

Isaiah 13 Commentary

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ISAIAH ("Jehovah is Salvation")						
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God's Government "A throne" Isaiah 6:1				God's Grace "A Lamb" Isaiah 53:7		
Time 740-680BC						

[See Introduction to Isaiah by Dr John MacArthur](#): Title, Author, Date, Background, Setting, Historical, Theological Themes, Interpretive Challenges, Outline by Chapter/Verse. Excellent overview. From [Grace To You](#) ministries - same intro as in [MacArthur Study Bible](#)

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

- **Oracle:** Isa 14:28 15:1 17:1 19:1 21:1,11,13 22:1,25 23:1 Jer 23:33-38 Eze 12:10 Na 1:1 Hab 1:1 Zec 9:1 12:1 Mal 1:1
- **Babylon:** Isa 14:4-23 21:1-10 43:14 44:1,2 47:1-15 Jer 25:12-26 50:1-51:23 Da 5:28-6:28 Rev 17:1-18:24)
- **Saw:** Isa 1:1
- [See Map of Babylonian Empire](#)

ISAIAH LAYS A HEAVY BURDEN ON BABYLON

As you read and study the great prophetic book of Isaiah, keep the context in mind, remembering that chapter 12 marks the end of the first major section of Isaiah (refer to the preceding Table). Isaiah takes an abrupt turn to the oracle concerning Babylon beginning in Isaiah 13:1 followed by additional oracles to the nations through chapter 27.. Isaiah 1-12 precedes from worst (Isa 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) to best, from divine judgment to divine comfort, chapter 12 (Isa 12:1-6) culminating in the promise of salvation and the presence of the Savior (Isa 12:6). Isaiah 13-27 records God's prophecies against 10 Gentile nations that opposed Israel, as well as judgments against Judah and Israel.

Matthew Henry's introductory comments on this section are worth pondering...The threatenings we find here against Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Tyre, etc., were intended for comfort to those in Israel that feared God, but were terrified and oppressed by those potent neighbours, and for alarm to those among them that were wicked. If God would thus severely reckon with those for their sins that knew Him not, and made no profession of His name, how severe would He be with those that were called by His name and yet lived in rebellion against Him! (**Ed:** E.g., study Hebrews 12:5-11-notes) And perhaps the directing of particular prophecies to the neighbouring nations might invite some of those nations to the reading of the Jews' Bible, and so they might be brought to their religion.

ISAIAH 13-27 JUDGMENT OF THE GENTILES BEGINNING WITH THE BURDEN ON BABYLON

The oracle ([massa](#)) **concerning Babylon** - Note that this oracle extends through the end of Isaiah 14.

As discussed below Babylon is the second most mentioned city in the Bible and is found from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis 11 identifies it as the seat of man's prideful rebellion against God's authority and Revelation 18 predicts the final fall of this "great" city. Isaiah 13-14 give us previews of coming attractions. The interpretation in this commentary is based on a literal approach to the Scripture and as discussed below identifies Babylon as a city with both a past fulfilled history and a future yet to be fulfilled prophecy.

The ESV Study Bible offers a more generic, "symbolic" interpretation of Babylon seeing it as "the proud evil that sets the whole world against God (Isa 13:11, 19; cf. Ge. 11:1-9; Isa. 14:26; Da 4:30; Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:2, 3)." While this statement is true, it does not address the fact that Babylon is a literal city, which is the approach taken by these notes, which will go into some detail to defend the interpretation of Babylon as a literal city, not just in Isaiah's day but also in our day, a city in Iraq which will one in the future rise to a position of power and prominence before its final demise in the Revelation.

Guzik - Isaiah finished his prophetic career in 685BC, almost 100 years before Judah finally fell before the Babylonian Empire (586BC). At the time of this prophecy, Babylon was a significant nation, but they were definitely behind the Assyrian Empire in status. Yet the Lord who knows the end of all things can speak of the judgment on the pride of Babylon hundreds of years before the judgment comes.

Matthew Henry on **oracle** "The threatenings of God's word press heavily upon the wicked, and are a sore burden, too heavy for them to bear."

NET Bible Note says that Isaiah 13-23 "contains a series of judgment oracles against various nations. It is likely that Israel, not the nations mentioned, actually heard these oracles. The oracles probably had a twofold purpose. For those leaders who insisted on getting embroiled in international politics, these oracles were a reminder that Judah need not fear foreign nations or seek

international alliances for security reasons. For the righteous remnant within the nation, these oracles were a reminder that Israel's God was indeed the sovereign ruler of the earth, worthy of His people's trust."

