



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTERS 13-14

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapters 13-14

Now begins a different series, oracles against the other nations (chapters 13-23). Even in this stretch, there are a few utterances of a different type, especially in chapter 22.

Prophecy Against Babylon:13:12 to 14:23:Summary and Comments:

Some scholars think this part is not by Isaiah, since it happened after his time. But they are moved by a rationalist spirit, which denies anything supernatural. On the other hand, a basic conviction that God would punish the wicked could be enough to account for the picture painted here. This would really be much the same as the Deuteronomic pattern. We note too that Babylon could easily stand for the center of power of evil, as it does in Apocalypse 17 - 18. And St. Augustine, in his <City of

God>, spoke of Babylon as capital of the City of this World.

He opens with a call to battle: raise a banner, as a rallying point for the holy ones - those solemnly dedicated to the battle by God. Isaiah imagines he hears a noise on the mountains of a great army assembling. It will sweep through Babylon easily. The mention of mountains recalls the mountains of Media, from where came the army of Medes and Persians that finally conquered Babylon.

Troops come even from faraway lands, for Babylon has ruled widely, and all want to destroy its power. The "Day of the Lord" is at hand - in Scripture that means either the day of reckoning for evil persons and things, or the great day at the end of time.

But now even nature quakes at the sight: The stars of the sky will not give their light, and the sun is dark at its rising, nor will the moon give light. These lines in verse 10 are apocalyptic genre, just as are similar words in Matthew 24, and similar words in Isaiah 34:4 for God's judgment on Edom, and in Ez 32:7-8, for His judgment on Egypt. God will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty.

People of many nations have been in Babylon for business, but in the face of this terror they will run back to their own lands. Those who do not leave will be thrust through, and their infants will be dashed to pieces, their houses looted, their wives raped. The jewel of kingdoms, Babylon, will be overthrown by God. Like Sodom and Gomorrah it will never again be inhabited. No Arab will pitch his tent there, desert creatures will live there. This happened in stages. In 538 Cyrus captured Babylon, but spared the city. In 518 after an uprising Darius conquered the city again and tore down its walls. Alexander had planned to make Babylon his metropolis, but died young. Later the city fell into complete disrepair, when Seleucus I made his capitol at Seleucia. In the first century B. C. Strabo called Babylon a wilderness. In the 19th century excavations began, to discover the ruins, still uninhabited.

In contrast, God will have compassion on His people. And men of other nations will come to them and become their servants.

There follows a taunt song against the king of Babylon - not necessarily a particular one, but the King standing for all the power of Babylon. The Lord will break the rod of the wicked with which they afflicted other peoples. So now other lands can be at peace. And even the cedars of Lebanon do not have to be cut down to build palaces in Babylon.

In a fine poetic fancy, Isaiah pictures the realm of the dead. Other ancient kings sit on their thrones there when the King of Babylon comes down. They mock Him: You have become just as weak as we are! In place of fine

carpets, maggots will be spread beneath you.

That king had thought himself like the morning star, son of the Dawn, and had said he would ascent to heaven, and go above the stars. But now the king is brought to the depths of the grave.

Church Fathers like Jerome and Tertullian took this king to stand for Lucifer, the leader of the devils. As a piece of fancy, such as that which Isaiah himself uses, this is suitable of course. The king of Babylon had considered himself the "morning star". So the Fathers made the name Lucifer, light bringer, for the chief devil.

The kings in the underworld ask: Is this the man who shook the earth? Who would not let the Hebrew captives go home? Other kings there lie in state, but the King of Babylon does not have an honorable burial. This was fulfilled specially in Belshazzar, the last king, who was killed in the invasion by the army of the Medes and Persians, and seems not to have had an honorable burial. His dynasty disappeared from history. Some object; Nabonidus was really the last king of Babylon. But cuneiform records show Nabonidus went off to Arabia on a religious mission, and never assumed the throne again, and before he left, made Belshazzar his regent. Hence the book of Daniel, and the natives, would speak of him as the king.

So the offspring of the wicked will never be mentioned. His sons will be slaughtered. Babylon itself will be a place for owls and a swampland.

Prophecy against Assyria: Summary & Comments:14:24-27

Assyria disturbed Israel before Babylon did. Isaiah may have put Babylon first, since Babylon seems of greater lasting importance. And in the vision of a prophet, time means little.

Here God says: Surely , as I have planned, it will happen. I will crush Assyria in the land of my people. I will take his yoke from the peoples. This is my plan for the world.

Prophecy against the Philistines: Summary and Comments. 14:28-32

An oracle from the year in which King Ahaz died tells the Philistines not to be happy over the fall of Assyria. One Assyrian King has died, more are coming: a snake, a more venomous snake, a dragon. Tiglath-Pileser ruled 745-27; Shalmaneser, 727-22, Sargon II 721-05, Sennacherib 705-681. We have no record that Shalmaneser struck the Philistines, but Sargon II and Sennacherib did.

Who was that King who died? We are not certain of the date of the death of King Ahaz. Tiglath-Pileser King of Assyria died in 727, Ahaz probably died the year after that. Isaiah warned Philistia against revolting at the death of Tiglath-Pileser,

and implied that Judah should not try to revolt either, as the Philistine envoys would urge. In general Isaiah advised against depending on foreign powers: they should depend upon the protection of God, if they would be faithful. Yes, Judah was to be humbled, but would be restored.

End of Chapters 13-14