquered Babylon many of its people felt that he had come as their deliverer. The land continued to enjoy a large measure of prosperity. Little if any devastation occurred, when the Babylonian rulers lost their positions of authority. In fact Daniel, who had been a high officer under Nebuchadnezzar, held a top position under the new rulers. This chapter of Isaiah describes the overwhelming power of God as He annihilates all that is wicked and subdues everything that opposes His will. The greater part of its fulfillment is still future.

It is necessary to pause for a minute at verse 12: "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Some of the rabbis have interpreted this in a Messianic sense. In the direct context the most obvious interpretation is that the depopulation and destruction is so great that gold and precious things are worth nothing in comparison with the need of manpower for defense. It reminds us of the cry of Richard III, "My kingdom for a horse!"† Yet, in a passage dealing with such great cosmic events, accomplished solely by God's power, one must recognize the possibility that this verse does indeed refer to something far precious than further manpower for more defense. Surely it points to the One through whom alone deliverance may be obtained from the terrible results of sin. All those who will suffer the miseries described in this chapter could have escaped if they had only accepted the offer of the Man who is indeed more precious than fine gold, the One who alone could have given them redemption and deliverance.

A Picture of Lasting Desolation

Isaiah 13:19-22 presents a terrible picture of lasting desolation. The word "Babylon" is used in the first of these five verses; yet we notice that this description has been only partially fulfilled in the case of the ancient city of Babylon. The desolation of Babylon did not come immediately after the conquest by the Persians, nor was it a result of destruction in

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†Richard III, Act V, scene 4, line 7.