

The Prophecies of Isaiah ²⁹ Lesson 11

Vision 7 – Part 2

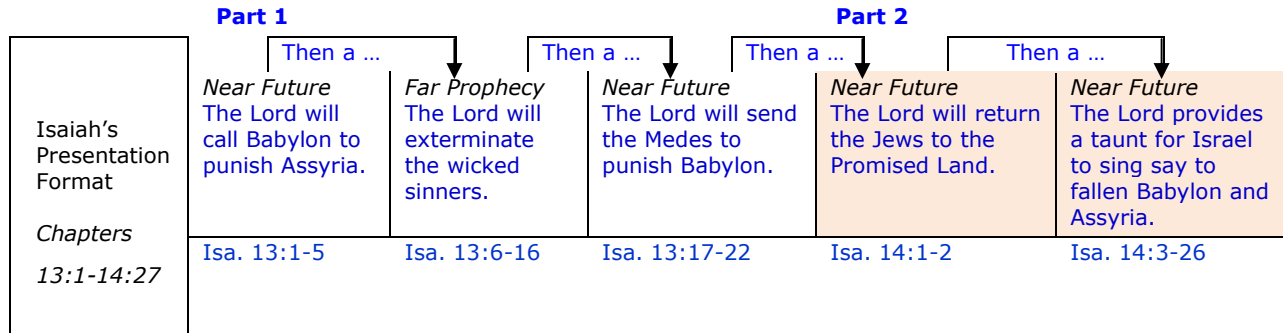


Figure 24: Vision 7

Near Future

Taunt – Jew's Response to the King of Babylon

Isaiah 14:3 And it will be in the day when the LORD gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved, ⁴ that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, and say, "How the oppressor has ceased, *And how* fury has ceased! ⁵ "The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of rulers ⁶ Which used to strike the peoples in fury with unceasing strokes, Which subdued the nations in anger with unrestrained persecution.

A taunt is a mocking or jeering of an individual or group. Throughout this study, the Lord has taunted the Northern Kingdom saying He will bring judgment on them if they continue to disobey. In history, Goliath taunted the Israelites to present their best warrior and challenge him to a fight. The nation of the loser would surrender to the nation of the winner. Religious taunts are directed at pagan idols. In this case, the Lord provides the whole nation of Israel with a taunt that predicts the fall of Babylon, a nation not even in power at the time, and Israel's joy over its defeat. One day, 190 years after the Lord has provided this taunt through Isaiah, Israel will be headed home from exile and will understand every word provided in this passage.

A succession of Assyrian kings will take the Northern Kingdom into exile, but Nebuchadnezzar will increase the Jewish presence when he adds the exiles from the Southern Kingdom. At the beginning, Nebuchadnezzar is ruthless, but as time passes, Daniel points him to the true God. When Nebuchadnezzar dies in 562 BC, the following kings, all related to Nebuchadnezzar by marriage or birth, fail to lead the empire and conditions for the exiles degrade. Nevertheless, because Nebuchadnezzar continues the practice of taking exiles out of the Promised Land, the blame and aggression of the Assyrian Empire ultimately fall on the Babylonians. This taunt will be used when the oppression ceases in 536 BC and Israel is headed home.

Near Future

Taunt - Earth's Joy after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:7 "The whole earth is at rest *and* is quiet; They break forth into shouts of joy. ⁸ "Even the cypress trees rejoice over you, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, 'Since you were laid low, no tree cutter comes up against us.'

29 All Scriptures in this lesson entitled "The Prophecies of Isaiah" are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, Copyright (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

At this point in Isaiah's ministry, the Lord has not revealed the identity of the king who will free the exiles but He soon will. When the Babylonians lose their empire, the whole earth will seem at rest and peaceful to the tribes of Israel. When this taunt is prophesied, the cypress trees and the cedars are still standing in mass. During Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns, he cuts down the forests that are in his way. He builds roads and cuts channels to the Red Sea to transport the timber cut down in battle. By the time of the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BC, the people need not fear the axe of the king against the few cypress and cedar trees left in the region.

Near Future

Taunt - Sheol's Excitement after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:9 "Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones. ¹⁰ " They will all respond and say to you, 'Even you have been made weak as we, you have become like us. ¹¹ 'Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you, and worms are your covering.'