Young emphasizes the consoling and encouraging aspects of Isaiah 13-23 noting "That these prophecies appear in the Biblical book of Isaiah was not for the benefit of the Babylonians but for the people of God (**Ed**: Israel, especially the believing remnant). From them they would learn that the hostile power of the world in its most powerful manifestation would finally be brought to ignominious defeat and ruin. No power that sets itself against God, be it as haughty and pretentious as was Babylonia, can prevail. Thus, Israel would learn that God does not permit to go unpunished the wickedness of those who have set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed, and who oppose His people. To see the opponents of God's purposes punished would bring consolation and encouragement to the Jews, for it would teach them how precious their salvation was in God's sight. But they would also learn that they too were deserving of punishment, and that only by God's mercy had a remnant been spared. Then, too, the raging of the nations is but a carrying out of God's purposes. He is in control of all things. A topsy-turvy world is not really topsy-turvy. Even the darkest moments are in God's providential control and rule. ([The Book of Isaiah - 3 Volume Commentary](#))

THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS ORACLE

When does this oracle against Babylon take place? This question will be addressed in greater detail throughout the notes on Isaiah 13 but first it is worth noting that there are several clues to the timing from the following passages...

(1) Isaiah 13:6 - **The Day of the Lord** - See in depth discussion below.

(2) Isaiah 13:10 - Isaiah describes major cosmic alterations in the sun, moon and stars, and this is something that has not yet occurred in the history of the world.

(3) Isaiah 13:19 - Isaiah compares Babylon to Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were completely devastated, but that has never happened to Babylon. (Compare the prophecies in Revelation - Rev 6:12-14+, Rev 8:12+)

The implication from points 1-3 is that the final and full fulfillment of Isaiah 13 has to be future to our day. This genre of interpretation is not popular with those who do not espouse the belief that **God is sovereign** and in complete control of the future history and course of this present world and that He has a plan for the "apple of His eye," the tiny nation of Israel. Popular or not, this "futuristic" (literal) approach is the only interpretation that can rationally, reasonably explain Isaiah's prophecies. Revelation 16:19+ describes the 7th Bowl and final bowl Judgment of God and it will be poured out on Babylon. What is the clear implication? Babylon has to be rebuilt and bloom into the immoral, abominable city that influences the entire world. And note that Isaiah (and Jeremiah) state specifically that the judgment is on Babylon which John says is a city (Rev 17:18+, cf "great city" in Rev 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21+) and not on the Roman Catholic Church, not on the city of Rome and not on the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecies both mean Babylon! Take it or leave it! But if you leave it you are not allowing God's plain word to state what it plainly states - Babylon will be utterly, totally destroyed and will never again be inhabited by mankind! For a much more detailed discussion see **Dr Andy Woods** lengthy treatise on "[What is the Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18?](#)" If you still do not believe Babylon must be rebuilt to be utterly destroyed than it simply becomes a matter of faith, for "**faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1+) Many Bible scholars did not believe that the nation of Israel would ever become a nation again. But they were forced to eat their scholarly words when Israel became a nation again on May 14, 1948! One other event that has to transpire before the end of this age is rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. But if one refuses to believe the city of Babylon must be rebuilt, they probably doubt that a Jewish Temple will be rebuilt.

Examples of unbelief in Bible scholars regarding God's ability to reconstitute the nation of Israel...

In 1937 **Louis Berkhof** wrote in his famous book Systematic Theology (used in many seminaries) "Both the Old and the New Testament speak of a future conversion of Israel, Zech. 12:10; 13:1; II Cor. 3:15,16, and Rom. 11:25-29 seems to connect this with the end of time. Premillennialists have exploited this Scriptural teaching for their particular purpose. They maintain that there will be a national restoration and conversion of Israel, that the Jewish nation will be re-established in the Holy Land....It is very doubtful, however, whether Scripture..... Now it may be thought that Romans 11:11-32 certainly teaches the future conversion of the nation of Israel. Many commentators adopt this view, but even its correctness is subject to considerable doubt." (**ED**: One wonders what Berkhof thought on May 14, 1948!)

Bruce Waltke a highly acclaimed Biblical scholar states dogmatically that, **The Jewish nation no longer has a place as the special people of God**; that place has been taken by the Christian community which fulfills God's purpose for Israel."

Comment - Waltke may be an outstanding scholar but sadly he espouses a very deadly and evil doctrine

known as replacement theology. You may be thinking that I am overstating the case by calling it an "evil" doctrine. If you doubt the evil that has been perpetrated against Jews in general and the nation of Israel in particular by this devilish doctrine then you owe it to yourself to set aside 60 minutes to watch the video by **Dr David Reagan** in which he gives indisputable proof of the corrupt fruit of replacement theology. And be sure and watch the **video** as Reagan documents his premise with many slides which every person who holds to replacement theology needs to view and ponder. Words matter, especially when it deals with Biblical doctrine! Here is the link to [The Evils of Replacement Theology](#).

