

He calls the heavens and earth to rejoice (45:8) at the work of the Lord of all. He who stretched out the heavens and all their host is the guarantor of this mighty event (vs.12,13). Let us not be surprised if the prophet seems to overemphasize the small return under Ezra and Nehemia. By God's standard the event was great.

The section 45: 14-25 we are disposed to refer by hyperbole and poetic license to this same event. Alexander, of course, adopts a different--the so-called spiritualizing--view. Of vs. 17 he says; "The Israel of this text and of others like it is not the Jewish people, considered simply as an ancient nation, but the Jewish people considered as the church of God, a body which has never ceased and will never cease to exist and claim the promises."¹ So be it. By this easy method we could prove that the Babylonian captivity was a period of extinction of the true Church. It amounts to saying that all the saved are saved, which is certainly true, but appears to leave the thought in low gear. Delitzsch and Naegelsbach refer this section to the final deliverance of Israel, and it must be admitted that the alteration we have noticed favors the view that here the prophet looks far ahead again before he returns to the overthrow of Babylon. Paul in Romans 14: 11 quotes verse 23 of the final judgment, but the fact is not decisive in favor of Delitzsch's and Naegelsbach's view because in Isaiah God may only be bringing forth His character as the Judge in order to prove His present word. Still the New Testament does favor this view which refers this section literally to the last time. And certainly verse 17 could not refer to the end of the world in any other stronger words in the Hebrew language. At least we must say that this deliverance from Babylon is one

1. Commentary, in loc.