The Hebrew word Sheol is the same as the Greek word Hades and represents the invisible place where all souls are gathered after death, both righteous and wicked. ³⁰ The two are separated by a great gulf, the righteous in a peaceful section called Abraham's Bosom and the wicked in a dreadful place called Torment. ³¹ In the Old Testament, Sheol is at first inescapable. However, it will change for the righteous about 750 years after this prophecy, with the resurrection of the Lord from Sheol on the third day after His death. ³² The arrival of the Babylonian kings in Sheol, specifically the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar, arouses all the good kings from their peaceful rest and gets the attention of all the wicked kings housed across the great gulf which no one can cross. The great Nebuchadnezzar is dead. He could not overcome the same fate of all kings - death. His soul is in Sheol, his body is in the grave, devoured by the maggots and worms.

Near Future

Taunt - King's Thoughts after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:12 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

In other English versions, the phrase "O star of the morning" is translated as one word, Lucifer, and rightly so. It refers to the star that appears just briefly before the dawn of the day. Here it is used to refer a king of Babylon who has exalted himself as a god. Much later in church history, Lucifer is associated with evil and applies this passage to the devil although the Bible does not use it in that way.

In Daniel 4, the prophet interprets the dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning a tree that is cut down. Daniel explains that Nebuchadnezzar is the tree and the moment he proudly exalts himself above God, he will then be like a wild animal driven into the wilderness for seven years. One year later, Nebuchadnezzar strolls onto his balcony and expresses his

³⁰ Job 30:23

³¹ Luke 16:22-23

³² Psalm 49:10-12; Ezekiel 31:16

pride in the kingdom he has built through his own power and strength. Immediately, Nebuchadnezzar becomes like an animal and is thrust into the wilderness for seven years, "cut down to earth."

Near Future

Taunt - King's Place after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:15 "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

Even after Nebuchadnezzar returns to his senses at the end of the seven years, he cannot escape the grave and his appointment in Sheol.

Near Future

Taunt - People's Bewilderment after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:16 "Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, *saying*, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷ Who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?'

In Sheol, the people who had gone to that place before the king gaze and ask the same questions we would ask. How did Nebuchadnezzar end up in this section of Sheol? He did nothing good while we were there with him. We trembled before him. He devastated our lands. He captured our cities. He kept the exiles prisoners in his lands. Now he is here in Abraham's Bosom on the good side of Sheol. How did he get here? At the end of his seven years of living like an animal in the wilderness, Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses. He said:

Daniel 4:34 "But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar called upon the name of the Most High God and his reward was eternal life and peaceful rest when his days on earth were complete.

Near Future

Taunt - King's Heritage after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:18 "All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb. ¹⁹ "But you have been cast out of your tomb Like a rejected branch, clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a trampled corpse. ²⁰ "You will not be united with them in burial, because you have ruined your country, you have slain your people. May the offspring of evildoers not be mentioned forever. ²¹ "Prepare for his sons a place of slaughter because of the iniquity of their fathers. They must not arise and take possession of the earth and fill the face of the world with cities."

All the kings of every nation lie in glory, in special tombs carved and marked with their names. The Babylonian kings are all alike except one – Belshazzar. Figure 23 shows all the kings of the Babylonian Empire, tells their relationships to the previous king, gives the years of their reigns, the causes of their deaths and indicates whether or not they were buried. Belshazzar was not buried with the other kings.

Kings of the Babylonian Empire

King	Relation to Previous King	Years of Reign	Cause of Death
Nabopolassar	First King	625 – 606 BC	Died of natural causes – buried
Nebuchadnezzar	Son	606 – 562 BC	Died of natural causes – buried
Amel Marduk (Evil-Merodach)	Son	562 – 560 BC	Killed by brother-in-law Nerigalissar - buried
Nerigalissar	Son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar	560 – 556 BC	Died of natural causes – buried
Labashi-Marduk	Son of Nerigalissar	556 BC	Killed after 9 month reign - buried
Nabonidus	Married Nebuchadnezzar's widowed daughter	556 – 536 BC	Spent most of his time with his wife at Tema, the oasis in the Hejaz region of Arabia, made his son Belshazzar co-regent in Babylon, outlived his Babylonian Empire in Arabia, contracted a dreaded disease, died after 7 years – buried
Belshazzar	Son of Nabonidus	Ca. 539 – 536 BC	Died in Medo-Persian attack – not buried with the other kings

