

THROUGH THE BIBLE

ISAIAH 13-14

In a sense the Bible is “[A Tale of Two Cities](#).” From Genesis to Revelation the Bible tracks the conflict between two kingdoms - *the Kingdom of God* and *the kingdom of Satan*. And every kingdom has a capitol...

God’s capitol city on the earth was [Jerusalem](#).

Satan’s headquarters was the city of [Babylon](#).

Babylon is mentioned nearly 300 times in Scripture.

In the ancient world Babylon was the hotbed for astrology, and occult worship, and pagan belief.

The tower of Babel was the focus of mankind’s first organized rebellion against God. The Lord broke up the rebels by confusing the people’s language.

Yet, even after God’s judgment, Babylon remained the center for false religion. Babel reached its zenith in the late 6th century BC under a king named Nebuchadnezzar. He conquered Judah in 605 BC.

Two of Babylon’s distinguishing features exemplified its magnificence... One was its famous “[Hanging Gardens](#).” The Greek historian, Herodotus, refer to the gardens as one of the seven wonders of the world.

The other example of Babylon’s greatness were its “[walls](#).” A double wall 311 feet high by 87 feet thick surrounded the city. It was impregnable. The Euphrates flowed under the walls, and supplied the city’s water.

The city of Babylon was considered unconquerable.

Yet the fall of Babylon came in 539 BC.

A coalition army of Medes and Persians took the farmland north of Babel... then surrounded the city.

The Babylonians were braced for a long siege. They had stores of food that would last 20 years, and the Euphrates provided ceaseless water. But the Persian King Cyrus, and his General Ugabaru, had a plan...

The farms north of Babylon were irrigated by an elaborated system of canals. The Medo-Persian troops went upstream and diverted the river into these canals.

This dried up the riverbed under the city, enabling the invaders to enter Babylon - not by *scaling over the walls*, but by *marching under the fortified walls*.

This surprise tactic caught the Babylonians off-guard, and the supposedly impregnable city was taken by the Medes and Persians without firing a single shot.

And as is often the case, *the back story* is even more fascinating... Daniel 5 tells us what happened in the palace while the Euphrates River was being diverted.

The King of Babel at the time was a man named Belshazzar. On the night the city fell he was hosting a drunken orgy. During the party he decided to mock the gods of Babylon's conquered foes, and made the mistake of including *Judah's God - the one true God*.

From the Babylonian war chest he brought out the sacred vessels that God had ordained for use in Solomon's Temple. His revelers used the holy vessels as *beer mugs* and *shot glasses*. It was a deliberate attempt to humiliate and desecrate the God of Israel.

But at that very moment mysterious handwriting appeared on the wall of the king's palace. It was written by the finger of God. It was *supernatural script!*

Daniel was called in to interpret the writing.

Here was God's message to Belshazzar, "Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin." "Your number is up. You've been weighed and found lacking. Your kingdom is about to be divided." And at that moment, Ugabaru marched his troops under the walls and into the city.

It's interesting that the Hebrew prophets had seen this all in advance. The Prophet Jeremiah in Chapter 51, predicted the fall of Babylon 50 years beforehand.

Isaiah wrote of the Persian conquest of Babylon 160 years before it actually happened. Isaiah 45:1 even mentions the Persian King Cyrus by name 100 years before he was born... And here in Isaiah 13-14 God predicts judgment on Babel, and her evil inspiration - the devil who made her *headquarters of ungodliness...*

Verse 1 "The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw..." The word "*burden*" means "*heavy*." Here's a heavy warning - a serious message.

Call it "*a heavy revvy*" - it's a dire warning from God.

"Lift up a banner on the high mountain, raise your voice to them; wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles. I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger - those who rejoice in My exaltation." The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like that of many people!

A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters the army for battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven - the LORD and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land.”

I gave you the details of the fall of ancient Babylon. But the most striking feature in Isaiah 13 isn't its *similarities* to that battle, but its *dissimilarities*...

For example, here Isaiah sees Babylon surrounded by many nations. In 539 BC only two conquering nations - Media and Persia - came against the city.

Here in verse 5 Isaiah says the invaders come from "*a far country*" - as far away as "*the end of heaven.*" The Medo-Persians were Babel's next-door neighbors.