Henry Morris notes that Isaiah records that he saw "these things, though they were all far in the future. Evidently, God gave Isaiah a series of visions, projecting him into the future, so he could see the events as actually taking place."

Isaiah the son of Amoz - Isaiah in beginning a distinctly new section clearly claims authorship to abort those of liberal persuasion who would try to invoke a new author! Comparing Scripture with Scripture strongly supports Isaiah's authorship as we note the similarity in the following subjects...

- Israel is to become a remnant: Isa 10:21, 22 with Isa 17:4–6; 24:1–13.
- The return of the remnant: Isa 10:20, 21 with Isa 17:7, 8; 20:5, 6; and Isa 27:9.
- Cry of deliverance in darkness: Isa 9:1 with Isa 11:1 and Isa 24:14.
- Destruction of oppressor: Isa 10:16-19, 33, 34 w/ Isa 14:25; 16:4; 17:12-14; Isa 18:4–6.
- Regathering of Israel: Isa 11:11–16 and Isa 14:1 with Isa 27:13.
- Turning of the nations: Isa 11:10 with Isa 14:1b; Isa 16:1, 2; 18:7
- Nations serve Israel: Isa 11:11 with Isa 14:2.
- Nations partly experience Israel's rule: Isa 11:14–16 with Isa 14:29.
- Coming peace: Isa 9:4–6 and Isa 11:2–5, with Isa 14:1, 2, 7, 8, 29, 30; 16:4, 5.
- Redeemed sing hymns of praise: Isa 12:1-6 with Isa 24:14–16; 25:1–5; 26:1, 2.

Young - Just as in Jeremiah and in Ezekiel the prophecies of the foreign nations are grouped together, so also in Isaiah. This section, therefore, may be compared with Jeremiah 46–51 and Ezekiel 25–32. The prophet speaks concerning Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Elam, Media, Arabia, Tyre, and then concludes the prophecies with a description of **judgment of the world and of the last things** (Isaiah 24–27).

Concerning Babylon - We are at first surprised that this does is not read "concerning Assyria", for Assyria has been the subject of discussion in the preceding chapters as the major protagonist of Israel and Judah. In addition, at the time of this prophecy Babylon was by no means a threatening power and she did not achieve that status until almost a century later.

Oracle (04853) (**massa'** from verb **nasa'** = lift up, carry, take away, see "lift up" in Is 13:2) literally describes a burden or something which is carried about and emphasizes the effort necessary to carry the item (Ex 23:5, 2Ki 5:17, 2Ki 8:9). Figuratively, in the prophets **massa'** indicates a divine prophecy with a message of judgment, a prophecy, analogous to a "heavy load" because it announces threat of heavy judgments. The other picture of "weight" is that the prophet is heavily laden with a message from God that he must deliver. It is a weighty or burdensome kind of message to deliver, an utterance which speaks chiefly of doom. Specific burdens deal with Nineveh (Nah 1:1), Judah (Hab1:1), Damascus (Zech 9:1), Jerusalem (Zech 12:1), Israel (Mal 1:1), Zabad who murdered King Joash (2Chr 24:27), King Joram (2Ki 9:25).

Figuratively **massa'** can also describe "iniquities...as a heavy burden" (Ps 38:4) or people being burden (Nu 11:11,17;Dt 1:12;2Sa 15:33;Job 7:20). **Massa'** is once used to describe delight or strong yearning in one's heart (Eze 24:25). In 2Chr 17:11 **massa'** describes a tribute which is a forced payment from a submissive nation to a superior nation. **Massa'** can describe a burden in the sense of an oppression or hardship, something that causes distress (Hos 8:10).

Massa' - 29x in 25v in the **NAS** - burden(3), oracle(25), oracles(1). 2 Ki. 9:25; 2 Chr. 24:27; Prov. 30:1; Prov. 31:1; Isa. 13:1; Isa. 14:28; Isa. 15:1; Isa. 17:1; Isa. 19:1; Isa. 21:1; Isa. 21:11; Isa. 21:13; Isa. 22:1; Isa. 23:1; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 23:33; Jer. 23:34; Jer. 23:36; Jer. 23:38; Ezek. 12:10; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 1:1

Massa' - 66x in 60v in the **KJV** = burden 57, song 3, prophecy 2, set 1, exaction 1, carry away 1, tribute 1; 66 Ex 23:5; Nu 4:15, 19, 24, 27, 31f, 47, 49; 11:11, 17; Deut 1:12; 2 Sam 15:33; 19:35; 2Kgs 5:17; 8:9; 9:25; 1Chr 15:22, 27; 2Chr 17:11; 20:25; 24:27; 35:3; Neh 10:31; 13:15, 19; Job 7:20; Ps 38:4; Pr 30:1; 31:1; Isa 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1, 25; 23:1; 30:6; 46:1f; Jer 17:21f, 24, 27; 23:33f, 36, 38; Ezek 12:10; 24:25; Hos 8:10; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1

