

it is a situation in which a man was studying war conditions and he was seeing what was happening and he was planning the defense of the U.S. and he puts things down in such situation as though it were at the time present. He imagines a sudden attack by parachute and a sudden attack by atomic bombs and a person who works into a thing and studies a great deal into it, is apt to get into a situation like this and sometimes there may be a very thin line between that which is imagined and that which isn't true. These people of Isaiah's day felt the king of Babylon was going to come and the treasures of the king and his descendents and children would be taken away and they heard the terrific denunciation of the sin of the people, they thought of it as already present and their situation was very similar to the situation which came later when the people were right in the situation and there was a real need for this book especially when Manasseh came to the throne when he turned away from God so completely that the Word was lost and there was a situation when these were coming on, when the people longed for the nation to turn back to God and following the teachings of Isaiah and yet they go on in their wicked way--these people would tend to give way to despair and despondency.

196 There is a Jewish tradition that Isaiah lived on into the reign of Manasseh and that Manasseh persecuted the godly to the extent that his men came to capture Isaiah to torture him and he fled into the woods to hide in a hollow tree and that these men simply took the tree and sawed it right across and thus sawed Isaiah in two--that is a tradition that is very early, and though we cannot vow for its truth, it does show us what the situation was at that time. It also reflects something of the tradition that Isaiah lived at the time of Manasseh. He doesn't name Manasseh but lists the kings through Hezekiah. Of course that is understandable from several viewpoints and you would find people even needing this comfort even in the time of Hezekiah and you certainly would have it in the days of Manasseh, and in this sort of situation it certainly would be natural for someone such as Isaiah to sit down and write those people who thought they were in exile at that time and it would be a blessing to them then and when the exile actually came--the declaration of the message that God wanted them to help.

(d) This was not simply a matter of imagination. The northern kingdom had already gone into exile and thousands of Judah itself had been taken into captivity. That took place around the reign of Hezekiah or at the end of Ahaz's reign. Sennacherib had