Verse 5 also mentions "*weapons of indignation.*" Remember, ancient Babylon fell *without firing a shot.*

Why these discrepancies?

Was Isaiah's prophecy wrong? *Not hardly.*

Isaiah definitely saw Babel's fall, but remember what we've noted about ancient prophecy. It often has a two-fold fulfillment. There's an immediate, short-term fulfillment - and then a long-range, future fulfillment.

Many Bible scholars see in Isaiah 13-14 a prediction still future. He prophesies the fall of a rebuilt Babylon.

And one of the reasons we think much of this prophecy is still future is found in verse 6, "*Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.*" Here's a strategic biblical mile marker - a signpost - "*The day of the LORD*"

Throughout the Bible this phrase looks to the end of the age when God has His say in the affairs of men.

Today is “the day of man.” Man is having his say, getting his way. And frankly, I’m tired of his jabber.

Mankind keeps hailing himself an expert in this and that... He keeps spouting off his wisdom while the world and our quality of life continue to deteriorate.

We’ve made a mess of things. I long for the day when God will finally *get His say, and have His way!*

The day is coming when God will have the final word. The day of the Lord begins when Jesus raptures the Church and brings judgment on a wicked world. It culminates when He returns and sets up His kingdom.

Evil Babylon will finally and utterly fall - and Jesus will establish His throne in Jerusalem. The Kingdom of God will finally come to earth. This is the day Isaiah sees... and it includes the destruction of Babylon.

Verse 7 tells us, “Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames.”

Paul uses the same language when he describes the judgments that occur during the Great Tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 puts it "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'peace and safety!' then

sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman and they shall not escape." A false peace gets abruptly interrupted by terrible judgments that grip the globe like labor pangs.

This is going to happen in the last days.

Verse 9 "Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it."

The Bible mentions two types of tribulation... In John 16:33 Jesus told His disciples, "In this world you will have tribulation." This world is always going to persecute Christians - trouble the followers of Jesus.

But that's not the trouble Isaiah describes. He's talking about the tribulation God vents upon the world.

God is angry with our wicked ways, and the day is coming when He'll judge fiercely. The cruelty of the nations will be met by the severity of God's wrath.

"For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine."

Verse 10 obviously goes beyond the scope of the historical battle. Isaiah mentions cosmic cataclysms as part of God's judgment. Compare *Isaiah's description* with *Jesus prediction* in Matthew 24 - and you'll see that Jesus and Isaiah are on the same page.

Both agree that these astronomical phenomena will summon the end of this age and the coming of Jesus.

In verse 11 God declares, "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." God "*halts the arrogance of the proud.*" There comes a time when God says no more. He only lets our *prideful proclamations* go so far.

"I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir." When God's final judgments are poured out on planet Earth gold will be more plentiful than guys. Massive destruction and widespread death will ravage life as we know it today.

Verse 13, "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger."

Over the years, in all my trips to California, I've only experience one earthquake - *but one was enough!*

I was in the upper deck at Anaheim Stadium. *My seat shook... the foul pole shook... everything shook.*

It turns out the epicenter of a 5.7 Quake was south of San Diego, near the Mexican border. I felt it as far as Anaheim - 100 miles away. It was a moving experience for me - but not for the locals - 5.7 is no big deal.

Yet the day is coming when God will shake not only California. He'll shake the Earth off its foundations.

He'll even shake the heavens above. As Jerry Lee Lewis sang, "*there's a whole lot of shaking going on*"

Verse 14 “It shall be as the hunted gazelle, and as a sheep that no man takes up; every man will turn to his own people, and everyone will flee to his own land.”

Pay close attention to the language in verse 14.

The subtlety probably escaped Jews of old, but not those of us with the benefit of a NT. Notice, the people who live through God’s final judgments on planet Earth are referred to as “*a sheep that no man takes up.*”

That implies that some sheep do get “*taken up.*”

Throughout the NT, we’re taught that before God’s judgment comes down, God’s Church will go up.

