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Isaiah 13

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Isaiah 13.

Topics.

- God is mustering a host for battle from heaven to destroy the land.
- The day of the LORD is near as destruction from the Almighty.
- The day of the LORD comes with wrath to destroy sinners.
- I will punish the world for its evil and make mankind rarer than gold.
- The LORD is stirring up the Medes whose bows will slaughter men.
- Babylon, the glory of kingdoms will be utterly destroyed.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12).

The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it:

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application: of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

ISAIAH 13:1-5

God is Mustering a Host from Heaven to Destroy the Land.

- **Isaiah 13:1-5:** The 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.

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Before preceding it helps to know that verse seventeen shows the focus of this chapter is upon the Medes conquering Babylon. The word oracle (burden in the KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*massa'*) in this context it carries the idea of a prophecy of burden and an utterance of doom about to come upon the Empire of Babylon.

Cry aloud to them: (v2) refers to the Medes (v17).

Wave the hand for them to enter: (v2) refers to Babylon (v19).

My consecrated ones: (v3) refers to the Medes (v17).

The sound of an uproar of kingdoms of nations: (v4) refers to the Medes and their armies (v17).

To destroy the whole land: (v5) refers to the Babylonian Empire (v19).

They come from the end of the heavens: (v5) refers to the Medes they are spoken of as coming from the ends of heaven because they are fulfilling the judgment and purposes of God.

The weapons of the LORD'S indignation: (v5) refer to God using the armies of the Medes to destroy Babylon.

In this vision: Isaiah sees the LORD commanding the king of the Medes and their armies who He calls His consecrated and mighty ones to prepare themselves to enter the royal gates of Babylon and execute His judgment on the proud and self-exalting king of Babylon and His Kingdom.

NOTICE: the LORD calls the Medes His consecrated ones and His mighty men, and calls Babylon His exalting ones (v3). This is because the nations before God are like jars of clay before a master potter. In the same way the potter moulds the clay according to his will God moulds the nations and uses them according to His sovereign will and according to His judgments, plan and purposes. Here God is using the Medes as His mighty men that He is gathering together to execute His anger on Babylon, because of the cruel and oppressive way they have treated God's people while in captivity.

ISAIAH 13:6-8

The Day of the LORD is Near as Destruction from the Almighty.

- **Isaiah 13:6-8:** Wail, 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 (Babylon)_(v19) 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.

The expression, "the day of the LORD," in this context refers to the day the LORD gathers His mighty men the Medes to utterly destroy Babylon the glory of all kingdoms and make Babylon's land a complete waste. Here the inhabitants of Babylon are called to wail because God is about to bring the mighty armies of the Medes against them and give them triumphant victory over Babylon.

Destruction from the Almighty will come: (v6) secular nations on earth watching the armies of the Medes invade Babylon and conquer the nation would simply view it as the stronger army defeating the weaker nation, but from heavens viewpoint it is spoken of as, "destruction from the Almighty," because the Medes are carrying out the sovereign will of God.

They will be in anguish like a woman in labour: (v8) means all the inhabitants of Babylon will be struck with fear and terror when they see the armies of the Medes marching toward them.

ISAIAH 13:9-10

The Day of the LORD comes with Wrath to Destroy Sinners.

- **Isaiah 13:9-10:** Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation (Babylon) (v19) 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.

The stars of the heavens: symbolize those who are in great positions of authority and who have a great influence over a multitude of people in the context it of these verses it refers to the king of Babylon and the royal house.

Their constellations: refer to the princes and nobles and the priests, idols and gods of Babylon.

The sun and the moon will not give their light: means that day and night the people of Babylon will be full of great grief sorrow and mourning. Isaiah is using biblical lofty language to highlight the enormity of the destruction and horror of this battle between Babylon and the Medes.

ISAIAH 13:11-13

I will Punish the World and make Mankind Rarer than Gold.

- **Isaiah 13:11-13:** I 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.

I will punish the world: (v11) the world here firstly applies to the world of Babylon, but all that is said of Babylon can by extension be applied to the world as a whole. The following verses show that God used Cyrus as His anointed shepherd to bring His judgment upon Babylon:

- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped*, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, *who call you (Cyrus) by your name*. ⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, *I call you by your name, I name you*, though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me*, ⁶that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).
- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: '*Surely God is in you*, and there is no other, no god besides him.'" (Isaiah 45:14).

God not only favoured Cyrus and gave him a great victory over the mighty Empire of Babylon and all nations aligned with Babylon, but also used him as His anointed shepherd to deliver His people Israel from the bondage of Babylon to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. In the same way God used Cyrus as His anointed shepherd the Lord Jesus Christ God's eternal anointed Shepherd will also bring God's judgment on the world and deliver His people from it to himself when he returns in glory.

The heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place: this battle is so great, the fear so intense, the destruction so enormous and the hundreds of thousands of human bodies that are left on the surface of the earth for birds to feast on is so vast that the only way to describe the alarm, panic, terror, horror and magnitude of the battle and the widespread destruction of the land and its cities is to say, the heavens trembled, and the earth shook out of its place. Isaiah is using biblical lofty language to convey to the reader the magnitude and enormity of the awful events and the overwhelming killing, bloodshed and incalculable and gigantic number of deaths that will take place on this horrific day.

ISAIAH 13:14-18

The LORD is Stirring up the Medes whose Bows will Slaughter Men.

- **Isaiah 13:14-18:** And 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.

Babylon is pictured as a gazelle being hunted and like sheep with no one to protect or help them. The armies of the Medes are so fierce that even those who are wounded and fall in the battle will be thrust through with the sword. This is a bloodthirsty merciless battle not only are soldiers of war killed, but those living in the city, the villages and countryside of Babylon are slaughtered such is the horrors of war.

ISAIAH 13:19-22

Babylon, the Glory of Kingdoms will be Utterly Destroyed.

- **Isaiah 13:19-22:** And 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.

Throughout the Bible Babylon is seen symbolically as a type of the world with its pride; its oppressive financial system of interest; its excessive materialistic wealth; its system of paying pitiful wages to the poor to increase the profits of the rich; its wars; immorality; violence and lack of caring for the poor and needy.

The following verses show that Babylon is used symbolically to portray the global world system.

- A second angel followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.” (Rev. 14:8) (Rev. 18:2).
- On her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.” (Rev. 17:5).
- She (Babylon) glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' (Rev. 18:7).
- Kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her (Babylon), will weep over her when they see the smoke of her burning. (Rev. 18:9).
- The merchants of the earth will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.” (Rev. 18:10).
- They threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city (Babylon) where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.” (Rev. 18:19).
- A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more.” (Rev. 18:21).

Babylon is pictured as a system of deception; sexual immorality; indulgent luxurious living; prideful boasting and self-exaltation; merchants that grow enormously rich through global trade on land and sea and believes it-self to be so strong and secure it will never be found mourning. But in one hour (i.e., very quickly) this vast global system will collapse and nations, kings, businessmen, governments and even some churches and religious organisations who have used the system of the world to obtain excessive riches will weep when it collapses and is laid waste.

The Babylonians were money-lenders not only out of dedicated policy but with fervour, zest, and relish. One of their proverbs expresses this outlook very clearly in the following words, "The giving of a loan is like making love; the returning of a loan is like having a son born." They were a breed of happy, proud, heartless and ruthless moneylenders. Their whole world of business moved in terms of credit financing, and their whole concept of social control and of imperialism rested on usury (interest). It is not surprising that Babylon the Great, the harlot, is the type in Revelation of our global money system and of a one-world order that seduces all nations. The use of loans in biblical economy is not the basis of normal operation as with Babylon, but of abnormal circumstances. As such, and only as such, they have their place, but they operate in terms of absolute understanding as well as clear, definite and obvious restrictions. The two kinds of loans in the Bible that were recognized were:

- Loans to the believer without usury, but with security.
- Loans to the unbeliever, with usury and security.

In both instances the security is something real, it is a tangible asset, in goods or in money that is transferred and involves only the two parties involved in the contract. Modern banking however, is radically different. Banks create money by an official authorization and by one party simply recording a loan and a deposit on their books. The consequence is, not the personal and limited action of a biblical loan, but inflation, the decreasing of the prior relationship of money value to total goods and services. As a result, there is a decreasing of all money, and such loans mean an element of robbery in that they reduce the value of all other money previously in existence. Modern central banking (i.e. the Federal Reserve System) is modern applications of the old Babylonian principles and is equally seductive in helping to bring about the lure of the Dream of Empire.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Prior to the introduction of central banking, the ability to create money by an official authorization was relatively limited, and it depended in large measure on the confidence of the individuals in the local bank. Today, the instrument of control has passed to the Federal Reserve System, its directors and stockholders, the Treasury Department, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and other agencies who are engaged in manipulating the money supply. Biblical law is hostile to a money system that is based on credit, because it creates an abnormal and oppressive lifestyle of debt for a country or individual who lives by it. The Babylonian system of economics today is anti-biblical and as such will incur the wrath of God. In the book of Revelation chapter eighteen we are told that a day is coming when the merchants of the earth that have grown rich from the power of Babylon's luxurious living will weep and mourn over Babylon since no one buys her gold, silver, jewels, pearls and fine linen anymore because, Babylon the Great is fallen (Revelation 18).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