BRIEF EXCURSUS ON BABYLON

Babylon (0894) (**babel**) means confusion. . " Babylon is the Greek spelling of the name which in Hebrew is uniformly **Babel**. The word occurs some 286 times and refers to an ancient city on the eastern bank of the Euphrates about twenty miles south of Bagdad, near the modern village of **Hillah** in Iraq. Genesis 11:9 gives the name as Babel (perhaps from balal "to confuse") but probably intended as a parody, a word play referring to what happened when the languages were confused. Even our derivative English word "babble" is an example of onomatopoeia, a word which imitates an actual sound, and thus is essentially the same in all languages.

Babylon is mentioned more in the Scriptures than any other city except Jerusalem.

Babel - 262x in 233v in the **NAS** -Ge 10:10; 11:9; 2Kgs 17:24, 30; 20:12, 14, 17, 18; 24:1, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20; 25:1, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28; 1Chr 9:1; 2Chr 32:31; 33:11; 36:6, 7, 10, 18, 20; Ezra 1:11; 2:1; 7:6, 9; 8:1; Neh 7:6; 13:6; Esther 2:6; Ps 87:4; 137:1, 8; Isa 13:1, 19; 14:4, 22; 21:9; 39:1, 3, 6, 7; 43:14; 47:1; 48:14, 20; Jer 20:4, 5, 6, 21:2, 4, 7, 10; 22:25; 24:1; 25:1, 9, 11f; 27:6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22; 28:2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 14; 29:1, 3, 4, 10, 15, 20, 21, 22, 28; 32:2, 3, 4, 28, 36; 34:1, 2, 3, 7, 21; 35:11; 36:29; 37:1, 17, 19; 38:3, 17, 18, 22, 23; 39:1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13; 40:1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11; 41:2, 18; 42:11; 43:3, 10; 44:30; 46:2, 13, 26; 49:28, 30; 50:1, 2, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 28, 29, 34, 35, 42, 43, 45, 46; 51:1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 49, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 64; 52:3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34; Ezek 12:13; 17:12, 16, 20; 19:9; 21:19, 21; 23:15, 17, 23; 24:2; 26:7; 29:18, 19; 30:10, 24, 25; 32:11; Da 1:1; Mic 4:10; Zech 2:7; 6:10

Babylon is transliterated into Greek and occurs 12x in 11v in the NT - Matt 1:11, 12, 17; Acts 7:43; 1Pet 5:13; Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21.

The first mention of **Babel** is in Genesis in which it was referred to as the kingdom of Nimrod, a leader who was a "mighty hunter before Jehovah" ("**before**" could also be translated "mighty against!")...

He was a mighty hunter **before** the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like **Nimrod** a mighty hunter **before** the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (Hebrew = babel; Lxx = babulon) and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Genesis 10:9-10)

The next mention of **Babel** is in Genesis 11 where we see man's rebellious heart and God's righteous response...

And the LORD said, "**Behold**, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them (See **Tower of Babel** or **here** and **Images for tower of Babel**). "Come, let Us go down and there **confuse (balal)** their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So (TERM OF CONCLUSION) the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth (**Ed**: Note that this "rebellious spirit" of Babylon now covered the earth!); and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called **Babel**, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:6-9)

Comment: **Babylon** clearly serves as a prototype or picture of man's rebellion against God and immediately precedes Genesis 12's introduction of God's plan to redeem fallen mankind through a man named Abraham who would be the father of the nation of Israel and ultimately of the Messiah (Gal 3:16). It is therefore not surprising that we see this conflict that begins in Genesis 11 (man's way of "salvation") and Genesis 12 (God's way of salvation) continuing to its final and dramatic culmination in the last book of the Bible, specifically in Revelation 17 and 18.

Motyer - More than any other name, therefore, '**Babylon**' typifies humankind's will to be its own saviour.

Babel refers to the ancient city on the eastern bank of the Euphrates about twenty miles south of Baghdad, near the modern village of Hilla in modern day Iraq. Its first occurrence in the Bible pertains to the Tower of Babel episode in which man in a titanic social revolt attempted to throw off the rule of God and achieve unity and peace without God (Ge 11:9). The symbol of their unity was the tower, and the strength of their unity was their common language. As a result, God judged them by confusing their speech. According to the Sumerian Enmerkar Epic, at one time men praised Enlil "with tongue," possibly a reflection in secular history of this event.

