

## ***Session 5 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 13-14***

### **I. BABYLON: A TYPE OF THE FINAL DAY-OF-THE-LORD JUDGMENT**

- A. Isaiah prophesied the total and final destruction of Babylon and her king (Isa. 13-14).
- B. A type of the day-of-the-Lord judgments are seen in God's historical judgments on Babylon which includes the time when the Assyrian King Sennacherib defeated Babylon in 689 BC and when the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC. However, the total and final destruction of the land (13:1-16) and its people (13:19-20) did not happen under Sennacherib or Cyrus.
- C. ***Historical overview:*** Babylon became the dominant empire in the Middle East (626-539 BC), about a century after Isaiah's ministry (around 740-700 BC). Soon after the death of the last strong Assyrian ruler Assurbanipal (627 BC), a series of civil wars greatly weakened Assyria. In 615 BC, Babylon rebelled against Assyria under Nabopolassar in alliance with the Medes and Persians. They sacked Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 612 BC. Then the seat of empire moved to Babylon. In 626 BC, a new dynasty arose under Nabopolassar. He ruled Babylon for 20 years (626-605 BC).
- D. Outline for Isaiah 13-14
- 13:1-16 The day-of-the-Lord judgments
  - 13:17-22 The total and final destruction of Babylon
  - 14:1-2 The end-time restoration of Israel
  - 14:3-23 A proverb against the king of Babylon
  - 14:24-27 God's judgment of Assyria
  - 14:28-32 God's judgment of Philistia.
- E. Various views of commentators on the context of the judgment on Babylon described in Isaiah 13.
1. When Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III defeated Babylon in 729 BC
  2. When Merodach-baladan usurped the Babylonian throne in 721 BC and reigned as king of Babylon 721-710 BC and for about one year in 703 BC
  3. When Assyria King Sargon II took back control of Babylon in 710 BC. Sargon marched against Babylon in 710. Merodach-baladan fled, and the Babylon submitted to Sargon. After Sargon's death in 705 BC, Merodach-baladan sent an embassy to Hezekiah seeking to persuade him to join an alliance to resist the new Assyrian King Sennacherib.
  4. When Sennacherib defeated Babylon in 689 BC
  5. When Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC

## II. THE DAY-OF-THE-LORD JUDGMENTS (ISA. 13:1-16)

- A. Isaiah prophesied of the final day-of-the-Lord judgments on Babylon in 13:1-23. There are other biblical oracles about the final day-of-the-Lord judgments on Babylon (Jer. 50-51; Rev. 16-18).
- B. The final day of the Lord affects the whole world (13:11), resulting in the death of many people (13:12; Rev. 6:8; 9:15) and includes the shaking the heaven and earth (13:10, 13; 24:18; 34:4; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15-16; Zech. 14:6-7; Hag. 2:6-7, 21-22; Mt. 24:19; Rev. 6:12; 8:5, 12; 11:13, 19; 16:18).
- C. The apostle John connected the judgment of Babylon described here to what will happen in the Great Tribulation (Rev 6-19). The final day of the Lord is also the theme of Isaiah 24-27. The military forces that will fight and the nations who are defeated are not identified in 13:1-16 since this passage can be seen as having a partial fulfillment at various points in history. However, the emphasis in Isaiah 13 is the final day of the Lord as seen in the Great Tribulation (Rev. 6-19).
- D. God will defeat His enemies on every “day of the Lord” in history. The defeat of the wicked kingdoms will be accomplished on the day of the Lord for various nations. Although human armies attack the nation under judgment, it is God who is punishing His enemies (13:9, 13).
1. Amos 5:20-21 predicted a day-of-the-Lord judgment on Israel—it occurred when Assyria attacked the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC.
  2. Zephaniah 1:14-18 described a day-of-the-Lord judgment for Judah—it occurred when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC.
  3. The final day of the Lord will take place when the Lord defeats all of His enemies and sets up His glorious millennial kingdom.
- E. Some passages on the day of the Lord include a historical destruction of a nation in the near future (Israel and Judah), while giving a picture of a distant and final day of the Lord (13:1-16; 24:1-23).

*<sup>4</sup>A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together...<sup>6</sup>Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand!...<sup>9</sup>The day of the LORD comes...He will destroy its sinners...<sup>10</sup>For the stars of heaven...will not give their light; the sun will be darkened...<sup>11</sup>“I will punish the world for its evil...<sup>12</sup>I will make a mortal more rare than gold...<sup>13</sup>I will shake the heavens and the earth...” (Isa. 13:4-13)*

- F. The Lord will summon various armies across the earth as instruments of His judgment (13:2-3). He describes the noise that occurs when a multitude of soldiers arrive to the battle scene (13:4-5).

