

The Prophecy of Isaiah
Judgment is Coming

We are making a broad study of Isaiah and covering several chapters in each lesson. Instead of my usual verse-by-verse approach on a given book of the Bible, I decided on this method because Isaiah is so large; viz. 66 chapters.

This has troubled me because I believe that every word of God in the Scriptures is put there for a purpose. Paul writes to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:10-17

¹⁰ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. ESV

With that said, we will proceed to consider a rather large “chunk” of Isaiah’s prophecy, chapters 13-23.

Up to this point, Isaiah’s prophecies have dealt primarily with Judah and Israel. However, chapters 13-23 are “oracles” [weighty messages] of doom directed at several other cities and nations.

The first oracle is against Babylon [13:1]. Babylon will be utterly destroyed by a powerful invading force. The attitude of the people of Babylon is arrogant, typical of a godless people whose sin has sealed the judgment of God on them.

Prophecies regarding Babylon

Isaiah 13:1-14:11

Isaiah’s oracle against Babylon was not intended to be read by the people of that doomed nation. Rather the oracle was meant to comfort those in Judah who feared God but were terrified at the threat posed by such a cruel enemy to the north.

Isaiah foresaw, as it were, flags waving as the invading armies moved against Babylon, who were the captors of the people of Judah. The image is of the people of Judah shouting with joy and waving on the invaders as they marched against the Babylonian slave masters and enter the gates of the nobles, the rich and the mighty [1-2].

The warriors were not "holy" {consecrated} in the sense we think of something being holy. But they were "sanctified" or set apart for God's use [3].

Isaiah does not name the invaders but they are the Medes and the Persian armies.

The invading forces are so vast that they create a thunderous noise and raise an uproar among the kingdoms [4].

The soldiers come from far away [5].

Persia, which captured Babylon in 539 B.C., was over 350 miles from Babylon. God used these ungodly Persians, to execute His wrath against ungodly Babylon.

Isaiah describes the devastation:

Hands will hang limply as their courage utterly fails them [7-8];

Creation itself displays God's judgment [9-10];

The heavens trembles and the earth shakes [11-13];

The people of Babylon will be like a hunted gazelle or a sheep without a shepherd, i.e., easy prey [14];

The invaders will make no distinction between native-born Babylonians and anyone else living within Babylon's borders [15];

Their children will be horribly killed before their eyes [16];

The invaders can not be bribed with silver and gold [17];

They will cut in pieces the young men and kill babies in the womb [18];

Babylon will be as Sodom and Gomorrah [19];

Babylon will be so desolate that it will never again be inhabited nor will shepherds graze their sheep there [20-22].

Babylon was doomed!

God's Mercy

Isaiah 14:1-2

Babylon will fall but Judah will be restored by God's mighty power.

Judah was restored after the Babylonian captivity. Your system of eschatology interprets whether this passage has a future fulfillment in a millennial kingdom on earth.

Taunting Babylon

Isaiah 14:3-11

Isaiah prophesied that the restored people of Judah will sing a taunting song against the oppressive king of Babylon [3-4].

God is sovereign over the great king of Babylon [5-6].

The time of peace [7-8].

Isaiah pictures the grave as a throne room where all of the God-defying kings have gone in death. Lesser kings will be "all astir" because this most powerful ruler has met the same end as they did [9-11].

The End of Satan

Isaiah 14:12-21

When Isaiah wrote about a fallen Day Star {morning star}, he was most likely referring to the king of Babylon. However, beyond that the fallen star is Lucifer or Satan. It is Satan who lurks behind the scenes to influence the minds of men.

Before the fall in the Garden of Eden where Satan tempted Eve "to be as gods," it was Lucifer who would first exalt himself to be "like the Most High."

But the end will find Lucifer and his followers in hell.

Isa 14:12

- **How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer!** Babylon's sudden fall is compared, with great force and beauty, to the (seeming) fall of a star from heaven. The word translated "Lucifer" means properly "shining one," and no doubt here designates a star; but whether any particular star or no is uncertain. The LXX. translated by *ἑωσφόρος*, whence our "Lucifer." The subjoined epithet, "son of the morning" or "of the dawn," accords well with this rendering. **How art thou cut down to the ground!** One of Isaiah's favorite changes of metaphor. It is a favorite metaphor also to which he reverts - that of representing the destruction of a nation by the felling of a tree or of a forest (comp. [Isa 2:12,13](#); [10:33,34](#), etc.). **Which didst weaken the nations;** rather, *which didst prostrate the nations*. The word used is one of great force (comp. [Ex 17:13](#); [Job 14:10](#)).