Babylon was indeed one of the greatest of ancient cities- The splendor of ancient Babylon was spectacular, covering over 1000

acres surrounded by a double-walled system of defense that encircled the city. These walls were over 85 feet thick and 11 miles long, with the outer walls being approximately 25 feet wide and reinforced with towers every 65 feet (cp Jeremiah 51:12, 58). There were eight major city gates named after various Babylonian deities (e.g., the famous [Ishtar Gate](#)).

The city was dominated by a seven-story [ziggurat](#), 288 feet high, known as the Tower of Babylon. It was constructed from nearly 60 million fired bricks. On the top of it stood the temple of [Marduk](#) (Jer 50:2). The Greek historian Herodotus claimed that it contained a solid gold statue of [Marduk](#) weighing 52,000 pounds!

Whereas King [Nebuchadnezzar](#) envisioned the proud city that usurped Jerusalem's headship as a head of gold (Da 2:32-note, Da 2:37-note), Daniel saw its true bestial character as a lion (Dan 7:4-note). Daniel based his prayer for Israel's release on Jeremiah's prediction that the captivity would last seventy years (Jer 25:11-12; Jer 29:10; Dan 9:2ff-note). But whereas Jeremiah predicted the length of the captivity, Isaiah foresaw the way of Israel's exodus from Babylon through the conquest of [Cyrus](#) (Isa 41:1, 2, 3, 4; Isa 43:14; Isa 44:28, 45:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Isa 46:11 ["bird" = King Cyrus])

Resources on Babylon:

- [Babylon](#) - Dr Tony Garland
- [What is the Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18](#) - Dr Andy Woods
- [Revelation 052 – Babylon: The Bookends of History \(Part 1\)](#) - Dr Andy Woods
- [Revelation 053 – Babylon: The Bookends of History \(Part 2\)](#) - Dr Andy Woods
- [Babylon - Bible Dictionary \(part 1\); Bible Dictionary \(part 2\)](#)

As one reads the OT prophecies concerning Babylon especially prophecies that state "Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the [Chaldeans](#)' pride, will be as when God overthrew [Sodom](#) and [Gomorrah](#)." (Isa 13:19), the question arises is this "Has Babylon ever been destroyed to the extent that it became like Sodom and Gomorrah?" The historical evidence strongly supports the premise that Babylon has never been completely destroyed which in turn supports the interpretation that Babylon will be rebuilt and will suffer a literal future destruction. As of 2011 Babylon is an insignificant place in Iraq, but is anything too difficult for God? (Ge 18:14, Jer 32:17, 27, Isa 46:9, 10) Is it too difficult for Him to cause/allow Babylon to arise from the ashes to become the leading metropolis of the world? I think not! It follows that the prophecy in Isaiah 13 has never been fully fulfilled and is yet future to our time. It is fitting that Babylon which has been called "the seat of the civilization that expressed organized hostility to God" (Tenney) in Genesis, should meet its final and utter demise in the book of the Revelation as recorded by the apostle John...

And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her (the city of Babylon), will weep and lament over her (the great city) when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, '**Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.**' (Rev 18:9, 10, 16-19+)

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her (Babylon)." And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will **Babylon, the great city**, be thrown down with violence, and **will not be found any longer**. (Rev 18:20,21+).

Comment: Note carefully how a literal reading of John's description indicates that Babylon is an actual **city**, a rebellious **city** which will finally receive her just judgment from God and will finally be completely destroyed forever just as was Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 13:19)!

Dr John MacArthur commenting on Isaiah 13:19ff agrees that Isaiah's reference to Babylon's demise had only a partial fulfillment in her defeat by the Medes and Persians and that a final fulfillment will occur in the future - "From the near future (Medes defeating Babylon - Isa 13:17), Isaiah returned to the distant future. The ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies of Babylon's desolation will come in conjunction with **Babylon's rebuilding** and **utter destruction** when Christ returns (Rev 14:8+; Rev 18:2+). Obviously, Isaiah was unable to see the many centuries that separated Babylon's fall to the Medes from the destruction of the final Babylon by God (see Revelation 17+, Rev 18+)." (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#) page 956)

Note from Wikipedia - By 1905, there were several villages in Babylon, one of which was Qwaresh with about 200 households located within the boundaries of the ancient inner city walls. The village grew due to the need for laborers during the German Oriental Society excavations (1899-1917)