It’s called the rapture. Jesus descends in the clouds and snatches us to heaven. Critics of the rapture say the doctrine never appeared in the OT, *but here it is!*

Verse 15 “Everyone who is found will be thrust through, and everyone who is captured will fall by the sword. Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished. “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it.” Here Isaiah mentions the Medes. Apparently, the Medes were motivated by revenge more so than gold. This may speak of the aftermath of Babylon’s fall in 539 BC - or it could refer to the modern day Medes. *And who might they be?*

How about “*The Kurds.*” The Kurdish people are the ethnic group that served as Saddam Hussein’s whipping boy in the 1980s, and now they’re the object of the wrath and hate of the new Islamic State, ISIS.

Remember Saddam experimented with his weapons of mass destruction on the Kurds. He gassed innocent men, women, children... Kurdish vengeance and anger may still be taken out on a future Babylonian King.

Verse 18 “Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children.” Our translation uses “*bows*,” but the Hebrew word “*quesheth*” is literally, “*launcher*,” possibly modern *missile launchers*.

Verse 19 “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” Genesis 19 records Sodom’s destruction, “The LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah... out of the heavens.”

Apparently, Babylon will be destroyed in an inferno.

But this doesn’t correlate with ancient Babel. It was conquered without firing a shot. The city was taken by the Medes and Persians intact. I believe this fire raining from heaven is reserved for a future Babylon.

In fact, Revelation 17-18 speaks of a future Babylon.

Either ancient Babylon will be rebuilt, or the Babylonian system of religion will become so identified with one city that it takes its name. But John sees this future Babylon. She’s the world’s center for business and religion. Yet he says in Revelation 18:19, “In one hour she is made desolate.” He reports that the nations mourn when they see “the smoke of her burning.”

I believe what Isaiah sees - a Babylon overthrown like Sodom - is a future city that’ll rise in the last days.

Verse 20 adds, “It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there.”

This once mighty city will be abandoned and lie in ruins. It'll be uninhabited by anyone other than wild, desert animals... “The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged.”

Again, these last verses of Chapter 13 depict an abandoned Babylon - a fact not true of ancient Babel.

After being conquered by the Medo-Persians in 539 BC the city remained vital for centuries. In fact, 200 years later, Alexander the Great made the city of Babylon his capitol. Isaiah's prophecy is for the future!

This is why the former Iraqi ruler, Saddam Hussein's attempts to reconstruct Babylon drew so much attention from Bible scholars... In the desert 62 miles south of Baghdad, Hussein spent \$25 million rebuilding ancient Babylon. He styled himself as the next Nebuchadnezzar. He wanted Babylon to be his capitol.

Many of our American troops walked the halls of Saddam's 500 room palace. He rebuilt Babylon's famed “Marduk Gate” and several other ceremonial buildings. He had plans to reproduce “The Hanging Gardens” and even the infamous “Tower of Babel.”

Obviously, his plans were cut short, but who knows if a future Middle East leader won't revive his vision for a new Babylon. With the oil money flowing into the region

the means exists for a Dubai type construction project. Babylon may well rise from the ashes again.

It's interesting when Isaiah first uttered this prophecy Babylon was just a local city on the Euphrates River.

It took 100 years and the overthrow of Assyria for Babylon to become a world empire. The thought of Babylon as a superpower sounded as strange to Isaiah's contemporaries as the idea of the present day Babylon becoming a strategic city on the global scene.

In the decades to come, keep your eye on Babylon.

I believe there's a good chance that the ancient city will re-emerge as an economic and commercial center.

Chapter 14 begins, "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob."

The judgment that comes on Babylon occurs when Israel is resettled in their own land. Here's another prophecy that points to the future - even to our day.

When the Jews return home, strangers will join them.

"Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors." God will turn the tables on Babylon. For 70 years Daniel and Ezekiel, and their fellow Jews, were exiles in Babylon. But when God overthrows Babel, the Babylonians will serve the Jews.

“It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders.” The Babylonian king will taste some of his own medicine. Like Saddam Hussein he'll be humbled.

Chapter 13 is God's judgment on the city of Babylon. But now, Chapter 14 points a finger at Babylon's king.

Historically, at the time of Babylon's fall to the Medes and Persians, King Belshazzar ruled over Babel - but the spiritual king of Babel is someone far more sinister.

“The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing. Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us.'

Remember, the book of Isaiah was written 100 years before the Jews were taken into captivity to Babylon.

God used King Nebuchadnezzar's army to judge His people. But during their captivity these words of Isaiah provided hope. The Jews were assured that one day God would turn the tables and cut down Babylon.

