

approaches. In verse 7 we see them rushing to their idols for protection and even building new idols in the thought that thus they may be safe from the great force which God has raised up. Verse 8 and the following verses contrast Israel's situation with that of these nations that are filled with such terror by the approach of Cyrus. God declares that He will protect Israel.

Verse 8 is particularly interesting because in it the Lord gives the reason why He is going to protect Israel. He does not say that Israel is God's pet and that therefore He wishes to give her special preference over the nations. He declares instead that He has chosen Israel as one who is to be His servant to accomplish a work that He has planned. It is for this reason that Israel is to be protected, in order that through her the great purpose of God may be accomplished.

The Servant of the Lord

This is the first appearance of the phrase "the servant of the Lord" in the book of Isaiah. It is a theme which constantly grows in importance from chapter 41 until its great climax in chapter 53. At first sight it is not altogether clear exactly what is meant by the phrase, and there has been much discussion about it. As we go on its meaning gradually becomes clearer.

In studying the Bible it is important to recognize the principle of progressive revelation. This does not mean that God reveals something at one time and then reveals something contradictory at a later time. God's truth is fixed and final and He never declares anything which is false. Yet, of course, He does not necessarily tell all the truth at one time. The greatness of God and the comprehensiveness of His plans are so tremendous that the finite mind could not comprehend all the truth about Him. Gradually we are enabled to understand more and more. God adapts His presentation to our minds in order that we may be able to grasp His truths and gradually to understand more and more about them. The first glimpses He gives us are true, but they are far from complete. As the revelation is continued He gives new glimpses which enable us more fully to understand what has previously been revealed.