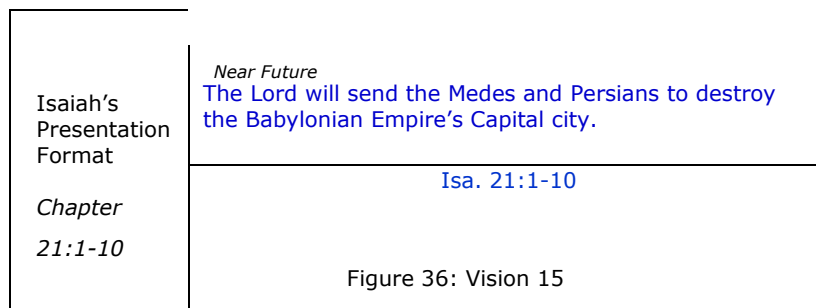


The Prophecies of Isaiah ⁴⁰

Lesson 16



Fallen Babylon Oracle – Vision 15

Vision 15 occurs shortly after the previous vision of 722 BC which is fulfilled in 715 BC. It seems evident that this vision takes place days before the fall of the city of Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom. Assyria is still the powerhouse nation in the world. The inhabitants of Aram are in exile in the old tribal area of Reuben. The Northern Kingdom tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh are in exile north of the Euphrates on the Gozan River. Babylon is a subservient region to the south of Assyria and hardly a candidate to usurp the power of the Assyrian king; however, Babylon, against all odds, will overtake the empire and become the new power in the region in 609 BC.

Near Future

A Wilderness by the Sea

Isaiah 21:1 The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea. As windstorms in the Negev sweep on, It comes from the wilderness, from a terrifying land. ^{2a} A harsh vision has been shown to me; The treacherous one still deals treacherously, *and* the destroyer still destroys.

The opening of vision 15 addresses the wilderness of the sea. The location of this vision is confused by the next sentence which says, "As wind storms in the Negev sweep on..." Many commentators call this vision the Oracle of the Negev but the Negev reference is a simile to explain how the oracle will be fulfilled; the land next to the sea will become a wilderness with the fulfillment of this oracle. The Negev is plagued with major windstorms that literally wipe the land clean. So too, the subject of this oracle will be wiped clean. This harsh vision is directed to eliminate the treacherous nation that will crush God's people if left in power.

Near Future

Call for Medes and Persians

Isaiah 21: 2b Go up, Elam, lay siege, Media; I have made an end of all the groaning she has caused.

The destroying nations in this verse are Elam and Media which will join and become the Medo-Persian Empire. In 722 BC, Elam and Media are under the control of Assyria along with the area called Babylon. At the appropriate time, the Lord will call for the Medes and

⁴⁰ 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.

the Persians to wipe the nation of Babylon clean because of the grief she has caused to His plan and property.

Near Future

Isaiah's Distress

Isaiah 21:3 For this reason my loins are full of anguish; Pains have seized me like the pains of a woman in labor. I am so bewildered I cannot hear, so terrified I cannot see. ⁴ My mind reels, horror overwhelms me; The twilight I longed for has been turned for me into trembling. ⁵ They set the table, they spread out the cloth, they eat, they drink; "Rise up, captains, oil the shields,"

Isaiah expresses his great anguish for the circumstances that facilitate the need to destroy Babylon. Isaiah sees the banquet that will be held 186 years after this vision. Daniel 5 provides the actual details of the banquet. Belshazzar is in charge of the empire while his father and mother are on vacation at the oasis of Tema on the Arabian peninsula. Belshazzar will throw a banquet for his lords and nobles. In the drunken brawl, Belshazzar will call for the Lord's utensils from the temple in Jerusalem to be brought from the treasury. Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar's great grandfather, will have placed them in safe keeping in the temple treasury of Belus in Babylon in 586 BC. He will have the wisdom not to put them in the Babylonian treasury. The Belus treasury is holy to the false god and therefore more secure than the nation's treasury. Nevertheless, Belshazzar will gather the utensils from the treasury and use them at the tables of his banquet which is an abomination to the Lord. "They set the table, they spread out the cloth, they eat, they drink," so the Lord will call the Medes and the Persians to bring judgment on Belshazzar's feast. Daniel will foretell the destruction just a few hours before it occurs when he translates the handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar.

Near Future

Directions to Isaiah

Isaiah 21:6 For thus the Lord says to me, "Go, station the lookout, let him report what he sees. ⁷ "When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, A train of donkeys, a train of camels, Let him pay close attention, very close attention." ⁸ Then the lookout called, " O Lord, I stand continually by day on the watchtower, And I am stationed every night at my guard post. ^{9a} "Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs."

Daniel's record describes the events inside the banquet room on the night of the fall; Isaiah's record details the events outside the city walls. The events of the fall of Babylon on the night of the handwriting on the wall are not a surprise to God; He knows about the fall and prophesies it to Isaiah 186 years before it happened; He also prepares and moves the Medo-Persians to the gate of the city in order to destroy it on the night of the banquet. The Lord will not move a small army to Babylon; it will have riders and men accompanying packhorses in pairs as well as a train of donkeys and camels to support the soldiers in the campaign. According to Isaiah's vision, the faithful Babylonian lookout stationed in the watchtower will see the Medo-Persian army when it arrives but the drunken nobles and co-king will be in no condition to respond.

