

Babylon Denounced and the Fall of Satan Described

Isaiah 14:1-23

Isaiah 14:1-3 - *“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. ² Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the Lord; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors. ³ It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve.”*

Background Notes

In Isaiah 13 we learned that God's judgment of Babylon was both historical and eschatological. In other words, there was a time in history when Isaiah's prophecy of God's judgment on Babylon was partially fulfilled. The Babylonian Empire no longer exists.

In Isaiah 13 we also discussed that there will be an eschatological “Day of the Lord” for Babylon. The “Babylon” of the End Times will be judged and destroyed in the future (Revelation 17-18).

In the first 3 verses of Isaiah 14, both the historical and eschatological aspects of God's judgment on Babylon were in view. God's blessing on Israel was revealed as well. As predicted in verse 1, after the fall of Babylon the Jews returned to their homeland in 538 BC, under the edict of Cyrus, the Persian king. A number of foreign proselytes from Babylon went along to Jerusalem with them - thus the historical fulfillment of verse 1.

Israel will be restored in the future. Israel will be at rest in her own Land in the earthly kingdom that our Lord will set up when He returns, and Gentiles will share in the blessings of that kingdom as well. At that time the Lord will judge the End-Time “Babylon.”

So in Isaiah 14:1-3 both the historical and eschatological judgment of Babylon and the blessing of Israel are in view.

Doctrinal Points

1. The prophecy against the king of Babylon foreshadows the fall of Babylon in the future.

Isaiah 14:4-11 - *"You will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!"* ⁵ *The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers.* ⁶ *He who struck the people in*

wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders.

⁷ *The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.* ⁸ *Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us.'* ⁹ *"Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming. It stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth. It has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.* ¹⁰ *They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?'* ¹¹ *Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the sound of your stringed instruments. The maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you."*

Verses 4-21 are a "taunt song" against the king of Babylon. In the world of sports, fans will sing or chant "taunt songs" after their team gains a victory over the opposition - especially if the victory is an upset! Here in Isaiah 14 there is a "taunt" that was sung by God's people about the defeat of the king of Babylon.

Who are God's people here? In this context, it's Israel (v1). Throughout the chapter, God's people are the Jewish people. It's important to maintain the differentiation between Israel and the Church. Israel is Israel. The Church is **not** the "New Israel," and the Church has **not** replaced Israel as God's chosen people. In the Bible, Christians are never called "descendants of Jacob" (v1). **Israel is Israel** - throughout the Bible.

When will the Jewish people sing this victory song? Here again, there is both the historical aspect and the eschatological aspect for the song. Certainly the Jewish captives in Babylon rejoiced with the victory of Medes and Persians over Babylon - especially when the Persian emperor Cyrus issued his famous Edict that allowed the Jewish captives to return home to Jerusalem. At that time, God had certainly broken the staff of the wicked and the scepter of the rulers (v5-6). Babylon, that had ruled the nations in anger, and that had struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, had been taken down!

But notice that the taunt song will also be sung in the far future, when *"the whole earth is at rest and quiet"* (v7). That certainly has not happened yet - but it will happen in the future. The Lord Himself will defeat the "Babylon" of the End Times, and restored Israel will sing in triumph! Read Revelation 18 - the taunt song begins in verse 20.

Notice the descriptive and figurative language in this victory song (Isaiah 14:8 -11). Even the trees will rejoice with the victory over Babylon. The kings who are already in Sheol will rise up to welcome the mighty king of Babylon into the realm of departed spirits. The king of Babylon, with his pomp and luxurious lifestyle, will be brought down to a “bed of maggots.”

The prophecy against the king of Babylon foreshadows the fall of Babylon in the future.

2. The prophecy against the king of Babylon reveals the fall of Satan in the past.

Isaiah 14:12-23 - *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.’*

¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. ¹⁶ “Those who see you will gaze at you. And consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷ Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?’

¹⁸ “All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house. ¹⁹ But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot. ²⁰ You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named. ²¹ Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land, and fill the face of the world with cities.” ²² “For I will rise up against them,” says the Lord of hosts, “and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity,” says the Lord. ²³ “I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water. I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,” says the Lord of hosts.”

In some of these verses, it appears that the taunt song goes beyond the literal king of Babylon and describes the **evil source of power behind pagan Babylon - Satan himself**. For example, in verses 12-14, some things are said that seemingly could never be said of any literal king of Babylon – things that could only be said about Satan. One example would be *“How you are fallen from heaven”* (v12). This could not have been said of a king of Babylon, but it was descriptive of the fall of Satan.

Notice - before his fall, Satan was called the “Star of the Morning,” or “Lucifer.” But Satan was not content with the high position he had been given. In his pride, Satan determined to exalt himself above all other created beings, and claim power and authority that belonged to the Most High alone.

Satan stated his five “*I will*” statements at some time in the past, and his fall from his former position of glory and power in heaven has already taken place (v12). However, his final consignment to eternal punishment has not yet taken place (v15). That is still in the future. Revelation 20:10 states that Satan will be consigned forever to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire.

In verse 16 Isaiah returned to his prophecy of the literal kings of Babylon. Once again it seems that there is an historical aspect as well as an eschatological aspect to the prophecy. The time of the mighty Babylonian kings who conquered nations, overthrew cities, and imprisoned people came to an end. There is no longer any Babylonian Empire.

On the very night that Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, The Babylonian king, Belshazzar, was slain. He was not given an honorable burial. None of his descendants inherited the throne. As we discussed in chapter 13, the once-proud city of Babylon became a desolate ruin, inhabited only by wild animals.

As to the eschatological, or future, aspect of this portion of the taunt song, Revelation 16 says that in association with the end-time Babylon, there will be a notorious world ruler known as the “Beast.” Revelation 19 says that this evil man will be thrown alive into the Lake of Fire. As these final verses of the taunt song indicate, there will be no honorable burial for this evil ruler of the End Times.

So in Isaiah 14 the downfall of the literal ruler of Babylon was in view - but in verses 12-14 this passage goes beyond the human ruler, and refers to the ***satanic power source*** behind the Babylonian ruler.

The prophecy against the king of Babylon reveals the fall of Satan in the past.

Practical Application

Watch out for pride!

When we consider that ***pride*** led to Satan’s downfall, the warning “Watch out for pride!” is an obvious application from this chapter. “*I will become like the Most High.*”

We must all be aware how vulnerable to pride we are. We need to be on our guard. But we must be aware that others are vulnerable to pride as well. For example, 1 Timothy 3:7 teaches that a new convert should not be recognized as an elder in the church. Why not? “*Lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*”

What was “*the snare of the devil*”? ***Pride*** was the snare that took Satan down!

The lesson is obvious for all of us. **Watch out for pride!**