

the great enemy of Judah in Isaiah's time. Babylon appeared only as the friend and ally of Hezekiah. But it hardly needed a seer's penetration to discover how hollow and false that friendship was, and the prophet's stern message to the King after he had received the embassy from Merodach Baladan, as related in chap. 39, shows that he fully understood the danger that was yet to come from that quarter. Yet while foretelling Judah's captivity in Babylon he could not leave that as his final message to his country. It was rather in harmony with his doctrine of the remnant as a holy seed that he should look still further forward to the deliverance by judgment on Babylon. A message of that kind would be but the fuller development of the commission which he received at the time of his call as related in chap. 6, and would be one suited to his own day quite as much as for the days of the exile. Such a consideration might not be sufficient to account naturally for a long series of discourses and yet be sufficient to explain such a prediction as that given here. Hence with the evidence before us at the present time there seems no sufficient reason for disintegrating the collection of discourses in the first 39 chapters, or for attributing any of them to another author than the historic Isaiah.

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