These prophecies encouraged the exiled Jews. And where there's hope, even the worst circumstances can be endured. "When hope is alive, the night is less dark; the solitude is less deep, and the fear is less acute."

In 1965, Navy pilot, James Stockdale, was shot down over the jungles of Vietnam. For seven years he was held prisoner in the Hanoi Hilton. He was frequently beaten, tortured, and isolated from others.

At times he spent weeks with his hands chained over head - he couldn't even swat an oncoming mosquito. He ended up permanently impaired by his ordeal.

When he was finally released, he was asked how he endured years of such horrible brutality. He answered, "Hope kept me alive. The hope of one day going home, that each day could be the day of my release."

I've heard it said, "A man can live forty days without food, three days without water, eight minutes without air, but he cannot live one second without hope."

This is what the biblical prophecy is all about!

It was written to folks in the midst of battle - between good and evil - God and Satan. Yet it fast-forwards to the end - the final battle - and it reveals the Victor!

Stand with Jesus now, and you'll win in the end!

Verse 9 speaks directly to the King of Babylon. "Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations." *Wow, Hell is excited to meet you.*

Belshazzar was the Babylonian king who mocked God by bringing out His sacred vessels and filling them with wine and whiskey. He used holy saucers and bowls to toast the idols of Babylon. It was blasphemy.

Now Isaiah sends him an invitation... **to Hell.** *Hell is eager to welcome you! It looks forward to your arrival.*

Verse 10 records his reception, “**They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?'**” Hell humbles former kings - arrogant men. It'll do the same to Belshazzar.

“**Your pomp is brought down to Sheol (Hebrew for Hell), and the sound of your stringed instruments; the maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you.**”

Notice here, what Isaiah teaches us about hell...

First, people are **conscious** in hell. They're very much aware of their condition and their surroundings. They speak and see. They have thoughts and feelings.

Second, hell's inhabitants **recognize** each other. Here the former kings of the Earth know the King of Babylon when they see him. They know each other.

Third, they **mock** others. Hell is full of sarcasm. Here, its residents sneer at the king of Babylon, “**Have you become as weak as we?**” It's a spiteful place.

And **fourth**, Hell's inhabitants are subject to great **pain**. They're lying on maggots and covered in worms.

A maggot is a slug-like, worm-like parasite. It has a mouth hook that tears into its food and rips it apart.

Whenever my wife is repulsed she shouts, “Gag a maggot.” They don’t easily gag. They eat everything!

In Mark 9 when Jesus warns us of hell, He mentions three times, “Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” If you like lying on a gas grill while worms crawl over you, *then hell is your kind of place!*

In Summer of 2010 a shocking event occurred on a US Airways flight leaving Atlanta. Someone brought onboard a container of rotten meat filled with maggots.

As the plane taxied to the runway maggots started falling out of the overhead compartment creating quite a disturbance. One passenger said, “It only takes one maggot to upset your world.” The plane was turned around and returned to the gate... *But when you take your seat in hell you’ll be sitting in a bed of maggots.*

Plump red wigglers will be crawling all over you.

Hell must smell like a bait shop. If you don’t like maggots here’s another reason to give your life to Jesus! Unlike US Air, hell won’t stop for a few maggots.

And a maggot shower is just one of the tortures of Hell. Luke 16 tells us that hell is forever on fire. Like the burning bush Moses saw on Mt. Sinai, hell burns, but isn’t consumed. Its torment is eternal. Your throat is always parched. Your thirst is never quenched.

In Dante's Inferno, he writes an inscription over the gate of hell "All hope abandon, you who enter here."

It’s been said, "Even hell is truth known too late."

The reality of a *literal, eternal, infernal* Hell should shake us all out of our apathy. Several years ago, I read a Gallup poll that revealed 60% of Americans believed in hell, but here's the kicker only 4% thought they were going there. *What's the basis of your hope?*

Some folks trust in the fact that they're *a good person... or they try hard... or they mean well...*

They're hoping God grades on the curve...

AW Tozer once wrote, "The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions."

Other people hedge their bets, and buy into some religious dogma. Yet the Bible says if you're trusting in anyone or anything other than the finished work of Jesus Christ you're going to hell. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." God has made one to heaven.

