

The Prophecies of Isaiah ²⁸ Lesson 10

Vision 7 – Part 1

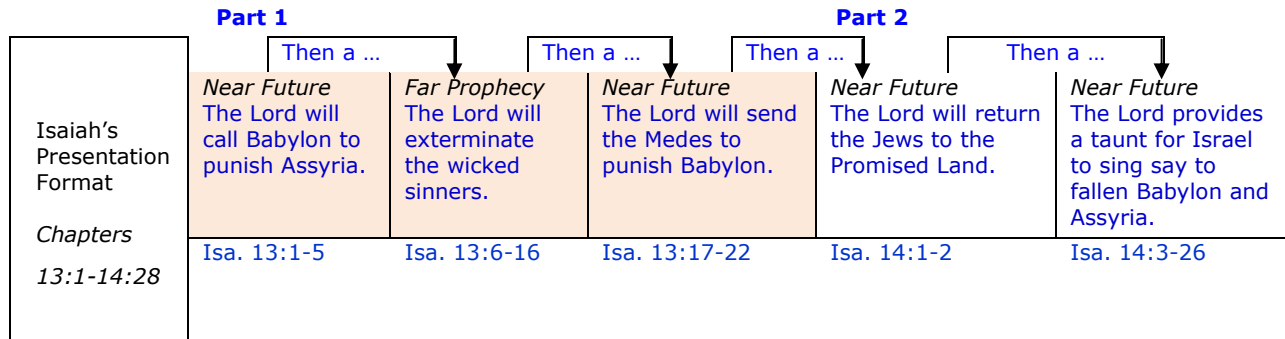


Figure 23: Vision 7

Babylon's Oracle

With the close of Vision 6 in 740 BC, Isaiah delivers only one vision over the next 16 years. Nothing is included in the Scripture to indicate the exact time of Vision 7 except that it occurs before 726 BC, the year of Ahaz's death. By that time, Isaiah's professional prophecy ministry has spanned at least 32 years, but it includes only seven visions.

Vision 7 addresses the Babylonian Empire that will not be established for a minimum of another 114 years. However, the Babylonian civilization began in earnest within 98 years after Noah and the flood. Noah and his children moved down the mountains of Ararat and established several settlements, including the location of Nineveh. As the family grew, Nimrod, Noah's grandson, took the lead and moved the family down the river to establish the settlement known as Babylon. It is a direct violation of the Lord's instruction to spread and populate the earth. Just 98 years after the flood, Nimrod leads the relatives to build a tower to heaven as a monument to their own greatness. The tower displeases the Lord. He confounds their languages and forces them to seek new homes in the world. The family units move to the different locations identified in Map 7. At the time of the tower construction, the Scripture records the names of 61 males, of whom 18 are the family heads who relocate across the vast region of the Middle East and beyond. Therefore, all the nations of the world began in the Babylonian



Map 10: Division of Families by Languages after the Tower of Babel

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area. Over the next 2,000 years, the area will have periods of great success and strength mainly known as the Old Era. Their greatest leader was Hammurabi the sixth king of the dynasty who ruled three hundred years after Abraham. After Hammurabi's death, the power shifts north to the land of Assur, known as the father of Assyria. By 1365 BC, Assyria is budding as the world power. At the time of this vision, Babylon is a subservient area south of the main body of Assyria. The Babylonians are descendants of Shem and his first son Arpachshad; the Assyrians are descendants of Shem's third son Assur. They are cousins but drastically disagree – first, because of their language barrier and second, because of their desire to control governmental rule. To the east of Babylon are the Elamite and Madai cousins; they disagree for the same reasons.

The people must consider Isaiah's prophecy concerning Babylon to be farfetched. In reality, it will not begin to threaten the rule of Assyria until sometime in the five-year interval between 631 BC and 627 BC when Nabopolassar establishes a Babylonian throne while still under the control of Assyria. With the help of the Medes, Nabopolassar sends his son Nebuchadnezzar to Nineveh. He destroys the city in 612 BC and begins a march across the empire to capture it for his father. In 609 BC, Nebuchadnezzar catches up with the royalty from Nineveh in Harran and kills them. The Assyrian Empire has ended. In 606 BC, Nabopolassar steps down from the throne, giving it to Nebuchadnezzar. Within two months, Nabopolassar dies of natural causes at the age of 53. However, Isaiah's Vision 7 is delivered some time before 726 BC, almost a century before Nabopolassar threatens the Assyria Empire. No one who hears Isaiah's proclamation will live to see the rise of the Babylonian Empire, but it will occur just as prophesied.

