

of the clearest. Isaiah 44.26 ~~reads~~ speaks of God as the one who "confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Yes shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof."

In 51.3 He says, "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord..." In 52.9 He says, "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."

Throughout these chapters it is quite evident that the oppressor is not the Assyrian empire which was so prominent in the situation discussed in the earlier part of the book of Isaiah, but the empire of the Babylonians. Babylon is mentioned in four verses (43.14; 47.1; 48.14; 48.20). Four times also the word Chaldean is used, the name of the group that was dominant in the Babylonian empire at this time.

In chapter 46 the two leading gods of Babylon are mentioned as those who that are going to be overthrown when God destroys the power of the Babylonian empire.

A very prominent place in the discussion of our passage is taken by the coming of a great conqueror. He is referred to in vivid terms as one whom God brings to accomplish His purposes. Such references occur in 41.2ff., 41.25ff, 44.28--45.3, and in 46.11. At the end of chapter 44 and the beginning of chapter 45 this conqueror is actually referred to by name; twice the name Cyrus is used. In connection with this occurrence mention is made five times of the fact that God has called him by name, a great emphasis on the marvel of God's permitting Isaiah to predict even his name more than a century in advance. In 44.28 and 45.13 it is stated that Cyrus is going to allow the people to return and to rebuild Jerusalem.