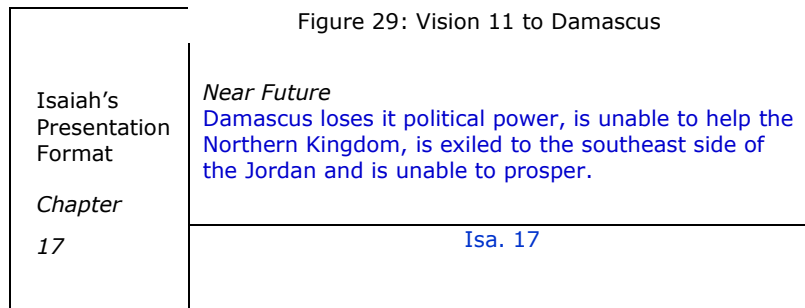


The Prophecies of Isaiah ³⁵

Lesson 13



The Lord delivered Vision 8 to Isaiah in 726 BC and Vision 14 in 722 BC; therefore, Visions 9 through 13 are given some time in the four year period between the two dates.

Timing of Visions 8 through 14

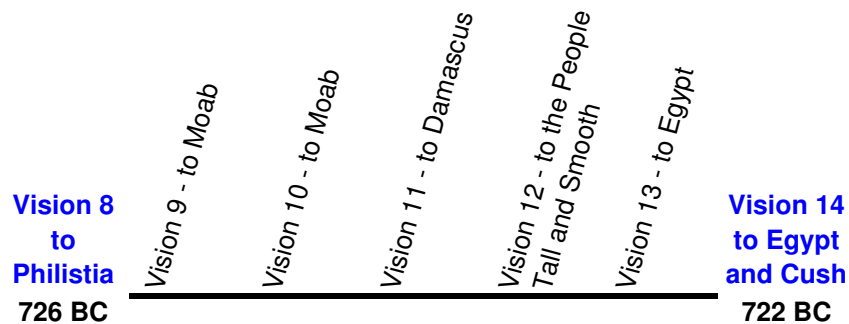


Figure 30: Timeline of Visions 8 - 14

The oracle to Damascus is similar to those to Moab in Visions 9 and 10; all of them are foretelling the fate of the city.

Damascus' Oracle – Vision 11

Near Future

Damascus Fallen Ruin

Isaiah 17:1 The oracle concerning Damascus. "Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city, and it will become a fallen ruin."

Damascus is the capital of Aram which lies northeast of the Northern Kingdom. In the years between 726 BC and 722 BC, Aram is the closest friend of the Northern Kingdom. This passage is a word for word declaration from the Lord to Isaiah. He is to deliver it to the Southern Kingdom so they will know His determination for the two countries. It seems from the oracle's introduction that the vision deals solely with Damascus; however, the greater body of the vision addresses the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. In verse 1, the oracle plainly asserts that Damascus "will become a fallen ruin." Some time after this vision, Damascus attempts an unsuccessful insurrection with Hamath and Arpad. She is put down by Assyria and even though Damascus is not destroyed, she is reduced to the point that she

³⁵ 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.

is no longer a major city in the area. This details of her destruction are recorded in an inscription of Sargon. The facts concerning her downfall are recorded about 100 years later in the writings of Jeremiah in which he mentions her helplessness.

Jeremiah 49:23 Concerning Damascus. " Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, For they have heard bad news; They are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, It cannot be calmed. ²⁴ "Damascus has become helpless; She has turned away to flee, And panic has gripped her; Distress and pangs have taken hold of her Like a woman in childbirth. ²⁵ "How the city of praise has not been deserted, The town of My joy!

Damascus cannot even help herself much less her friend who is calling out to her from Ephraim.

Near Future

Aroer Forsaken

Isaiah 17:2 "The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they will be for flocks to lie down in, and there will be no one to frighten *them*.

Damascus has already been attacked by Assyria under the leadership of Tiglath-pileser in 740 BC, at least 14 years before this vision. Tiglath takes many of the captives from Damascus into exile in Aroer which he conquers in the same war effort. Aroer is a city in the tribal area of Rueben, land that once belonged to Moab. When Tiglath takes Rueben into exile, he calls the entire area Aroer. Therefore, when the Lord prophesies to the cities of Aroer and its chief city of Kir, He is referring to this area. This event is recorded in Second Kings.

