

seeing Babylon's restoration by Esarhaddon in 680 B.C. should be led by God in his thought into precisely this future situation? He approaches it by degrees. He first announces Jerusalem's return (40:1,2). Now he specifies the deliverer in general terms, (41:1-7; 41:25-29). Soon he will mention the oppressor by name (43:8-21), and finally in a grand climax he introduces and names Cyrus the deliverer (44:21 - 45:17), and describes the downfall of Babylon the oppressor (46:1 - 48:22). The whole situation and manner of the prophet is just what we should expect from one so wholly given over to the Spirit of God as Isaiah evidently was. And yet be it noted that he did greater things than these, and here we find the strongest proof both of true prediction and of the Isaianic authorship of these passages. Notice what blanks there are in the foregoing summary. The blanks are filled, as we shall see in a later division, by the glorious Messianic prophecies which also advance in alternation with these predictions of the return from Babylon. We argue from the greater to the less. If the prophet could have foretold the Christ so marvelously, could he not also have foretold the return from Babylon, and that in exact terms reflecting the situation as it would be in the day of the fulfillment of his word? The believer must answer in the affirmative, and even the sceptic should be constrained to admit the possibility. We may not argue the point at length, but for ourselves there is no other way.

We return to the exegesis of 41:1-7. There is now general agreement that the subject of this section, the "one from the East", of vs.2, is Cyrus.¹ We need not follow Delitzsch that the work is pictured as already

1. Alexander, Commentary, in loc.: "Eusebius, Theodoret, and Procopius understand it as describing the triumphs of the true religion, or the gospel here called righteousness. Cyril and Jerome apply it to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the Righteous One, or as the Lord our Righteousness. Cocceius stands alone in his application of the verse to the Apostle Paul. The Jews make Abraham the subject of the passage, excepting Aben Ezra, who, with Vitringa and all the latest writers, understands it as a prophecy of Cyrus."