*<sup>1</sup>The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. <sup>2</sup>“Lift up a banner on the high mountain, raise your voice to them; wave your hand...<sup>3</sup>I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger...”<sup>4</sup>The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters the army for battle. <sup>5</sup>They come from a far country, from the end of heaven—the LORD and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land. (Isa. 13:1-5)*

1. **Banner:** Raising a flag on a high mountain speaks of gaining visibility to rally many others.
  2. **My sanctified ones:** This does not refer to the character of the soldiers, but to their call to be used by the Lord as His instrument of judgment.
  3. **Kingdoms of nations:** Ten kings in alliance with the Antichrist will destroy Babylon.  
*<sup>16</sup>The ten horns [kings] which you saw on the beast [Antichrist], these will hate the harlot [Babylon], make her desolate...and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup>For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose...to give their kingdom to the beast...<sup>18</sup>And the woman [Babylon]... is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:16-18)*
- G. The people will experience melting hearts, terror, anguish, pain, shock, and feeling numb with limp hands, with sense of helplessness and lacking strength to act in response (13:6-8).  
*<sup>6</sup>Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty...  
<sup>7</sup>All hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, <sup>8</sup>and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth... (Isa. 13:6-8)*
- H. The purpose and worldwide nature of the day-of-the-Lord judgments (13:9-13): These verses picture the horrors of war resulting from the Lord lifting His restraints off wicked people. The anguish will be far worse than anyone can imagine. Isaiah again described this day of the Lord (24:1-6).  
*<sup>9</sup>Behold, the day of the LORD comes...with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. <sup>10</sup>For the stars of heaven...will not give their light; the sun will be darkened...<sup>11</sup>"I will punish the world for its evil...I will halt the arrogance of the proud..." <sup>12</sup>I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold... <sup>13</sup>I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place...in the day of His fierce anger... (Isa. 13:9-13)*  
*<sup>1</sup>Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty...distorts its surface and scatters...its inhabitants...  
<sup>3</sup>The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered...<sup>5</sup>The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws...<sup>6</sup>Therefore the curse has devoured the earth...therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:1-6)*  
*<sup>4</sup>...And it [red horse] was granted...to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword...<sup>8</sup>Behold, a pale horse...power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger...and by the beasts of the earth. (Rev. 6:4-8)*
- I. Isaiah applied the day-of-the-Lord principles to the judgment of Babylon in ancient times and at the end of the age (13:17-22). The Medes were united to the Persians in conquering Babylon (539 BC).  
*<sup>17</sup>"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them [Babylon]...<sup>18</sup>Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces...<sup>19</sup>And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms...will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>20</sup>It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation... (Isa. 13:17-20)*

- J. Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that the city of Babylon would be totally and permanently desolate and without inhabitants (Isa. 13:19-20; Jer. 50:3-4, 13, 23-24, 45-46; 51:29, 37, 41, 49, 64). This was not completely fulfilled in history as it will be in the generation that the Lord returns.
- <sup>3</sup>...*which shall make [Babylon] her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein...*<sup>4</sup>*In those days ...The children of Israel...with continual weeping they shall come, and seek the LORD their God.* (Jer. 50:3-4)
- <sup>37</sup>*Babylon shall become a heap...without an inhabitant...*<sup>41</sup>*How Babylon has become desolate among the nations!...*<sup>49</sup>*at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall.* (Jer. 51:37-49)
- K. When the Persians conquered the city of Babylon in 539 BC, they did not totally destroy the city as Jeremiah and Isaiah prophesied. This lack of fulfillment is used by critics to claim that Bible prophecy is not accurate. Babylon grew weaker slowly through the centuries. About 200 years after Babylon was conquered, Alexander the Great selected it to be his capital city. There is strong historical evidence of people living in Babylon even 1,000 years after Christ. The site of ancient Babylon is known today. People live there today—Hillah, has a population of over 5,000 people.
- L. John described the city of Babylon in the end times (Rev. 17-18). Babylon will be rebuilt similar to Jerusalem. Zechariah 5 gives us significant insights into the rebuilt city of Babylon in the end times.

### III. THE END-TIME RESTORATION OF ISRAEL (ISA. 14:1-2)

- A. Isaiah described the end-time salvation of Israel along with their evangelistic zeal to win Gentiles to honor and serve the God of Israel (14:1-3). This speaks of Israel's end-time restoration, describing something far more glorious than the return of the Jewish people from Babylonian captivity under the leadership of Zerubbabel in 536 BC (as seen in Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah).
- <sup>1</sup>*For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers [Gentiles] will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.*  
<sup>2</sup>*Then...the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD...* (Isa. 14:1-2)
- B. **Gratitude:** Some Gentiles who “cling to Israel” may be invited to move to Israel on the condition that they will serve God's purpose for Israel. The newly-established unity in Israel will be served by foreigners who are grateful to be allowed to move there. It is possible that serving Israel will be “litmus test” for those who desperately want to live there; thus, they gladly accept menial tasks.