2 Kings 16:9 So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried *the people of it* away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death.

Although Damascus is not completely helpless at this time, she is captured and many of her people are carried into exile in the southern part of the captured Northern Kingdom.

Near Future

City Disappear

Isaiah 17:3 "The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and sovereignty from Damascus and the remnant of Aram; They will be like the glory of the sons of Israel," declares the LORD of hosts.

In 726 BC, Damascus still stands in Aram to the northeast of the Northern Kingdom. Naphtali, Gad, Rueben and half the tribe of Manasseh are in exile as recorded in First Chronicles.

1 Chronicles 5:26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day.



Map 19: Location of the First Exiles from the Northern Kingdom

The Aramians are taken south but the defeated tribes of the Northern Kingdom are taken to the four cities near the Gozan River which feeds into the Euphrates.

Ephraim is the strongest remaining tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Soon, the captured city of Damascus will be totally destroyed and Ephraim will not be able to call on her for help again. The power of Damascus and Aram has ended and so too will the power of the remaining Northern Kingdom.

Near Future

Jacob Faded

Isaiah 17:4 Now it will come about in that day that the glory of Jacob will fade, and the fatness of his flesh will become lean. ⁵ It will be even like the reaper gathering the standing grain, as his arm harvests the ears, or it will be like one gleaning ears of grain in the valley of Rephaim. ⁶ Yet gleanings will be left in it like the shaking of an olive tree, two *or* three olives on the topmost bough, four *or* five on the branches of a fruitful tree, declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel will succumb to the same fate as Aram, fading away into history. Just as a remnant of Aram is carried south to Aroer, a remnant of Israel will be carried off to Assyria, but a very small number of the remnant will be left behind in the land, two or three here and four or five there, by order of the Lord. He uses the valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem as an example. It was one of the most fertile and fruitful portion of the Promised Land. Even the best harvesters could not collect everything from the field; something was always left behind and the Lord will make sure a portion of the remnant will be left in the homeland.

Near Future

Jacob Regards Maker

Isaiah 17:7 In that day man will have regard for his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel. ⁸ And he will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands, nor will he look to that which his fingers have made, Even the Asherim and incense stands.

Those who survive the battle will do so because they have turned to the Holy One of Israel, their Maker, for their salvation, forsaking all the idols and altars of false gods.

Near Future

Forgotten God

Isaiah 17:9 In that day their strong cities will be like forsaken places in the forest, Or like branches which they abandoned before the sons of Israel; and the land will be a desolation. ^{10a} For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.

The Lord does not want to be forgotten by anyone on earth. He created them all and Aram has forgotten Him in the same way that Israel forgot their rock which is the Lord, their sure defense.

Near Future

Destroyed Garden

Isaiah 17: 10b Therefore you plant delightful plants and set them with vine slips of a strange *god*. ¹¹ In the day that you plant *it* you carefully fence *it* in, and in the morning you bring your seed to blossom; *but* the harvest will be a heap in a day of sickness and incurable pain. ¹² Alas, the uproar of many peoples who roar like the roaring of the seas, and the rumbling of nations who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!

A slip is a cutting taken from a plant and placed in the ground. In this passage, the Lord is using this metaphor to explain that Israel's sin of worshiping idols originated in foreign soil. Her harvest will be nothing but a heap of sickness and pain.

Near Future

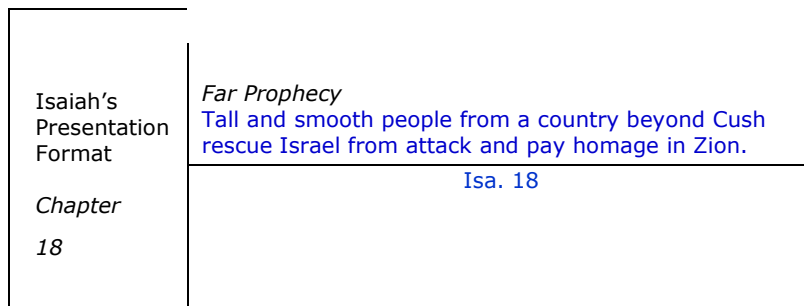
Lord Rebukes

Isaiah 17:13 The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters, But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away, and be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind, or like whirling dust before a gale. ¹⁴ At evening time, behold, *there is* terror! Before morning they are no more. Such *will be* the portion of those who plunder us, and the lot of those who pillage us.

