

## August 5

**Scriptures:** Read Isaiah 13-16

**Key Verse:** "...I have purposed, so it shall stand." (Isaiah 14:24)

### Overview

The "burden" of divine judgment that Isaiah proclaimed in chapter 13 and 14 was to be borne by the Babylonians (the Chaldean empire), which later became the most powerful nation. They conquered Assyria and all other nations in the region, including the people of Judah, whom they carried away captive. Although God used them to bring His judgment upon His people, they were very wicked, and Babylon was the centre of evil. Therefore, Isaiah predicted the time of divine punishment against them as well. The amazing thing about this prophecy is that at the time of Isaiah's writing, the strongest nation was Assyria; Babylon was not yet a world power, nor were the Medes, whom Isaiah prophesied would overthrow Babylon (13:17); they were both weak and insignificant nations. The accuracy of Isaiah's prophecies is yet another amazing feature.

The Lord calls the Medes "My sanctified ones... My mighty ones" (13:3), not because they were godly, for, they were heathens; but they are called so because God had consecrated and ordained them to be His instruments to overthrow Babylon (13:17), which they did with the aid of their neighbours, the Persians.

"The day of the Lord" is the time of God's judgment, and here we read a graphic description of the events that will occur when Babylon would be overthrown. Yet there is an eschatological (end-times) element, in that the ancient fall of Babylon typifies the fall of the wicked latter-day Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 17:5). This is especially evident with regard to the phenomena of nature (13:10, 13). At that time, the whole world (all people) will come under God's judgment (13:11; cf. Matt. 24:29). Isaiah predicts the complete and permanent destruction of the beautiful, well fortified city of Babylon, which will experience the Lord's wrath, as did Sodom and Gomorrah (13:19-20). Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled almost two hundred years later in 539 B.C., and since the seventh century A.D. the city has been uninhabited and left in ruins.

In spite of God's displeasure with the people of Judah and their punishment in the Babylonian captivity, the Lord mercifully promised to bring them back from exile and give them rest from sorrow, fear, and bondage (14:3). The Lord provides the same today with the spiritual rest and restoration that is available to all whose souls have been saved through faith in Jesus.

Isaiah's prophecy (14:1) was literally fulfilled, for after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, God moved upon the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, who permitted, and even aided, in the return of the people of Judah to their land, taking with them many servants (14:2; likely conquered and subjected Babylonians, cf. Ezra 1:1-4; 2:1, 64). Isaiah predicts that they will joyously sing a song of celebration about the fall of the wicked king of Babylon, who not only oppressed them but the whole earth as well (14:4-21; cf. Rev. 18:20).

Isaiah illustrates well the result of the haughtiness of the king of Babylon — he died and went to the lowest depths of the pit (hell, 14:9-11,15). He was thrown down because of his pride, like his

father Satan, whom Isaiah describes, since Lucifer was the power behind the king of Babylon (14:12-15). Whatever the Lord purposes will happen, just as He purposed and accomplished the fall of the king of Assyria (14:24-27). When the Philistines saw the downfall of this oppressor, they rejoiced; but Isaiah warns that a greater and more powerful oppressor (Babylon) will arise after the fall of the king of Assyria, and he will bring about their destruction, which will actually be the Lord's doing, since His hand will be stretched out to judge (14:27).

Chapters 15 and 16 deal with Isaiah's lament over the destruction of Moab, which would happen because of their pride (16:6; Jer. 48:11). It would happen within three years of his oracle and be carried out by the large Assyrian nation. The Lord, however, would allow a small and weak remnant of Moabites to remain (16:14), possibly because (1) they were the ancestors of Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:37), (2) they were the people of Ruth, Jesus' ancestor (Matt. 1:5), and (3) they had received David's parents with kindness when they were refugees (1 Sam. 22:3,4). The Lord would desire Judah to show mercy to the Moabite refugees (16:3-4) just as God had shown mercy to them. The throne of David upon which the Messiah Jesus will reign will be established in mercy, truth, justice, and righteousness (16:5). All those who flee to the Lord can be sure that they will be met with His mercy and find a safe place of refuge from the spoiler, extortioner, and oppressor, Satan (Jer. 48:47).

## **Prayer**

Thank You Lord God that the throne established by Messiah Jesus is established in mercy, truth, justice, and righteousness. We come to You asking for mercy and refuge. Thank You also that You promised that You would not turn away those who came to You. Amen.