

## Isaiah Lesson 13

Isaiah Chapter 13

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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**Introduction:** In last week's lesson, we covered the spiritual condition in which will prevail during the millennial reign of Christ and how the people and their worship of God will be in "in that day."

Chapter 13 begins describing the burden of Babylon. The thought is of the weight of the charges to be brought by God, in this case, against Babylon. The chapter is about God's warning of judgment against Babylon. In the middle of the chapter, there is another fore view of the Day of the Lord regarding the Tribulation.

### I. The Judgment of Babylon

*Isa 13:1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.*

The vision of the burden of Babylon that Isaiah saw. This is the first of nine times that Isaiah speaks of the 'burden' of a neighboring gentile nation. As noted above, the thought is a warning of the impending judgment of God, in this case against Babylon.

This is the first mention of Babylon in the prophets. Though the prophecy to follow against Babylon certainly had historic fulfillment, portions of it are still unfulfilled, giving it eschatological implication. Babylon was certainly a historic city and place. It also has prophetic implications during the Day of the Lord as noted in Revelation 14-18.

*Isa 13:2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.*

*Isa 13:3 I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.*

*Isa 13:4 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.*

*Isa 13:5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.*

The prophet proceeds to pronounce ‘the burden of Babylon.’ The thought is singular. A battle flag would be raised upon a mountain in the east, perhaps in Media or Persia, which would signal the impending destruction of Babylon. God would raise up a powerful military force from the mountains to the northeast of Babylon (Media and Persia) which would attack Babylon and prevail over it.

That is exactly what happened during the reign of Belshazzar in Babylon when Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall. See Daniel 5. The Medes and the Persians swept down out of the north and conquered Babylon, beginning what came to be known as the Persian Empire. Though God would use Babylon to chastise Judah, Babylon itself would be chastened by God for its arrogance and wickedness.

*Isa 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*

*Isa 13:7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:*

*Isa 13:8 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.*

At this point, Isaiah seems to shift to what we understand to be end-time events. Verses 6-16 of this chapter describes the events during the Tribulation in Israel. In both verses 6 and 9, the events described are connected to the Day of the Lord. The initial phase begins with the Tribulation. Though the term the Day of the Lord in some cases may refer to God’s judgment apart from end time events, the context seems quite clear that the prophecy here is eschatological.

*Isa 13:9 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.*

*Isa 13:10 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.*

*Isa 13:11 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.*

In verses 10 and 11, mention is made of catastrophic events in the heavens as well as punishment upon the entire world. That has not yet happened but will during the Tribulation. The idea inherent in the phrase ‘Howl ye’ is to ‘wail’ in despair. The reason was that the judgment of God in the Day of the Lord was at hand. It will be destruction from God.

In that day, fear will prevail upon mankind as the wrath of God is unleashed against a wicked world. Desperation in that day will be likened to the pain of a woman in labor. Sinful mankind will be stunned as the world they take for granted comes crashing down upon them. Their faces in that day will have the distress of fire upon them.

The Day of the Lord is described as a time of cruelty as the wrath and fierce anger of God is poured out upon the earth. Much of the earth's population will be destroyed in that day. Revelation chapters 6-9 indicates that in the first half of the great Tribulation, one half of the earth's population will perish. In fact, if God did not intervene and change the length of the days, mankind (Israel in particular) would perish in that day.

*Mat 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

*Mat 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

The word translated as land (Ura erez) often refers to the land of Israel, but it may also refer to the earth itself. During the Tribulation, sinners in both Israel as well as the entire world will be destroyed. Lest there be any question to when this prophecy pertains, verse 10 makes clear it is eschatological.

Never in recorded history have the stellar heavens been darkened. Yet, there are many prophecies of this taking place during the Tribulation. See Joel 2:31, Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24, Revelation 6:12-14, and Revelation 8:12.

*Rev 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*

*Rev 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

*Rev 6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*

If there is one thing which the world takes for granted, it is the regularity of the sun rising in the morning, the stars coming out at night, and the predictable cycles of the moon. During the Tribulation, the very foundations of day and night, the measurement of time, and the calendar will 'crash.'

God, through the prophet, announced that He will punish the entire world. That has never yet happened, but it will take place during the Day of the Lord. The

arrogance of proud and sinful men will be eliminated and pomp of those in places of power will be cut down like grass. The pride and arrogance of the world's elite will be abolished in that day.

## **II. Man Will Become More Precious than Gold**

*Isa 13:12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*

*Isa 13:13 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.*

*Isa 13:14 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.*

*Isa 13:15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.*

*Isa 13:16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.*

Though the context to this point has been of judgment upon a wicked world during the Tribulation, there are hints in this following section of the focus of judgment turning to Israel.

