

Again we believe the objection is founded on a pedantic view of what is and what is not allowable in Hebrew style. We argue that the author, whoever he was, would have been justified in describing Babylon's early fate in these terms. Certainly according to the critics' view of a great redaction at a very late date we would not have expected this ~~xxxxxxx~~ passage to retain its present expressions unless the Jews themselves felt them to be a fair representation of Babylon's fall. In 17: 1 we found a similar situation where it is prophesied that Damascus "shall be taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." Ephraim likewise, it says in 7:8, shall be broken "from being a people". Yet as we have said Damascus continued for centuries, and is even standing today; Ephraim also continued far past the limits at which critics say Isaiah was edited, and our conclusion can be applied here also. It says that Babylon will be overthrown indeed, although not in great detail as the prophet represents the picture. It will doubtless be objected that the prophet's language here in ch. 13 is stronger than the other examples cited. We grant that it is so. And yet the concern of the prophet with Babylon is far greater than with Damascus. The glory of Babylon was far greater than the glory of Damascus. And whereas Damascus was merely an enemy of the covenant people, Babylon was their captor for seventy years. The events being far greater, the greater hyperbole can be easily excused. At least we can say this, that we should interpret the prophecy literally rather than refer Babylon to apostate Judaism and understand the return of Israel as the origin of the Christian church. And the commentaries in general agree with this interpretation. (Alexander¹, Naegelsbach also², and Delitzsch³)

 1. Commentary, Vol.I, p.268.

2. Lange Commentary, p.173.

3. Commentary, 4th ed., Vol.I, p.294.