Figure 25: Complete list of the Kings of the Babylonian Empire and the Cause of Their Deaths

In the raid on the Babylonian palace the night of Daniel's record of the handwriting on the wall, Belshazzar is slain with a sword. His soul goes to the pit of Sheol but his body is not buried in the glory of the kings in the tombs of his royal Babylonian heritage. His actions that night, recorded in Daniel 5 facilitate the end of his country and the royal family. There is no doubt that his remains were buried somewhere, if only in the rubble of the destroyed palace.

In this interpretation, we have identified Nebuchadnezzar with verses 12:4-17 and Belshazzar with verses 12:18-21. Yet verse 12:4 says, "that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon." How can we look the events of the lives of two kings and apply them to a verse that speaks of a singular king of Babylon? Throughout the Bible, when the Lord gives a prophecy concerning a king, prophet, or priest, He addresses the office rather than the series of people who hold that office. Thus, if you read Daniel 11 and wait for the fulfillment of every event in the life of one king of the South and one king of the North, it will never occur. However, when you look at the chronological lives of the kings who served the South and the kings who served the North, you will find the prophecy fulfilled exactly as foretold. The same applies in Vision 7. No single king in the Babylonian Empire fulfilled the prophecy given. However, the king's son who actually established the empire for his father and the king's son who foolishly lost the empire for his father together fulfill the prophecy. Therefore, in interpreting Scripture, we must always look at combined acts of those in the office to see fulfillment rather than try to apply all the details to one individual.

Far Prophecy

Taunt - Lord's Destruction after Babylon's Fall

Isaiah 14:22 "And I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity," declares the LORD. ²³ "I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog, and swamps of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD of hosts.

In verses 22 and 23, the taunt includes what the Lord intends to do when He says, "I will rise up against them ... and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity." In the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 536 BC, the Lord cuts off the royalty forever so that it will never hold power over the His people again. Not long after the raid, the old city of Babylon is deserted, swept with a broom, and then covered with sand. The

rise and fall of Babylon is more than 190 years away and the Lord still has to deal with Assyria.

Near Future

Taunt - Lord's Plan against Assyria

Isaiah 14:24 The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, ²⁵ to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulder.

The Lord's plans are His plans. Once He makes a plan, it is as good as complete, even though hundreds of years might pass before human eyes see the fulfillment. He has promised to "break Assyria" and He will in 712 BC, trampling on 185,000 men of Sennacherib and sending him home to die at the hands of two of his sons. The Lord will free the Northern 10 tribes from the Assyrian Empire after they serve their time in exile. It will occur when Nebuchadnezzar conquers the country for his father. However, the 10 tribes will stay in exile for another 73 years before the Lord breaks the Babylonian yoke and they are allowed to return home.

Near Future

Taunt - Lord's Plan against the Earth

Isaiah 14:26 "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. ²⁷ "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"

To state the future clearly, the Lord announces through Isaiah the planned arrival of the Babylonian Empire and its destruction. It is His plan for the next two-hundred years and nothing and no one can stop it from occurring.

Table 8: Scripture Fulfillment in Isaiah – Chapter 13:1-14:27

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 13:1-5	<i>Near Future</i> The Lord will call Babylon to punish Assyria.	Fulfilled in 722 BC
Isa. 13:6-16	<i>Far Prophecy</i> The Lord will exterminate the wicked sinners.	On the Day of Armageddon
Isa. 13:17-22	<i>Near Future</i> The Lord will send the Medes to punish Babylon.	Fulfilled in 536 BC
Isa. 14:1-2	<i>Near Future</i> The Lord will return the Jews to the Promised Land.	Fulfilled in 536 BC
Isa. 14:3-27	<i>Near Future</i> The Lord provides a taunt for Israel to sing say to fallen Babylon and Assyria.	Fulfilled in 536 BC