*“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.”*

The thought is that by the end of the Tribulation, the time would come when a man will be more valuable than the most expensive gold. The idea is of scarcity. Implicit is a decimation of humanity—particularly of men. However, there are hints in Isaiah 4:1 that towards the end of the Tribulation that there will be a scarcity of males in Israel after the terrible warfare. Eventually, the world will suffer the same fate by the end of the Tribulation.

*Isa 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.*

God will shake the heavens, and the earth will no longer be as it has been since God created it. The same thought was found essentially in Isaiah 2:21. Various prophecies regarding the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord are filled with warning of incomprehensible earthquakes.

The text here makes it clear that this is a direct result of God's anger. Implicit is that the violence of the shaking of the earth and the heavens will be such that the

earth is removed from its customary place in its orbit around the sun. This would help explain some of the cataclysmic events described throughout the book of Revelation.

With the description of great heavenly bodies crashing down upon the earth found in Revelation 8, it is conceivable that God uses one of these to knock the earth out of its very orbit. Notice also that it is not only the earth which is removed from its place, but the heavens as well. Catastrophic, cataclysmic events will take place in that day affecting the very order of the solar system as we know it now. The situation of the planet in that day is further described in verse 14. The thought here is that of fright. A chased deer is terrified as the wolves pursue it. A sheep left alone becomes frightened. This will be the case for those upon the earth during the Tribulation. Wicked men will learn to fear God the hard way in that day.

While all the catastrophic events are taking place, men will seek for the security of their home, if it still remains. However, there will be a complete collapse of societal order in that day. The thought in verse 15 seems to parallel that of Revelation 6:4 with the opening of the second seal. Implicit is a complete breakdown of civil order. Neighbors will kill neighbors and even relatives. The same horror is implicit in Ezekiel 38:21. Murder will become common as people steal whatever they can to survive.

*Eze 38:21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother.*

Unbridled violence will be the rule. Civilization will cease as people steal, rob, murder and do whatever to find food and necessities to survive. If that is not terrifying enough, "their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished." There seems to be a parallel here to that of Zechariah 14:2 which speaks of the horrors in Jerusalem in the latter days of the Tribulation.

In addition to murder and violence, rape of women, small children will be smashed to death before the eyes of parents. This evidently will take place in Jerusalem during the latter days of the Tribulation. Implicit in the text here is the fact that if this behavior hasn't yet begun worldwide, it soon will. What a terrible time that will be!

*Isa 13:17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.*

*Isa 13:18 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.*

*Isa 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees'*

*excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

The focus of the prophecy now shifts back against Babylon as introduced at the beginning of the chapter. God would bring tremendous judgment against Babylon. The fulfillment of this prophecy was more than 150 years away from its pronouncement. Daniel recorded its accomplishment. In their conquest of Babylon, the Medes and the Persians were undeterred by the wealth of Babylon.

*Dan 5:30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.*

*Dan 5:31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.*

Their focus was upon the military conquest of their rival, however, the prophecy warned that their bows spare none. Though Babylon had been the superpower and the pinnacle of the nations in its day, when God was through, it would become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. were destroyed by God as recorded in Genesis 19.

The city of Babylon certainly continued after the conquest by the Medes and Persians. Though ancient Babylon eventually fell into insignificance, there have been small communities on its site down through the centuries. The modern Iraqis have in fact attempted an archeological restoration of ancient Babylon as a national monument. The final fulfillment of their destruction evidently is still to come.

*Isa 13:20 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.*

*Isa 13:21 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.*

*Isa 13:22 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.*

There is no question that Babylon in some form will play a part during the Day of the Lord. That is evident in Revelation chapters 17-18. The judgment foretold in Revelation against Babylon is linked systematically to other cities having symbolic association to ancient Babylon. What is significant is that Babylon apparently is where the 'world' system began. (See Genesis 10, and 11:1- 9.)

Babylon is typical of the world (as a system) from the Tower of Babel onward. Nevertheless, there likely may be a final judgment of God against this wicked city, if only in its archeological restoration during the Tribulation. After that day, nothing will live there but the lizards and fowls of the desert. Of the creatures mentioned, doleful creature likely refer to jackals. The word translated as satyrs (ryessa'iy) can refer to goats and, some think, demon-possessed goats such as the swine of Gadara. Dragons likely refers to lizards or perhaps snakes.

When God is through with Babylon in its final judgment all that will be left are wild animals of the desert. The first part of that judgment would take place not very long after the day of Isaiah beginning in about 538 B.C. the ultimate fulfillment will be at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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