### IV. A PROVERB AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON (ISA. 14:3-23)

- A. After Isaiah prophesied of the judgment of Babylon (13:17-22), he next described the judgment of Babylon's king (14:4-23).
- <sup>3</sup>*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,*<sup>4</sup>*that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!”* (Isa. 14:3-4)

- B. After Israel is restored to the Lord and resting in the land, then she will take up “this proverb against the king of Babylon” (14:3-4).
- C. The setting for this lament depends on which king is described and whether the lament refers to an ancient or future king of Babylon, or both. No king of the Babylon nor Assyrian kings in Isaiah’s day fits this description. Commentators do not agree on the historical figure who fulfills the details of this passage. Each paragraph includes words that people will say about this king (14:8b, 10-11, 13-14, 16, 22-23).
- D. The death of the king who oppressed Israel and the nations (14:4-8): Who is this oppressor in the end times when Israel is saved and when the earth is at rest? One of the Antichrist’s roles will be as the king of Babylon. He is the wicked one (14:5) who struck Israel and the nations with a continual stroke (14:6) and who ruled the nations with anger and of whom the earth sings at his defeat (14:7).
- ...say: “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! <sup>5</sup>The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked...<sup>6</sup>he who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger...<sup>7</sup>The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing. (Isa. 14:4-7)*

**V. ISAIAH PROPHECIES THE FATE OF THE ANTICHRIST (ISA. 14:9-20)**

- A. The king of Babylon (Isa. 14:9-20) is a personification of the Antichrist and Satan. Ezekiel 28 prophesying of the king of Tyre has parallels to 14:9-20. The story of Satan and the Antichrist is told in these kings with very limited fulfillment related to ancient kings. The king of Babylon is a type of the Antichrist, and the Antichrist will be king over Babylon in the end times.
- B. There is astonishment in hell when the Antichrist descends there under God’s judgment (14:9-11). Its purpose here was to show the Israelite audience the foolishness of trusting such a king who is destined for judgment and weakness.
- <sup>9</sup>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...<sup>10</sup>They all shall speak and say to you: ‘Have you also become as weak as we?...’<sup>11</sup>Your pomp is brought down to Sheol [hell]...the maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you. (Isa. 14:9-11)*
- C. This fallen king is identified as Lucifer. This is a double reference to Satan’s fall reflected in the Antichrist’s fall. The Latin Vulgate used the word *Lucifer* to translate “the daystar” or “morning light.” Lucifer is applied to Satan since Jesus described him as falling from heaven like lightning (Lk 10:18; Rev. 12:8-9). The daystar is a title for Jesus—the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16).
- <sup>12</sup>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! <sup>13</sup>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...”<sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” (Isa. 14:12-14)*
- <sup>3</sup>...the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed...<sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God...so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)*

- D. The humiliation of the Antichrist includes not receiving any honor after his death (14:15-21). The scene of this proverb returns to earth where the unburied corpse of the king is dishonored.
- <sup>15</sup>Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol...<sup>16</sup>Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: “Is this the man who made the earth tremble...<sup>17</sup>who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities...?”<sup>18</sup>All the kings of the nations...sleep in glory, everyone in his own house; <sup>19</sup>but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch...<sup>20</sup>You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. (Isa. 14:15-20)*
- E. Ezekiel prophesied of the king of Tyre with several significant similarities to Isaiah 14:9-20.
- <sup>2</sup>Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre...“Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods’...yet you are a man...<sup>12</sup>You were the seal of perfection...<sup>13</sup>You were in Eden, the garden of God... The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.<sup>14</sup>You were the anointed cherub who covers... you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. (Ezek. 28:2-14)*
- <sup>15</sup>You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you...<sup>16</sup>You became filled with violence...and you sinned; Therefore I cast you...out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub...<sup>17</sup>Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty ...I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. <sup>18</sup>... I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. <sup>19</sup>All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever. (Ezek. 28:15-19)*
- F. God’s judgment of the brood of evil leaders who served under this oppressive king (14:20-23): This had a partial fulfillment in ancient history with its ultimate fulfillment related to the Antichrist.
- <sup>20</sup>...because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named.<sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>“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. <sup>23</sup>“...I will sweep it with the broom of destruction...” (Isa. 14:20-23)*
- <sup>19</sup>And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies...to make war against Him...<sup>20</sup>Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet...These two were cast alive into the lake of fire...<sup>21</sup>The rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from...Him... (Rev. 19:19-21)*
- G. God’s judgment on Assyria (14:24-27)
- <sup>24</sup>The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, “Surely...as I have purposed, so it shall stand: <sup>25</sup>that I will break the Assyrian in My land and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders. <sup>26</sup>This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.” (Isa. 14:24-26)*