

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THEME:

Burden of Babylon—destruction in the Day of the Lord, and in the immediate future.

REMARKS:

Isaiah chapters 13 through 23 contain burdens (judgments) on nine surrounding nations. All of these nations had some contact with Israel and most of them were contiguous to her borders. Israel suffered at the hands of some of them and will suffer again in the future.

While this section, for the most part, is yet future; nevertheless, the chief characteristic is that much has been fulfilled and stands today as an evidence of fulfilled prophecy. All of this adds singular interest and importance to these eleven chapters. The Assyrian is no longer the oppressor; those of other nations take his place.

A burden is a judgment. It was not pleasant to the prophet to deliver the message, for it made him the unpopular bearer of “bad news,” and his message a burden to the nation for which it was intended, as it was heavy to bear.

Babylon, as the subject of the first burden, is suggestive of many things to the reverent student of Scripture. First of all, the literal city of Babylon is the primary consideration. This is indeed remarkable, as Babylon, in Isaiah’s day, was an insignificant place. It was not until a century later that Babylon became a world power. God pronounced judgment upon Babylon before it became a nation.

It is also well to note that this new section does not end with the burden on nine surrounding nations but extends through six woes in chapters 28 through 33, and concludes with the calm and blessing after the storm in chapters 34 through 35.

OUTLINE:

1. **The PUNISHMENT of BABYLON in the Day of the Lord** (The Great Tribulation). Verses 1-16
2. **The DESTRUCTION of BABYLON in the Day of Man** (Ancient History Fulfilled). Verses 17-22

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see** (See REMARKS for further comment).

The literal city of Babylon in history is in view in this chapter and chapter 14. The future city of Babylon as it will be rebuilt is likewise under consideration. Also Babylon, as the symbol of united rebellion against God, is before us. The Tower of Babel is where it began and the end is before us in Psalm 2.

Verse 3—**I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.**

“**Sanctified**” here means “*set apart*” for a specific use by some agency. The food mentioned in I Timothy 4:4, 5 is not different or changed. It has no reference to any holy character of that which is sanctified. God will use the Babylonians as He did the Assyrians as instruments for punishing His people. (See Habakkuk 1:6-11).

Verse 4—**The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.**

This verse offers a satisfactory explanation of “**sanctified ones.**” Babylon will come against the Southern kingdom of Judah as Assyria did against the ten Northern tribes of Israel.

Verse 5—**They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, I even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.**

The Babylonians will likewise be the rod of God’s indignation.

Verse 6—**Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.**

This prophecy looks beyond anything that now is in history and is projected into “**The Day of the Lord.**” The Great Tribulation is the reference.

Verse 7—**Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt:**

Verse 8—**And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.**

Verses 9—**Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.**

The Great Tribulation is spoken of as a time of travail with men in travail. The Day of the Lord opens with this time of travail.

Verse 10—For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

See Matthew 24:29; Revelation 8:12.

Verse 11—And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

The Great Tribulation is worldwide, though centered in Palestine.

Verse 12—I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Verse 13—Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Verse 14—And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

Verse 15—Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.

Verse 16—Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

Although it is a time of worldwide destruction when no flesh would survive, yet God will preserve a remnant to Himself.

Verse 17—Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.

Here the prophet reverts to that which was in the immediate future, he identifies those who will destroy Babylon—“**the Medes.**”

Verse 18—Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

See Daniel 5 for the fulfillment of this prophecy—“**And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old**” (Daniel 5:31).

Verse 19—**And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.**

This has been fulfilled.

Verse 20—**It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.**

How can Babylon be destroyed and yet appear in the last days as a literal city again? Already the ancient site of ancient Babylon is seven to nine miles from the Euphrates River. The river has shifted that much. The ancient site will never be rebuilt but Babylon will be rebuilt on another site.

Verse 21—**But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.**

Verse 22—**And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.**

This has literally been fulfilled. “**Satyrs**” means demons. Babylon was the headquarters for idolatry in the ancient world. Apparently demons have this spot as a rallying place.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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