Realize, God's one and only provision for sin is *the shed blood of His Son, Jesus!* He's made no other way.

Verse 12 continues to address the King of Babylon.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" Recall, biblical prophecy is fond of twin fulfillments. *Prophecy comes in pairs!*

Until this point, Isaiah 14 has spoken of Belshazzar, king of Babylon. But Belshazzar was only a puppet on a string. A far more sinister force was behind the marionette. A *spiritual king* propped up the *earthly ruler*.

In Daniel 10 an Angel was dispatched to Daniel with a message. When he arrived he said he was detained by “*The Prince of Persia*” - a demon. On occasion demons empower and inspire the kings of this world.

And this was true of Babylon.

If Babel is the seat of Satan on the Earth; then who do you think was behind the King of Babylon? *How about Satan himself?* Here Isaiah sees past the human kings of Babylon to the power that inspired them.

This also happens in other prophecies Ezekiel 28 is describing the King of Tyre, when the Holy Spirit shifts his conversation to Satan, the power behind Tyre.

And notice here, how Isaiah refers to Satan. He calls him “*O Lucifer, son of the morning.*” Satan didn’t begin as the epitome of evil. Ezekiel 28:14 says he was once “*the anointed cherub who covers*”. He was an angel.

Remember when God gave to Moses blueprints for how to build the Ark - two golden angels were to sit on the top - their wingspan covered the mercy seat.

Of course, the Ark was a replica of God’s throne. The Bible mentions two archangels, Michael and Gabriel. Perhaps in the beginning there were three. Lucifer was one of the angelic trio who hovered over God’s throne.

We know Lucifer played a role in worship. Ezekiel 28:13 depicts him as a musical creature. Perhaps he was Heaven’s worship leader. Ezekiel calls him, “*the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*”

Here, Isaiah calls him, “*Lucifer*” which means “*light bearer.*” And “*son of the morning*” - this was the star that shone so brightly it was seen after the sun was up.

We're wrong to think of Satan as a cartoonish creature in a red suit, pointed ears, horns, and pitchfork. He's far more glamorous and sophisticated.

He comes in the most *pleasing shapes and attractive forms*. He's *the gorgeous blonde in the string bikini - the hip professor with his cool sounding arguments - the self-righteous preacher spouting seductive lies*.

We need to *beware!* Paul refers the fallen Lucifer as “*an angel of light.*” Satan is the master deceiver.

The Angel Lucifer once occupied great heights. Yet never has anyone fallen so far so fast. He was “*cut down to the ground.*” Recall what was written of the King of Babylon in verse 9, “*Hell is happy to see him.*”

Some people assume that today the devil rules over hell, but not so. Satan wants nothing to do with Hell.

Satan's headquarters is Babylon - not Hell.

Revelation 20 says at the end of the Great Tribulation Satan will be bound in Hell for 1000 years.

When that day comes Hell's inmates will look at the list of new arrivals and see Satan on the schedule.

They'll get excited! They'll finally get a chance to vent their rage, their anger - unleash their frustrations.

And what does hell say to the devil, verse 9, “*Have you become as weak as we?*” Satan doesn't reign in Hell. He gets kicked around. He's Hell's punching bag. His pride is brought low. His music is shut off. The old serpent crawls for eternity with maggots and worms.

And here's the sin that caused his colossal fall, verse 13, "For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"

Five times in two verses Lucifer says "*I will.*" Pride entered his heart. Recall, the middle letter in the word "*sin*" is "*I*". Lucifer sings with Sinatra, "*I did it My Way.*"

Somewhere along the way it turned into "*all about Lucifer.*" He went from *worship leader to entertainer to celebrity to worship hoarder to devil...* all pastors and worship leaders should take heed to the progression.

Pride caused Lucifer to get tired of worshipping God.

He desired to be worshipped... he tried to steal God's glory. He said "*I will be like the Most High.*"

Lucifer was already high on heaven's chain of command. He was "*anointed cherub who covers,*" but that wasn't enough. He coveted "*Most High.*" It didn't dawn on him there's only room for one *Most High*.

Satan desired to be exalted like God, yet God informs him in verse 15, "*Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.*"

In Luke 10:18 Jesus said He was there when Satan crashed. "*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*"

Satan no longer makes his home in heaven. He was fired from serving God. Today he roams planet Earth.

