

Thursday, May 25th, 2023

A Prophecy Against Babylon—Isaiah 13:1–14:23

Open It

1. How would you attempt to survive if America were completely ravaged by war and destruction?
2. What feelings accompany a surprise victory by the underdog team for which you rooted?

Isaiah 13:1–14:23 (ESV)

¹The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

²On a bare hill raise a signal; cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles.

³I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones.

⁴The sound of a tumult is on the mountains as of a great multitude! The sound of an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The LORD of hosts is mustering a host for battle.

⁵They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the LORD and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

⁶Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

⁷Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every human heart will melt.

⁸They will be dismayed: pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame.

⁹Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

¹⁰For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.

¹¹I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

¹²I will make people more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir.

¹³Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

¹⁴And like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land.

¹⁵Whoever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword.

¹⁶Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.

¹⁷Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold.

¹⁸Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children.

¹⁹And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

²⁰It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there.

²¹But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance.

²²Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

¹For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

²And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the LORD's land as male and female slaves. They will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

³When the LORD has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve,

⁴you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: "How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased!

⁵The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers,

⁶that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows, that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution.

⁷The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.

⁸The cypresses rejoice at you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since you were laid low, no woodcutter comes up against us.'

⁹Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations.

¹⁰All of them will answer and say to you: 'You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!'

¹¹Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers.

¹²"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

¹³You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north;

¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

¹⁵But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

¹⁶Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,

¹⁷who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?'

¹⁸All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb;

¹⁹but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot.

²⁰You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. "May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named!

²¹Prepare slaughter for his sons because of the guilt of their fathers, lest they rise and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities."

²²"I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendants and posterity," declares the LORD.

²³"And I will make it a possession of the hedgehog, and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD of hosts.

Explore It

3. What are some of the images Isaiah used to illustrate the power of God to be mustered against Babylon? (13:1–5)
4. How does the prophecy express the terror that will be felt by the Babylonians? (13:6–8)
5. What strange events would signal the day of the Lord (day of judgment)? (13:9–13)
6. What would be the primary reason for God’s judgment of Babylon? (13:11)
7. How did Isaiah describe the helplessness and terror that would pervade Babylon? (13:14–16)
8. How would the Medes’s goals of warfare be distinctly cruel? (13:17–18)
9. What images of desolation contrast with the glory and pride that Babylon experienced at its height? (13:19–22)
10. What pleasant reversals did Isaiah prophesy for the people of Israel? (14:1–2)
11. How did Isaiah say the Israelites would be able to taunt their former oppressors? (14:3–8)
12. How would the spirits of those in the grave greet the spirits of the Babylonians? (14:9–11)
13. How did Isaiah describe Babylon’s opinion of itself before its fall? (14:12–15)
14. What would be hard for other nations to comprehend about the total destruction of Babylon? (14:16–17)
15. What ultimate indignities did God have in store for an arrogant nation? (14:18–23)

Get It

16. Why was it important for God’s people to realize that God saw the haughtiness and cruelty of the Babylonians?
17. In what way is it easier to endure persecution if you have an assurance that the tables will eventually be turned?

Apply It

18. What promise of God can fortify your faith as you think about a difficulty you face this week?