

ISAIAH 14

THE DOOM OF BABYLON, PART 2

“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land ... And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve...” (verses 1-3). What a beautiful opening to this chapter! The whole reason why Babylon would be destroyed was so that it would be made clear that the Lord had mercy in store for His own people who would be in captivity there! Indeed, the entire plan of Divine Providence is arranged with a view toward the blessedness of the people of God. Babylon would be overthrown and ruined, because the injuries and persecutions done to the Lord’s people must be reckoned for. The Lord’s mercy to His people is carried on from age to age in His Church, and it is uniformly spoken of as the one great objective of His Providence and grace! They shall have rest from their sorrows and fears, rest from the sense of their present burdens, and rest from the dread of eternal judgment after this life on earth.

The last chapter spoke threatenings against the city of Babylon in general; but here, in verses 4-23, we find words that were directed particularly against the king of Babylon. That great “golden city” (verse 4) abounded in riches; and the king thereof, having the absolute command of so much wealth, used it to rule the nations. He especially used it to exercise oppression over the Jews. But the prophet here assures him that his scepter of power would one day be broken; and that he who ruled others in tyranny and cruelty would eventually find himself persecuted, without a deliverer. In fact, when he was gone, the whole world would be glad to see it (verse 7); and those who had preceded him to the regions of hell would mock him upon his own arrival there (verses 9-12), for the proud and haughty tyrant would then be as weak and powerless as they were. This would be a just recompense indeed for the outrageous pride and arrogance that he displayed while he was yet on earth, in addition to his sins of oppression and tyranny.

Here we may clearly see how God will reckon with those who disturb the peace of mankind. The royal city of Babylon was doomed to ruin and desolation, and the destruction of this great city of ancient times serves as an illustration of the utter destruction of the spiritual Babylon (Rev. 18:2) – that is, all people who are outside of Christ, and all governments and organizations that rebel against His authority and endeavor to set themselves up in the place of God. When a

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ More weight of judgment is added to the burden of Babylon, particularly concerning its proud and haughty king – verses 1-23
- ❖ A confirmation of the fall of Babylon is given in the defeat of Assyria’s army – verses 24-27
- ❖ The destruction of the Philistines is also foretold – verses 28-32

nation will not be swept clean with the broom of repentance and reformation, what else can they expect but to be swept off the face of the earth with the broom of judgment and destruction? (verse 23)

At the time when Isaiah gave this prophecy, the destruction of Babylon was in the far-distant future. The empire had not risen to any considerable height at this time when its fall was here foretold, and its fall was not accomplished for about 170 years. Therefore, the people to whom Isaiah spoke might well have asked, "What benefit does this hold for us who live now? And what assurance can we have



that these things shall actually come to pass?" To these questions, the prophet gave answers in verses 24-32. He gave a prediction of the ruin of both the Assyrians and the Philistines, who were the present enemies that were troubling God's people. The Jews of Isaiah's time would shortly be eyewitnesses of the destruction of these two nations, and they would certainly reap the benefit of their downfall. And this would be a present comfort to them, as well as a pledge of future deliverance for the confirming of the faith of their descendants. God is the same to His people today as He was yesterday, and He is the same now as He will be hereafter. If He executes righteous judgment upon the oppressors of His people at one point in history, we may rest assured that this is what He has always done – and that He will do so yet again!

In the days of King Hezekiah, the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib brought a very formidable army into the land of Judah; but God broke all his regiments by the sword of His destroying Angel. Those who wrongfully invade the Lord's land shall find that they do so at their own peril, and those who trample upon His holy mountains with unholy feet shall find themselves trodden under foot. God Himself undertook to carry out this destruction, for His people had no might of their own against that great Assyrian army that came against them. The breaking of the Assyrians' power is an example of what God shall do with all powers that engage themselves in battle against Him and His Church.

The last few verses of this chapter contain a prophecy against the Philistines, but it also includes promises of mercy for the Lord's people. In verse 30, we read, "The firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety." The poor and the needy are God's special care! Our gracious Savior has "come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), and to triumph over the enemies of our souls (Col. 2:15). And because He has done this, we poor and needy sinners may freely feed upon the Bread of Life, and lie down in eternal safety!

Lord, we praise You for executing righteous judgment upon the oppressors of Your people in history – thereby comforting us with the assurance that You will stand up for the relief of Your children yet again! Amen.