The NT refers to Satan as “ruler of this world” and “prince of the power of the air.” He has a stranglehold on rebellious men and the systems that influence them.

Yet at the cross Satan’s final and ultimate defeat was sealed. Jesus broke the power of sin and death.

When Jesus returns He’ll lock up the devil in Hell.

Matthew 25:41 tells us Hell wasn’t made for man, but for the devil and his angels. Thus, when Jesus returns He’ll assign Satan to the very place he’s tried to avoid.

Notice one other subtle, but vital point about Hell...

Isaiah says Satan isn’t only “*brought down to Sheol,*” but to its “*lowest depths.*” Implied are “*depths*” or “*levels*” or “*degrees of punishment*” in Hell. Some folks will be sentenced to hotter spots than other people.

Verses 16-17 make an interesting observation about Satan’s arrival in Hell. “*Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms...'*”

When Satan is finally forced out of the shadowy recesses in which he works into the light of day we’ll be astonished. *Is this the guy we let bully us around?*

We’ll be amazed that we allowed such a puny punk wreak such havoc. Satan was a defeated foe all along.

But because of our fears, and doubts, and lack of faith... we allowed him to work so much mischief.

Roy Putnam writes, "It's the fearful who allow the devil to hold high carnival on this planet. Satan sets up his tyranny only because he has not been challenged."

James says, "resist the devil and he'll flee from you."

Hold on to the promise, 1 John 4:4, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Verse 17 finishes the thought, "Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?" Here's a description of Satan's work - his legacy. He kept people in prison.

Satan will let you change addictions - go from alcohol to cigarettes - or video games to online poker.

He doesn't care what does the job, just as long as you stay locked up and in bondage to sin. Only Jesus can overthrow Satan in your life and truly set you free.

Verse 18, "All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house; but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot." Isaiah calls Jesus the "righteous branch." Satan is the "*abominable branch*."

"You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people.

The brood of evildoers shall never be named.

Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land, and fill the face of the world with cities."

Verse 22, "For I will rise up against them," says the LORD of hosts, "And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity," says the LORD." God will put an end to the Babylonian dynasty.

"I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts."

What descriptive language, God will sweep Babel with "*the broom of destruction.*" Leave it for porcupines.

Chapter 14 ends with the judgment of Assyria and the Philistines. Assyria invaded Judah in Isaiah's day. They were the immediate threat. Babylon came later.

In verse 24 God predicts Judah's deliverance from Assyria, "The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand: That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot." *This is exactly what God did...*

Isaiah 7-9 describes how *Immanuel* - a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus - the Angel or messenger of the Lord - came in a single night, and slew 185,000 troops who were camped against Jerusalem. It was a miracle.

Verse 25 "Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders.

This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations." Note in verse 24 God promises to break "*The Assyrian.*" A person, not just an army is in view. This is a dual prophecy - present and future.

“*The Assyrian*” speaks of both ancient Assyria, the first world ruler - but also, Antichrist, the last rebel ruler.

“For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?” *What a powerful verse!* Who can fight against God’s purpose and win? *No one!* What God purposes will prevail - and that includes His promises to you.

Always remember 1 Thessalonians 5:24. Paul tells us, “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

Chapter 14 closes with God’s warning to the Philistines. Since they were west of Judah, and Assyria invaded from the east, Immanuel’s annihilation of Assyria’s troops saved the Philistines as well as Judah.

That’s why God says to them, “This is the burden which came in the year that King Ahaz died. Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken; for out of the serpent’s roots will come forth a viper, and its offspring will be a fiery flying serpent.” In other words, don’t get the bighead.

Just because you’ve escaped judgment this time, doesn’t mean other threats are not on the horizon.

Repent or a viper will follow the serpent... Assyria fell, but Babylon followed. Though the teacher was replaced, God’s lesson remained the same... *repent!*

Verse 30 “The firstborn of the poor will feed, and the needy will lie down in safety; I will kill your roots with famine, and it will slay your remnant.

Wail, O gate! Cry, O city! All you of Philistia are dissolved; for smoke will come from the north, and no one will be alone in his appointed times."

What will they answer the messengers of the nation?

That the LORD has founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall take refuge in it." There'll be salvation for Jerusalem, but Philistia will go up in smoke.