Near Future

Rise of the Babylonian Empire

Isaiah 13:1 The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

Throughout history, the Lord communicates with prophets through visions, dreams and oracles. A vision is similar to a daydream in which the prophet sees the entire scenario played out and the Lord allows him to describe it to the people in his own words. A dream is exactly like a vision except that it occurs while the prophet is asleep. An oracle differs from the vision or dream in that the Lord does not allow the prophet to put the message in his own words; rather, He tells the prophet exactly what to say, word for word. In this passage, the Lord combines two of the means of giving the prophecy to Isaiah. He allows Isaiah to see the rise and fall of Babylon in a vision but He also tells him exactly what to say.

Isaiah 13:2 Lift up a standard on the bare hill, raise your voice to them, wave the hand that they may enter the doors of the nobles. ³I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, to *execute* My anger.

Back in Vision 6, the Lord becomes angry with Assyria because she consciously tries to overstep His plans. She is His instrument of judgment upon the Northern Kingdom, called by Him to execute His plans, sinless in her attack, sinless in her ruthless wrath. However, she has sinned greatly against the Lord when she pushes through her target and sets her eyes on the Southern Kingdom. Surely Assyria has heard the Lord's prophecies through Isaiah, Micah, Amos and Hosea over the last 32 years but she fails to heed the warnings. It is now too late for Assyria. The Lord is announcing for the first time in Isaiah in Vision 7 that His plan is to exalt the Babylonians into a mighty people from the bare hills of the lower Mesopotamia in order to execute His judgment on Assyria. He is giving Assyria fair warning with more than 100 years of notices.

Isaiah 13:4 A sound of tumult on the mountains, like that of many people! A sound of the uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts is mustering the army for battle. ⁵ They are coming from a far country from the farthest horizons, the LORD and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole land.

When the Babylonian Empire erupts, all the nations of the earth will feel its power. In 612 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar acts as the Lord's instrument to destroy Assyria's capital, the city of Nineveh will not be able to stop his march. He will drive his armies all the way through Aram, Phoenecia, Ammon, Moab, Arabia, Dedan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Put and the Southern Kingdom. The whole world will bow to the Lord's newly anointed instrument of judgment.

Far Prophecy

The Day of the Lord

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. ⁷ Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt. ⁸ And they will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of *them*; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹ Thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. ¹² I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir. ¹³ Therefore I shall make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger. ¹⁴ And it will be that like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather *them*, they will each turn to his own people, and each one flee to his own land. ¹⁵ Anyone who is found will be thrust through, and anyone who is captured will fall by the sword. ¹⁶ Their little ones also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.

Nebuchadnezzar's march through the nations will be frightful, robbing strength from the warriors' hands as every heart sinks in despair. The nations will look at each other in dismay, gripped with pain and extreme anguish. But Nebuchadnezzar's march will not compare to the Lord's march on His day when He exterminates the wicked sinners from the world. He controls the constellations, He controls the sun and moon and He will use them all to strike fear in the world of evil to punish the wicked and bring arrogance to an end. Few mortals will survive that day. If we could gather all the pure fold into one location, how tall would the pile be? Miniscule in comparison to the entire world to be sure. So too, the survivors of the day of the Lord will be miniscule in comparison to those who have populated the world. When the Lord departs from heaven to rid the world of evil, the heavens will tremble and the earth will shake. In that day, commonly called Armageddon, evil people will meet their end, "thrust through ... dashed to pieces, their houses plundered and ravished."

