

## Babylon (Isaiah 13:1–14:24)

### Part One: Sovereign Plans

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#### Introduction

A pattern used by prophetic writers in addressing their immediate situation and also speaking of future events is the near/far prophetic narrative.

1. The Babylonian Empire under King Nebuchadnezzar was the agent of God to punish Israel for her constant rebellion and disobedience to God's revealed purpose for her (Deuteronomy 29:27–29).
2. In turn, although Babylon served as God's instrument to punish of Israel, that kingdom was also judged for its treatment of Israel (Jeremiah 25:8–14).
3. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was to be utterly and permanently destroyed, never to be inhabited again (see Isaiah 13:19–22); however, there is another "Babylon" to play a prominent role in the future last days (Revelation 17:3–6; 1 Peter 5:12, 13).
  - a. We must not interpret these latter-day references to suggest that the ancient city of the Babylonian empire will be restored. Saddam Hussein of Iraq tried that, but we know what happened to him.
  - b. It is best to see the reference to Babylon not as a literal city but as a spiritual and politico/economic mimic of the ancient city. God will also use this last-days Babylon to punish the world (13:11), which He will then likewise destroy.
4. The chapters before us outline five powerful truths that interpret the events around us and help us wade through the myriad of contradicting eschatological clamor vying to convince believers of a particular view. History does repeat itself.
  - a. Everything is orchestrated by the Sovereign Lord: what is He doing (Isaiah 14:24)?
  - b. What part does Israel's stubborn defiance of God play in His ultimate intentions? Why so pridefully defiant (Isaiah 9:8–10)?
  - c. What characterizes Babylon—the "name" (Isaiah 14:22)?
  - d. Who was the real power behind the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:12–21)?
  - e. What are the similarities between this ancient judgment on Israel and the "day of the Lord" at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 13:9, 11)?

#### I. Restoring the Mountain

1. God's plan is to rescue a fallen people and a corrupted earth from the usurper by restoring the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 25:6–9)
2. This plan seems to be hindered by Israel's covenant failure:
  - a. A powerful indictment of God's chosen nation for her rebellion (Chapters 1–5)
  - b. A remnant rescued in the person of Isaiah (as a pattern), graciously taken, his eyes opened, his sin cleansed, his heart changed, and his service enlisted (Chapter 6)

- c. God's purpose made certain, establishing His kingdom through Immanuel, David's true heir (Chapters 7–12)
- d. God's wrath declared in a series of visions revealing the judgment of the nations, including Judah, her Babylonian Captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem (Chapters 13–27)

## II. Using A Remnant

The Bible consistently demonstrates that in every dark period of history—in times of apostasy when it seemed that truth and those who represented it had vanished away—God raised up a remnant, chosen and equipped by Him to stand in the gap.

1. The holy remnant identified—the mark of the servants of God:
  - a. They keep the Great Commandment (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 22:37).
    - 1) They are chosen of Him (Deuteronomy 7:6; Ephesians 1:3, 4) and possess a *circumcised heart*—regeneration (Deuteronomy 10:12–17; 30:6; Colossians 2:11–15).
    - 2) This remnant is distinguished by single-hearted devotion to Christ, keeping His charge, obeying His commandments, and serving Him faithfully (Deuteronomy 11:1, 13, 22).
  - b. They resemble the Savior in the world because of their holiness of life (purity) as outlined in the instruction (*Torah*) of God (Leviticus 20:7, 26; 1 Peter 1:14–16).
  - c. They are spiritually awake and discerning, separated from Babylon in every area of life.
    - 1) When the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, they allowed the Jews of the captivity to return to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23).
    - 2) Only a few returned because, in their 70-year captivity, they had become true Babylonians. Of those who did return, Babylon remained in them, for the most part (Haggai 1:4–7).
    - 3) Sadly, most “Christians” have also never truly left the world—modern Babylon (1 John 2:15–17; James 4:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 6:14–18; Revelation 18:4).
  - d. They persevere in all circumstances, being faithful unto death (Revelation 2:8–11).
2. The task of the remnant
  - a. Worshiping the Lord in His temple, which is His body, in sincerity and truth (John 4:23, 24; Ephesians 2:16–22)
  - b. Representing the Savior and the truth in the world (Ephesians 5:1–20)
  - c. Standing as His spiritual army in conflict of the ages (Ephesians 6:10–18; Revelation 3:14–22)