The Lord will allow the attacking nation of Assyria to go only so far. When she tries to take the Southern Kingdom, especially Jerusalem, the Lord rebukes Assyria in a deadly episode during one night. According to Scripture, terror overtakes the Assyrian army in the evening and by morning, 185,000 are dead. Anyone who tries to go against the Lord's chosen people will always face His wrath.

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 17	<i>Near Future</i> Damascus loses its political power, is unable to help the Northern Kingdom, is exiled to the southeast side of the Jordan and is unable to prosper.	Fulfilled before the end of the Assyrian Empire in 609 BC

Vision 12



Lord's Homage from People Tall and Smooth – Vision 12

Beyond the Rivers of Cush

Isaiah 18:1 Alas, oh land of whirring wings which lies beyond the rivers of Cush, ² Which sends envoys by the sea, even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation whose land the rivers divide.

Vision 12 refers to the nation of seagoing people, "tall and smooth," that lies beyond the rivers of Cush. It is to be feared throughout the world. However, it is also a land divided by its rivers and marked by something resembling "whirring wings" or wings that produce a clattering sound. Most scholars place the land of Cush south of Egypt as identified in Map 20 and equate her to Ethiopia today. The map is correct; however, the inhabitants of the nations to the west and south, beyond the rivers of Cush, would not be considered "tall and smooth," neither then nor now. The Lord is not addressing the land which Cush settled after the Tower of Babel. He is addressing the land identified near the Garden of Eden and called by that name more than two thousand years before the birth of Cush, Noah's grandson.



Map 20: The Division of the Eighteen Families after the Tower of Babel

Genesis 2 identifies the land of Cush as one of the four areas fed by a river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³ And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Four rivers are fed by the river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden. The last two can be identified with ease. The Tigris and the Euphrates hold the same names today and their headwaters begin in modern-day Turkey. The headwaters of the other two rivers must begin in the same location. The third river is the Pishon which begins in Turkey and flows around the land of Havilah which means sand or sandy. The sandy land of the



Map 21: Four major rivers that begin in the same area

Aram/Syrian/Arabian desert begins in modern-day Syria with the Euphrates to the northeast of the desert and the Pishon or Leontes River to its northwest. The Leontes provides a portion of the water that feeds the Jordan River which ultimately ends at the Dead Sea today, but prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the River ran all the way to the Red Sea, bordered on the west by the sandy desert. The Gihon River is difficult to identify because it is associated with the land of Cush. No river that begins in Turkey travels through the Promised Land,

around to Egypt and down the east side of the Nile uphill and downhill all the way to surround the land of Cush/Ethiopia. However, the Hayles River begins in Turkey near the other three and flows west around Pontus, through Galatia and pours into the Black Sea. Beyond the districts of Pontus, Galatia and the Hayles River, all the descendants of Japhath, Lud, and Meshech, ""tall and smooth"" including Greece live in countries that are riddled with rivers of all sizes. Three hundred and ninety-five years after this prophecy, Alexander the Great will march across the land of the four rivers mentioned and capture for his own empire every inch of land associated with them. Therefore, the land of Cush in this passage must be the area just south of the Black Sea. Alexandar the Great and his army will be feared far and wide but he will not be known as an oppressor. Later, in 64 BC, the remnants of his empire will meld into the Roman Empire. According to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue, when the two legs of the Roman Empire are conquered, each will be formed into ten toes or countries. At the end time, those ten toes will rejoin and form a new and dreaded empire, feared far and wide and known for its power and oppression. The leader of that nation will come against the Lord in Jerusalem, but he will not succeed.

A Standard and a Trumpet

Isaiah 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, as soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see *it*, and as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear *it*.