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Prophecies regarding other Nations

Isaiah 14:22-23

God was judging Babylon and He will judge other godless nations and cities. The theme of the next nine chapters is the sovereignty of God over the nations of the earth.

Against Assyria

Isaiah 14:24-27

God said that He would kill every Assyrian in the Promised Land and free His people from slavery. This was an unlikely outcome considering the strength of Assyria. But nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Against the Philistines

Isaiah 14:28-32

Isaiah gave this oracle against the Philistines in 715 B.C., the year that King Ahaz died. The Philistines were age-old enemies of Judah but here they send messengers to King Hezekiah offering to join in a revolt against Assyria. The prophet warns that only sadness and anguish was ahead for the Philistines. Assyria will attack from the north, bringing famine, slaughter, and destruction. The people of God should put their trust in Him, not in ungodly allies who would soon be facing the consequences of their own evil.

Against Moab

Isaiah 15:1 – 16:14

Moab was another constant enemy of Judah. Even so, Isaiah expressed sadness at the horrors of war that awaited these people [15:5]. This most likely refers to what happened under the reign of Sargon and the Assyrians from 715-713 B.C. This happened within three years of the prophecy [16:14].

Against Syria and Israel

Isaiah 17:1-14

Isaiah's oracle against Damascus was probably given during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis of 734-732 B.C. and parallels the warning of the failure of the Syrian-Israeli alliance [See 7:1-9; 21].

The capital of Syria and all of its cities were doomed and this came about in 732 B.C. when the Assyrians captured Damascus. There is a small ray of hope that some would turn from their idols to the Lord [7-8].

Against Ethiopia and Egypt

Isaiah 18:1 – 20:6

Cush is the name given to the powerful nation of Nubia, south of Egypt, also known as Ethiopia. This is not the same territory as the modern country of the same name.

The prophet declared that the people of Cush, though strong and brutal, would join the ranks of the godless nations to be overthrown by the instruments of God's will.

In 19:1-15, Isaiah declares that the leaders and the people of Egypt would not escape God's judgment. This once powerful nation was known for its idolatry and practices of divination. The Lord will visit calamity on Egypt by bringing drought and famine to the land. Despite the wisdom of the nation's leaders the Lord will put them all into confusion.

In 20:1-6, Isaiah repeats the theme of God's judgment upon both Egypt and Cush. In 711 B.C. the Lord told Isaiah to go about "stripped naked and barefoot" for three years as if he were a prisoner of war, a sign of the calamity that Assyria will bring on Egypt and Cush. The Assyrians will exile the people of these nations in nakedness and shame.

Again, Isaiah warns Judah not to form alliances with godless nations.

Against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia

Isaiah 21:1-17

In 21:1-10 the prophet again declares God's judgment upon Babylon, which will turn this once prosperous kingdom into a wasteland. The Lord will use the Medes and Persians to attack and overthrow Babylon; showing them that their false gods can not save them.

God will likewise judge Edom [11-12], the home of the descendants of Esau. They will not avoid the domination of either Assyria or Babylon.

Arabia is judged [13-17] and the entire region will be covered with fugitives seeking food and water. The Assyrians began attacking Arabia in 732 B.C and the Babylonians did the same under King Nebuchadnezzar [Jer 25:17, 23-24].

Against Jerusalem

Isaiah 22:1-5

Although Judah and Jerusalem was “God’s people” they rebelled against the Lord. They first trusted Assyria and later Babylon to help protect them from their enemies. Isaiah’s prophecy against Jerusalem probably refers to the siege by the Babylonians in 589-587 B.C. Another possibility is the invasion under the Assyrian King Sennacherib in 701 B.C.

Against Tyre and Sidon

Isaiah 23:1-18

Finally in chapter 23 we have Isaiah’s oracle against Tyre and Sidon. Tyre was a prominent seaport on the Mediterranean coast west of Damascus. Despite the island fortress and the renown of its mariners and merchants, Tyre will fall as the rest, remaining desolate for seventy years.