Near Future

Fall of Babylon

Isaiah 21:9b And one answered and said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; And all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground." ¹⁰ O my threshed *people*, and my afflicted of the threshing floor! What I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I make known to you.

The watchman hears the reply of one man who says, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground." Isaiah hears the news of the destruction decades before the actual event occurs and he is faithful to pass on the prophecy to the Southern Kingdom which will pass it on to the Northern Kingdom the Lord is about to thresh and afflict within the next few months, weeks or even perhaps days.

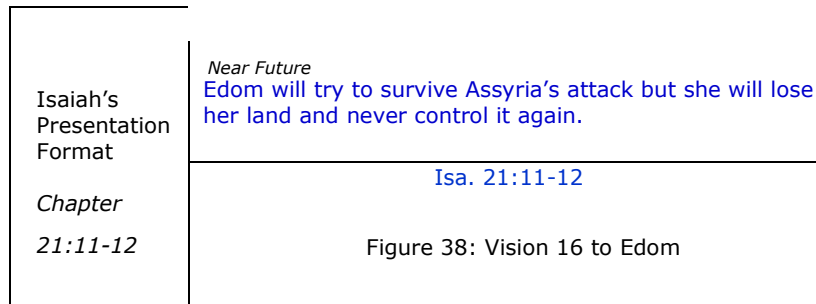


Picture 4: Ruins of Old Babylon

Figure 37: Fulfillment of Vision 15

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 21:1-10	<i>Near Future</i> The Lord will send the Medes and Persians to destroy the Babylonian Empire's Capital city.	Fulfilled in 536 BC

Vision 16 to Edom



Near Future
Edom's Oracle – Vision 16

Isaiah 21:11 The oracle concerning Edom. One keeps calling to me from Seir, "Watchman, how far gone is the night? Watchman, how far gone is the night?" ¹² The watchman says, "Morning comes but also night. If you would inquire, inquire; Come back again."

Edom is southeast of the Southern Kingdom. Many times, from the conquest of the Promised Land by Joshua until the time of Isaiah, Edom's land had been considered part of the Promised Land and at other times separate and autonomous. Edom's land is actually the land of Esau and his descendants. People today know her location because of one of her major cities, Petra. Seir, an alternate name for the region of Edom, pertains to the mountain range that was given to Esau and his descendants in Joshua 24:4.



Picture 5: Treasury of Old Petra

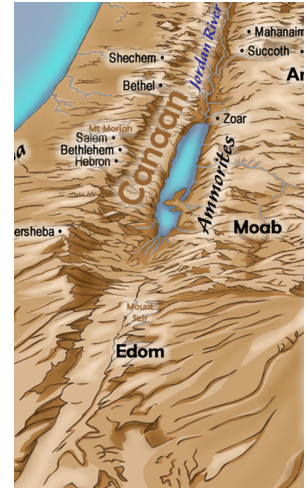
Joshua 24:4 And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.



Picture 6: Seir Mountain Range

In the original language, the word Edom is not used in verse 11; rather, it is called Dumah. Edom means red. Dumah or Idumah is the English equivalent of the Assyrian name for the area and it means silence or stillness.

Therefore, the watchman will be looking to Dumah and seeing no activity; it will be empty, silent and still. History records that both Tiglath-pileser in 734 BC and Sargon II in 711 BC took taxes from this area indicating that Edom was already under the thumb of Assyria. Will her political situation change? No. Morning and evening will come and go, but nothing will change for her. One day the exiles of Israel will be returned to their land but Edom will never control hers again.



Picture 7: Location of Edom's Seir Mountain Range

Figure 39: Fulfilment of Vision 16 to Edom

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 21:11-12	<i>Near Future</i> Edom will try to survive Assyria's attack but she will lose her land and never control it again.	Fulfilled in 711 BC

Vision 17 to Arabia

Isaiah's Presentation Format	<i>Near Future</i> Assyria will defeat the tribes of Arabia and put them in subjection.
	Isa. 21:13-17

Figure 40: Vision 17 to Arabia

Arabia's Oracle – Vision 17

¹³ The oracle about Arabia. In the thickets of Arabia you must spend the night, O caravans of Dedanites. ¹⁴ Bring water for the thirsty, O inhabitants of the land of Tema, Meet the fugitive with bread. ¹⁵ For they have fled from the swords, From the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, And from the press of battle. ¹⁶ For thus the Lord said to me, "In a year, as a hired man would count it, all the splendor of Kedar will terminate; ¹⁷ and the remainder of the number of bowmen, the mighty men of the sons of Kedar, will be few; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken."

In vision 17, Arabia will be the refuge for the caravans of Dedan. The Dedanites were a tribe in the Southern central Arabian peninsula near the western coastline. Tema is the beautiful oasis in northwestern Arabia. Kedar is a city in northern Arabia. Within the year, the Northern Kingdom will be defeated and Assyria's new king, Sargon II will turn his attention to Arabia. The Arabian peninsula will suffer great defeat and run for their lives. Kedar is destroyed; Dedanites rush away in caravans; Tema will be as far away as they can run from Sargon. According to a 715 BC Sargonian inscription that chronicled his accomplishments, he had defeated the Arabian tribes and deported them into exile in the old city of Samaria and the tribal area of Ephraim.



Figure 41: Fulfillment of Vision 17 to Arabia

Passage	Summary	Time of Fulfillment
Isa. 21:13-17	<i>Near Future</i> Assyria will defeat the tribes of Arabia and put them in subjection.	Fulfilled before 715 BC