Israel will be in trouble and attacked when she is not prepared to defend herself. All will see the "standard ... raised on the mountain" and hear the trumpet blast from Israel, calling for help. The inhabitants of the entire world will hear the blast and see the standard. It will not be missed by anyone.

Time of the Lord's Pruning

Isaiah 18:4 For thus the LORD has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly like dazzling heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." ⁵ For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms and the flower becomes a ripening grape, then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives and remove *and* cut away the spreading branches. ⁶ They will be left together for mountain birds of prey, And for the beasts of the earth; and the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them, and all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.

When will the trumpet blast and the standard be raised above Jerusalem? It will occur when the Lord looks from His dwelling in heaven with disdain, scorching the oppressor with heat and then bringing the rain so the harvest cannot be gathered. He will not come at that time but he will send a nation to help Israel. The attacking nation will be pruned in the spring at harvest time. The Lord will use the nation "tall and smooth" to do the damage but it is the Lord who will call for all the birds and beasts to devour the remains and they will eat from the spring through the summer. Men will wander though the land burying the meatless bones left behind. One hundred years after this vision, the Lord prophesies this event through Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 39:1 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; ² and I shall turn you around, drive you on, take you up from the remotest parts of the north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. ³ "And I shall strike your bow from your left hand, and dash down your arrows from your right hand. ⁴ "You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops, and the peoples who are with you; I shall give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. ⁵

"You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord GOD. ⁶ "And I shall send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD. ⁷ "And My holy name I shall make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I shall not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ "Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord GOD. "That is the day of which I have spoken. ⁹ "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out, and make fires with the weapons and burn *them*, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears and for seven years they will make fires of them. ¹⁰ "And they will not take wood from the field or gather firewood from the forests, for they will make fires with the weapons; and they will take the spoil of those who despoiled them, and seize the plunder of those who plundered them," declares the Lord GOD. ¹¹ "And it will come about on that day that I shall give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off the passers-by. So they will bury Gog there with all his multitude, and they will call *it* the valley of Hamon-gog. ¹² "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ "Even all the people of the land will bury *them*; and it will be to their renown *on* the day that I glorify Myself," declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁴ "And they will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. ¹⁵ "And as those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. ¹⁶ "And even *the* name of *the* city will be Hamonah. So they will cleanse the land." ¹⁷ "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ "You shall eat the flesh of mighty men, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, as *though they were* rams, lambs, goats, and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. ¹⁹ "So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.

This pruning will occur in the middle of the Tribulation at the Battle of Gog. The people "smooth and tall" will defeat Gog, their leader and his army.

Gift from the People Tall and Smooth

Isaiah 18:7 At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, Even from a people feared far and wide, A powerful and oppressive nation, Whose land the rivers divide-- To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, *even* Mount Zion.

Three and one-half years before the defeat of Gog, Israel enters into a seven year peace treaty with this feared nation of people "tall and smooth". When Israel calls for help, her ally comes to the rescue, defeating Gog's enemy. At the end of the battle, Israel still trusts the nation whose leader will arrive on his white horse with a bow in his hand. Israel believes he is her friend. The Revelation speaks of this foreign leader.

Revelation 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer.

Israel trusts this leader enough to allow him to occupy the Temple in Jerusalem, a dreadful mistake. He will soon break the treaty and establish himself as god in the Holy place of

Jerusalem and will establish his kingdom's capital on Mount Zion. One hundred years after this vision to Isaiah, Daniel prophesies the takeover of the Temple.

Daniel 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many (*Israel*) for one week (*seven years*), but in the middle of the week (*3 ½ years*) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (*Parenthesis added for clarity*)

Finally we see the “whirring wings” of the people from beyond the river of Cush, referred to in verse 1 of this chapter. The people “tall and smooth” will allow their leader to desecrate Israel’s most holy place with the clattering wing of abominations. It will not be just one transgression against the faith but repeated episodes of godless doings. From heaven the Lord will gaze quietly and with scorn; His time to break through the skies and set up His throne is still three and one-half years away.

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 18	<i>Far Prophecy</i> Tall and smooth people from a country beyond Cush rescue Israel from attack and pay homage in Zion.	Will be fulfilled in the middle of the Tribulation

Figure 31: Fulfillment of Vision 12