

blotted it out with floods of water and made it like a meadow."[†]

No one could have guessed that Babylon, after such a destruction, would ever regain enough of its ancient power to take part, a century later, in the ultimate destruction of the Assyrian empire, and actually to fulfill Isaiah's astonishing prediction (Isa. 39:6-7) that Babylon, rather than mighty Assyria, would be the force which would ultimately destroy Jerusalem and carry its people off into exile?

Our present section of Isaiah, as we have seen, is not directly concerned with Judah's eventual exile, but with the series of events which followed the alliance of King Ahaz with the wicked Assyrian aggressor, and the consequent removal of all barriers between Assyria and Judah. There is no help in Babylon; only in God can lasting support be found. Jerusalem will continue for another century, not through clever schemes or because of help from purely human sources, but simply because God has chosen to protect it by His supernatural power.

The Burden of Dumah

The next portion of this prophecy is a brief section (v. 11-12), with a rather cryptic title. Yet it has a haunting melody that renders it unforgettable:

He calleth to me out of Seir,
 Watchman, what of the night?
 Watchman, what of the night?
The watchman said,
 The morning cometh, and also the night"
 if ye will inquire, inquire; return, come.

As we have noticed, the word Durnah means silence. It is a word-play on the name Edom, as is shown by the reference to Mt. Seir, the outstanding geographic feature of the land of Edom. The Hebrew word which is regularly translated Edom

[†]Quoted in Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* II: 152-3.