

for their astrology, for all of these wicked things, verses 12 and 13. 14 and 15, telling how none shall be able to save Babylon. Chapter 47 has perhaps more of this than any other chapter of the condemnation of Babylon and the declaration of the sudden destruction that is to come to them.

How can anyone doubt by a chapter like 47, that the background of this section is the exile. That He is talking to the Israelites, telling them they will be delivered from exile, written before the Babylonians were a great power. He is presupposing the fact that they are to be the great power, and declaring that the Israelites will be delivered from its power.

And so in chapter 48, it continues with an address to the Israelites which after all this condemnation of the Babylonians, just before, sounds rather strange. But again, it is blessing, in 47, blessing to the Israelites, with the destruction and condemnation of Babylonia, but then He turns to the Israelites and says they don't deserve it. He says, "O house of Jacob, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness." He is now rebuking the Israelites for their                     , and that is bringing to our attention a new and vital problem, which we have touched upon before, but which comes more and more to the front, as we go through these chapters. The Israelites are in captivity. They are in a terrible condition. They need deliverance. God is going to bring them deliverance from the exile. But as we go on, more and more, we see that the reason the Israelites are in exile, the reason they need deliverance, is not because they've been elected. Not because they have met an unavoidable condemnation of circumstances. But because on account of their sin, God has sent them into exile. And they are told they are His servants, to be a light to the Gentiles, and how can a sinful people that deserve to be sent into exile, for their own sins, bring a light to other nations? So we have the problem. Suppose that God delivers the people from exile. As long as they have the sin, there will be anew kind of apostasy, and a need of a new exile. More and more in these chapters He brings to our attention the fact, of how terrible the exile is, and important as is the need of deliverance from exile, there is an even greater need, and that is the need of dealing with the problem of sin, which after all, is the cause of the exile. We've dealt with that at various times in these chapters. But it is the thought that is coming out more and