Those who say that **Babylon** of the ancient world was utterly destroyed are choosing to ignore the truth that Babylon was still a literal city in the first century AD. Peter mentions **Babylon** in his first letter (see below). While some have said this was "code

language" and that he really meant "Rome". A normally literal interpreter Dr Charles Ryrie chooses to jettison literal in 1Pe 5:13 and writes "She who is in Babylon" is the "church in Rome." He is guilty of doubly allegorizing the pronoun "she" and the location "Babylon!" Amazing! The ESV Study Bible actually goes so far as to say this description refers to the "church of Rome"! This is simply not good hermeneutic technique! There is nothing in Peter's letter to suggest this is *not* the **literal city of Babylon** and thus there is no Scriptural support for interpreting this name **symbolically**. And note that Peter has already described the literal geographic areas of "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (1Pe 1:1). Why would he suddenly switch to symbolic language in chapter 5? There is nothing in the context of chapter 5 which remotely supports that **Babylon** should be interpreted allegorically! If Peter had meant "Rome," he could have easily written the name "Rome." Paul was not afraid to use the name "**Rome**" (Ro 1:7, Ro 1:15, 2Ti 1:17)! (See related topics: [The Art and Science of Interpretation](#), [The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#) and [Understanding Symbols and Figures](#))

She who is in **Babylon**, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. (1Peter 5:13-note)

It is notable that several Bible translations jettison accurate translation of the Greek text and translate "**she**" (which is feminine) with the word "CHURCH." It is surprising that even the normally excellent NET Bible renders it "the church in Babylon" as does the CSB, NLT, NRS, and KJV.

The **NET Note** adds "Most scholars understand Babylon here to be a figurative reference to Rome. Although in the OT the city of Babylon in Mesopotamia was the seat of tremendous power (2 Kgs 24–25 ; Isa 39; Jer 25), by the time of the NT what was left was an insignificant town, and there is no tradition in Christian history that Peter ever visited there (**ED**: SINCE WHEN DOES TRADITION TRUMP THE INSPIRED TEXT?). On the other hand, Christian tradition (**ED**: SAME COMMENT ON "TRADITION!") connects Peter with the church in Rome, and many interpreters think other references to **Babylon** in the NT refer to Rome as well (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) (**ED**: WHO CARES WHAT "MANY INTERPRETERS THINK?" IF WE ARE TO BE GOOD BEREANS, WE WILL STICK WITH THE TEXT AND WHEN GOD SAYS "BABYLON" HE MEANS "BABYLON!") Thus it is likely Peter was referring to Rome here. (**ED**: IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT "IT IS LIKELY" BUT THAT IT REFLECTS THE BIAS OF MANY INTERPRETERS WHO REFUSE TO INTERPRET THE TEXT LITERALLY.).

Comment - The statement that Peter never went to Babylon simply cannot be supported and yet it is made by many commentators. They seem to forget that Peter actually had had contact with Jews from Babylon. How do I know? Glad you asked! Luke records that at the feast of Pentecost there were "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of **Mesopotamia**, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia." Mesopotamia is "between the rivers," which in fact is where Babylon was located. Could Peter have visited Jews in Mesopotamia? That seems as reasonable as relying on "tradition" to say Peter was in Rome when he wrote this letter!

Henry Morris comments: **Babylon** had a large Jewish population, and Peter had gone there to evangelize and make disciples among them since his special calling was to the Jews, as Paul's had been to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7). Some have speculated that Babylon was a mystical name for Rome, but no basis exists for this idea, with no indication that Peter had ever been there. Paul wrote a letter to Rome about this same time and had no hesitancy in calling the city by name (Romans 1:7). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

J Vernon McGee: I think "**Babylon**" here means **Babylon**, although some think it is a figurative name for Rome. Simon Peter is too practical to have used a figurative term. (**ED**: BUT UNFORTUNATELY HE THINKS "**SHE**" MEANS CHURCH!).

Believer's Study Bible: Peter is probably alluding to the **Babylon on the Euphrates**, a part of that Eastern world where he lived and did his work, rather than Rome (with Babylon being utilized as a cryptic word). Evidence for this position includes the following: (1) There is no evidence that Rome was ever called Babylon until after the writing of the Book of Revelation in A.D. 90-96, many years after Peter's death. (2) Peter's method and manner of writing are not apocalyptic. On the contrary, Peter is a man plain of speech, almost blunt, who would not interject such a mystical allusion into his personal explanations and final salutation. (3) Babylon is no more cryptic than Pontus, Asia, or the other places mentioned when Peter says the elect in Babylon send greetings to the Jews of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (4) Babylon, no longer a great world capital in the time of Peter, was still inhabited by a colony of people, mostly Jews, many of whom Peter befriended and won to Christ. ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown (written in 1871): **Babylon**—The Chaldean **Babylon** on the Euphrates...How unlikely that in a friendly salutation the enigmatical title of Rome given in prophecy (John, Rev 17:5), should be used! Babylon was the center from which the Asiatic dispersion whom Peter addresses was derived. Philo [The Embassy to Gaius, 36] and Josephus [Antiquities, 15.2.2; 23.12] inform us that Babylon contained a great many Jews in the apostolic age (whereas those at Rome were comparatively few, about eight thousand [Josephus, Antiquities, 17.11]); so it would naturally be visited by the apostle of the circumcision. It was the headquarters of those whom he had so successfully addressed on Pentecost, Ac 2:9, Jewish "Parthians...dwellers in Mesopotamia" (the [Parthians](#) were then masters of Mesopotamian Babylon)

Adam Clarke: After considering all that has been said by learned men and critics on this place, I am quite of opinion that the apostle does not mean Babylon in Egypt, nor Jerusalem, nor Rome as figurative Babylon, but the ancient celebrated **Babylon** in Assyria, which was, as Dr. Benson observes, the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews; but as I have said so much on this subject in the preface, I beg leave to refer the reader to that place.

