

The Burden of the Nations

Isaiah Chapters 13-23

A Burden indicates a heavy load – A negative message _ severe message – An unpleasant message of judgment or doom.

For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. (Jer 20:8-9)

And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD. And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God. Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken? But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD; Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence: And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten. (Jer 23:33-40)

The Book of Isaiah

The Burden of Babylon (Pt. 1)

Chapter 13

We have entered another portion of Isaiah, chapters 13-23. This portion of scripture is dealing with the destruction of the nation's in and around God's land, including Jerusalem itself.

The issue has been and always will be the "land" of Israel. While it is true that all the earth is the Lord's. He has chosen a specific place to dwell upon the earth. The "land" chosen from the beginning; it is the land of Eden. This land whose location is west of the garden He planted "in" Eden, the garden being eastward. Time will not permit me to cover all the importance of God choosing this location to dwell but suffice it to say, it is the land promised to Abraham: **"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates"** (Genesis 15:18). It is this "land" that the God of all the earth will sit in the midst of His creation.

The books of the prophets are filled with prophetic references concerning the time when the LORD dwelling on the earth becomes a reality (Isaiah 24:23; Ezek. 43:7, 9; Zech. 2:10, 11, 8:3; Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:7). New Jerusalem itself testifies to this very fact (Rev. 21, 22).

I say all this to underscore why the continual conflict between God and other nations in the "land". In Isaiah chapters 13-23 Isaiah will bring us through various "burdens" concerning the surrounding nations. As we have already noted, history and prophecy are intertwined, historical events even replaying themselves in the future prophetic landscape. However, I will say that the bulk of the material that is given in Isaiah chapters 13 & 14 is prophetic looking at the coming destruction of the nations; nations whose hearts are against Israel.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Babylon (13:1-14:23) | 5. Syria and Israel (17) | 9. Babylon (21:1-10) |
| 2. Assyria (14:24-27) | 6. Ethiopia (18) | 10. Edom (21:11-12) |
| 3. Philistines (14:28-32) | 7. Egypt (19) | 11. Arabia (21:13-17) |
| 4. Moab (15-16) | 8. Egypt and Cush (20) | 12. Jerusalem (22) |
| 13. Tyre (23) | | |

The Destruction of Babylon in Isaiah Ch. 13-14:

Historically: The Fall of Babylon by the Medo-Persian Empire is recorded in the book of Daniel, Isaiah chapters 44-45 and by name here in Isaiah chapter 13:17 as well as scattered throughout the prophets. The account of the events surrounding the fall of Babylon was prophecy at the time Isaiah is writing, however this is history for us. Isaiah will mention Cyrus the Persian by name 150 years before his birth (Isaiah 44:28-45:4) including the prophetic details of how the city of Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian Empire.¹

Prophetically: There are passages of Isaiah that have not transpired in history and therefore await a prophetic fulfillment. It must be noted the phrase “the day of the Lord” is often employed throughout the prophets to refer to the time our Lord comes back to judge the nations and establish His kingdom on earth. Also, the climatic events surrounding the “day of the Lord” as it pertains to the destruction of Babylon tell us that these passages await further fulfillment. Note for example Isaiah chapter 13:6-13, 19-22.

Biblical Babylon:

Babylon comes from the word “babel” meaning confusion (Gen. 11:1-9).

Literal Babylon: Babylon is the head of Gold and first of the world Gentile powers that rule over God’s people Israel. Babylon was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-9). Revelation deals with the destruction of the literal Babylon in the future, giving many details concerning the fall of this “great city”² (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:1-18; 18:1-24).

Mystery Babylon: Babylon is a literal city, and since its inception it has become the source of all false religious systems, giving it the “mystery” aspect and

¹ See Appendix F “the Historical Account of the Fall of Babylon”.

² Great City: 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21; 19:2.

“whore” aspect in Revelation (Rev. 17:5, 15). Pagan Rome is only one of many false religious systems that flow from the fountain head of Babylon. They are all corrupt streams of idolatry from the worship of “Moloch” and “Remphan” and “Chiun” in the wilderness (Acts 7:42; Amos 5:26), to the worship of Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians, and Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites and Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon, which were introduced by Solomon (I Kings 11:5; 2 Kings 23:2). All these religious systems flow from Shinar, Babylon³.

The Assembling of an army (1-6): The Lord is the one “mustering” (vs. 4) a great army. *Historically* it is the Medes (see vs. 17 cf. Jeremiah 51:11-13) and *prophetically* it will be the 10 horns who are 10 kings who unit with the beast (antichrist) to destroy Babylon; for God will put in their hearts to fulfil his will. (See Rev. 17:8-18).

The Day of the Lord, Judgment on the Land (6-13): Not just Babylon is in view but rather the “whole land” (vs. 5). The destruction of the “whole land” will come “as a destruction from the Almighty” (vs. 6 cf. Joel 1:15). The reference to the “destruction from the Almighty” being used here and in Joel is to the battle of Armageddon. The 10 horns or kings of Revelation 17 along with the antichrist, the beast, will destroy Babylon and move to the battle of Armageddon from which the Lord will fight and devour the kings and their antichrist (see Rev. 16:12-14 cf. 19:15-21).

The Destruction from the Almighty (7-13): The climatic events in the heaven and earth are always connected to the return of the Lord. The events will be such a severe nature that men’s hearts will fail them (vs. 7 cf. Luke 21:26-27), they shall be under great direst and stress they will seek even death (vs. 8-9 cf. Rev. 6:13-17). The land itself will be purged by the consuming fire (Zeph. 1:14-18) and cleansed by the angelic armies (Matt. 13:39-42). It is during the gathering of Armageddon, the great battle of Almighty, that the Lord returns to deliver his people. It at the physical return of the Lord that the climatic events begin to transpire in heaven and earth (vs. 10, 13 cf. Isaiah 24: 19-23; 34:5; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:25).

³ See also “The Two Babylons” by [Alexander Hislop](#)

Ruthless in Judgment (14-18): *Historically* the Medes (vs. 17) however, the overthrow of Babylon was recorded as happening with very little resistance. Therefore, this would seem to echo out into the future time when the beast and his kings will come and destroy Babylon (Rev. 19:15-21).

The Zoo of every Unclean Animal and Foul Spirit (19-22): Upon the future destruction of Babylon, it will never be inhabited (vs. 20). It will become a cage of all things unclean (vss. 21-22 cf. Rev. 18:2). Bozrah in the land of Idumea (Edom) will be one of these places as well (Isaiah 34). It would seem in the Millennium there will be places on earth that will forever remind the inhabitants of the earth of the abominations of mankind and the judgments of God (Isaiah 34:9-15; 66:24; Ezek. 47:11; Rev. 14:11; 19:3).