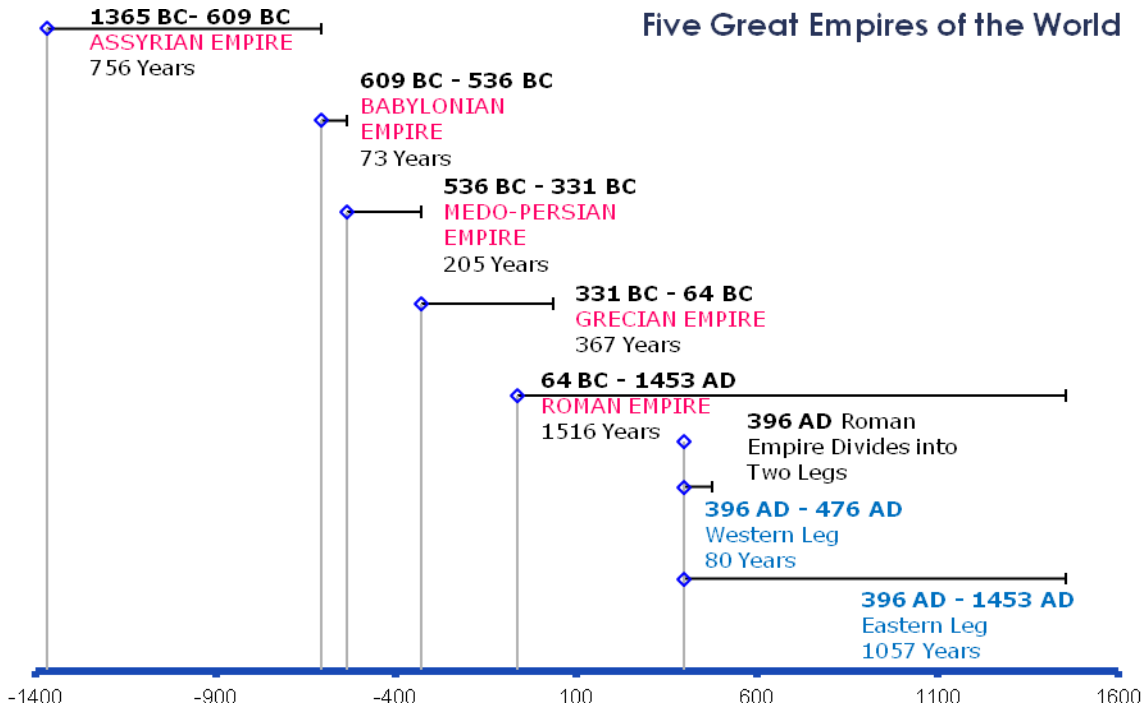
Near Future

Fall of the Babylonian Empire

Isaiah 13:17 Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold, ¹⁸ and *their* bows will mow down the young men, they

will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, *nor* will their eye pity children. ¹⁹ And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁰ It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab pitch *his* tent there, nor will shepherds make *their flocks* lie down there. ²¹ But desert creatures will lie down there, and their houses will be full of owls, Ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there. ²² And hyenas will howl in their fortified towers and jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her *fateful* time also will soon come and her days will not be prolonged.

Babylon, the new instrument of the Lord, will follow the sinful path of Assyria necessitating a call from the Lord for the Medes to be His next judge. When Nabopolasser makes the bold move to become the king of Babylon while it is still under Assyrian control, things could have turned out differently. The Medes have grown to be just as strong as the Babylonians. In 612 BC, Nebuchadnezzar harnesses the help of the Medes to overthrow Nineveh but make no mistake, Media has gained equal power and strength on its own. Only by the divine direction of God can Babylon hold Media in a subservient position. The Assyrian Empire lasts from 1365 BC to 609 BC, 756 years. The Babylonian Empire lasts from 609 BC to 536 BC, 73 years. The Medo-Persian Empire lasts from 536 BC to 331 BC, 205 years. Yet, history records that in the 73 year life of the Babylonian Empire, it established itself as the greatest empire ever to exist.



Time Line 2: Five Great Empires of the World

In the last years of their empire, the Babylonians lost sight of the important things of life choosing to focus on the vain things of the world in rebellion to God. The Medo-Persian Empire cares little for such fineries and acts as God's instrument to rid the world of Babylon

more than 190 years after this prophecy is given to Isaiah. How extinct will Babylon become? Totally extinct. The 90-foot golden statue on the Plain of Dura will disappear. The wonder of the world called the hanging gardens, gone. The great gate of Nebuchadnezzar, removed. The grand palace of the king, torn down. The great furnace, buried. The sprawling city, wiped clean from the earth and covered with sand. Just as God eliminated Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham, He will eliminate the city of Babylon within 200 years. When Isaiah receives this vision, nothing exists in Babylon except people. Nebuchadnezzar's projects will be built during the 73 year life of the empire and destroyed soon after Assyria is conquered. A city called Babylon exists today, but it is not on the original site which has been abandoned for hundreds of years. Over the last one hundred years, archeologists have fought the elements to remove the sand that once buried Babylon. It truly is a place good for nothing except desert creatures.

Near Future

Jews Will Return by Way of Babylon

Isaiah 14:1 When the LORD will have compassion on Jacob, and again choose Israel, and settle them in their own land, then strangers will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob. ² And the peoples will take them along and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them as an inheritance in the land of the LORD as male servants and female servants; and they will take their captors captive, and will rule over their oppressors.



Picture 3: Old City of Babylon Uncovered by Archeologists

The tribes of Naphtali, Rueben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh are in exile at the time of Vision 7. Six and a half tribes remain in the Northern Kingdom. When will the remaining tribes prevail against the nations under the direction and compassion of the Lord? When will Israel live on the land again in relative peace? Not any time soon! It will not occur until the Lord judges Babylon in 536 BC.