It is sad and unfortunate that otherwise respected interpreters should have fallen into the trap of interpreting all the NT uses of **Babylon** symbolically as a "code word" for Rome and/or Catholicism. In Rev 17:18+ "The **woman** (Rev 17:3+) whom you saw is **the great city**, which reigns over the kings of the earth." Revelation 18:10+ John describes "**Babylon, the strong city**" and in Revelation 18:21+ he calls "**Babylon, the great city.**" If these passages are read normally and literally, the interpretation is clear that **Babylon is a city!** God's holy Word does not ever, not one time, state that Babylon is Rome or that Babylon is Roman Catholicism. To invoke these interpretations is to not be diligent to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2Ti 2:15+), but to be influenced by the opinions of men, especially men who have seminary degrees and scholarly acclaim. The fact that **Babylon** is currently not a **strong, great city** at the dawn of the new millennium (2024), in no way gives the interpreter the liberty to interpret "**city**" as a symbol for a religion or another named city which is not mentioned in the **context!** The **city** is named **Babylon** and still exists (see [Wikipedia](#)). Whether one was in favor or opposed to America invading Iraq is unrelated to the fact that this event did occur, and did result in the liberation of one of the most oil rich countries in the world. **If God can raise up a nation like Israel in one day (May 14, 1948), it is no problem for Him to see that Babylon is rebuilt into the leading city of the world!** Prior to the liberation of Iraq, I had always wondered how God might revive ancient Babylon into a great city (I had always interpreted Babylon in Scripture literally), but now I find that scenario much more likely in view of the rich resources in Iraq (oil and people, historically a very intelligent people).

Tony Garland addresses the question of whether the prophecy of Babylon's destruction is was complete (as complete as Sodom and Gomorrah) or whether Babylon might one day be rebuilt....

When one examines the historical record concerning the fall of the city of Babylon in 539 B.C. to Persia (Da 5:30, 31), it is clear that the term "**destruction**" is much too strong a word to describe what actually transpired. Babylon has never been destroyed at the hands of a catastrophic attack as prophesied in the OT (see [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#)).

On the night that Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain and the city came under the control of Darius the Mede, it "fell" politically, but not physically. There was no large-scale attack upon the city. In fact, many within the city were not even aware for quite some time afterwards that the city had been taken. The city was taken by diverting the waters of the Euphrates. This allowed armed forces to wade under her defenses without much of a fight:

The city fell by complete surprise. Half of the metropolis was captured before the rest of it was "aware" of the fact, according to Herodotus. Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates and by night entered the city through the dried up channel (Da 5:30, 31). 1

Rather than being physically overthrown, as predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 13, 14, 47) and Jeremiah (Jer 50, 51), the city and its occupants were treated with considerable respect:

On...Oct. 29, 539 B.C., sixteen days after the capitulation, Cyrus himself entered the city amid much public acclaim, ending the Chaldean dynasty as predicted by the Hebrew prophets (Isa. 13:21; Jer. 50f). Cyrus treated the city with great respect, returning to their own shrines the statues of the deities brought in from other cities. The Jews were sent home with compensatory assistance. He appointed new governors, so ensuring peace and stable conditions essential to the proper maintenance of the religious centers.2

Babylon generally flourished under the Persians, although there is record of a revolt against Xerxes I which resulted in a harsh response:

Under the Persians, Babylon retained most of its institutions, became capital of the richest satrapy in the empire, and, according to Herodotus, the world's most splendid city. A revolt against Xerxes I (482) led to destruction of its fortifications and temples and the melting down of the golden image of Marduk.³

In subsequent campaigns which took control of Babylon, rather than being violently overthrown, the city slowly decayed due to competition and neglect:

On October 12, 539 B.C., Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia, and from that time on the decay of the city began. Xerxes plundered it. Alexander the Great thought to restore its great temple, in ruins in his day, but was deterred by the prohibitive cost. During the period of Alexander's successors the area decayed rapidly and soon became a desert. From the days of Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.), who built the rival city of Seleucia on the Tigris, queenly Babylon never revived.⁴

Even when Greece, the great leopard beast of Daniel's night vision (Dan. 7:6) came calling in the person and empire of Alexander the Great, the city was not destroyed:

