

Ethiopia, Babylon, and other sources and see one after another coming to naught before the attack of the Assyrians.

The conquest of Babylon by the Assyrians made a great impression upon the mind of that day. Babylon was an ancient city which had been mistress of a large portion of the world when Assyria was still comparatively unimportant. The downfall of Babylon seemed like a terrible disaster.

Some commentators take this passage as we have suggested, as describing a conquest of Babylon by one of the Assyrian kings. Others take it as referring to the eventual conquest of Babylon by Persia a century and a half later. Those who take this latter view allege in favor of it the statement in verse 2: "Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media," and point out that Elam was an ally of Babylon in the time of Sargon, but this is not a valid objection.

Elam and Media are not designated here as foes of Babylon. The prophet echoes the cries of the Israelites as they urge on the various enemies of Nineveh to push forward in opposition to it. A century later Media and Babylon together struck the death-blow against Nineveh, but the present alliance was short-lived. The prophet sympathizes with the hope of his compatriots for relief from the Assyrian danger.

Before the striking force of Assyria, Media and Elam drew back to their highland fortresses and left Babylon to suffer Assyrian retribution. The verse says: "A grievous vision is declared unto me; ... all the sighing thereof I made to cease." The groaning and sighing of the Assyrians, faced by all these opponents, comes to an end. God will use Assyria for another century as His instrument to punish wickedness. Babylon proves no more helpful than Egypt. Only in God can help be found. As the prophet points out the failure of Babylon as a help against Assyria, he enters into the strong disappointment of the Jews. All human help is failing, yet God has promised to deliver and He will fulfill His Word.

The succeeding verses give a vivid picture of the prophet in his watch-tower. In a vision he sees chariots and horse men, camels and all sorts of supplies going by. He cries like a lion as he watches what will happen. Then he sees a portion of the force returning and it gives the news in verse