[On] Oct. 1, 331 B.C., Alexander marched to Babylon, where the Macedonian was triumphantly acclaimed, the Persian garrison offering no opposition. He offered sacrifices to Marduk, ordered the rebuilding of temples that Xerxes allegedly had destroyed, and then a month later moved on to Susa.⁵

Alexander subsequently returned to Babylon with great construction plans to make it his capital, but these were interrupted by his death in 323 B.C. After Alexander, the city was ruled by a series of kings including Seleucus I (323-250) during which Babylon's economic—but not religious importance—declined sharply due to competition with the establishment by Antiochus I of a new capital at Seleucia on the Tigris (274 B.C.). Later, the city remained a center of Hellenism, supporting Jews in Palestine who opposed Herod.⁶ After the destruction of the [Second Temple](#) by Rome in A.D. 70, many Jews left Jerusalem for the area of Babylon. This trend increased after the Bar Kokhba war.⁷ The region of Babylon became an important center for Jewry outside Israel:

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and especially after the war of Bar Kokhba (132-35 C.E.), some scholars went down from Palestine to Babylon. The arrival of "Abba the Tall," Rab, in approximately 219, brought about a period of prosperity in the study of the Law in Babylon. Rab in Sura and Shmuel in Nehardea gave public instruction in the Law and trained many pupils. In this period academies were established, and they continued to exert an influence on Jews, not only in Babylon but throughout all the lands of their dispersion, as late as the 12th century.⁸

Although the city still stood when Roman emperor Trajan entered it in A.D. 115, by about A.D. 200 the site of the city was deserted.⁹ Thereafter, the city was mostly forgotten until the 1800s when archaeological expeditions began to investigate the site. In the mid-1960s, the Iraqi Department of Antiquities carried out further work at the site. "The Ishtar gateway . . . was partially restored together with the Procession Way . . . The Ninmah temple was reconstructed, and a museum and rest house built on the site, which is also partially covered by the village of Jumjumah."¹⁰

PLAN OF BABYLON (1944)

[Click to enlarge](#)

In more recent times (**Ed: See also quote below from Joel Rosenberg**), Saddam Hussein built himself a palace on a man-made hill beside the footprint of the original city. Then, in 1987, he ordered construction of a replica of Nebuchadnezzar's vast palace on the original site. Museums were also built. But since his fall from power in 2003, his private palace was ransacked by mobs and two museums at the site were looted. During almost this entire time, there have been people occupying the site or living nearby—in stark contrast to the predictions of Scripture concerning the uninhabitable wasteland it is predicted to one day become.¹² ([Babylon's Historic Fall - included citations](#))

I fully agree with Garland's summary statement that in the book of the Revelation...

Babylon simply means...**Babylon!** The only problem with taking Babylon in its literal sense is one of timing and faith. Because the modern site of Babylon in no way resembles what is described in the book of Revelation, there is opportunity for doubt concerning what God has said. This is nothing new: "Has God indeed said...?" (Ge 3:1).

What is the explanation for this reluctance to believe that John meant Babylon when he wrote "Babylon"? Even

at the time John was writing, Babylon was still a viable city, with a substantial colony of Jews (the famous Babylonian Talmud originated in or near there, about 500 years after the time of Christ) and there was a significant Christian church there as well (1Peter 5:13). At the very least, it would be confusing to John's first century readers, as well as to later generations, for him to write so much about Babylon when he really meant Rome...or "the false church." (Henry Morris - The Revelation Record)

The current situation in regard to the literal city of Babylon reminds us of the position of many earlier interpreters concerning the predictions of the OT in regard to Israel. Prior to her reestablishment in 1948, it was difficult for many to believe that unfulfilled passages concerning a people who had been dispersed for nearly 2,000 years could ever be taken in a literal fashion as pertaining to a physical nation yet future. Today, we thrill to read those interpreters who held to a literal understanding of Israel over the many years when Israel seemed but a dusty recollection of history. May we be found among a similar cadre of interpreters in our own time concerning the city of Babylon! (See topics defending the interpretation that "Babylon is Babylon": [Old Testament Context](#); [A Literal City](#); [Back to Shinar](#))

As noted above, the most concentrated use of the name Babylon in the New Testament is found in the book of the Revelation (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). It behooves the diligent Berean (Acts 17:11) student to observe these uses, paying careful attention to the uses in Revelation 17 and Revelation 18. You might want to take a moment to read those chapters before you look at the chart below which compares those two chapters.

IDENTITY OF BABYLON REVELATION 17 & 18		
	Revelation 17	Revelation 18
THE DESIGNATION	The name is the same BABYLON THE GREAT	
	Rev 17:5- note Babylon the great	Rev 18:2- note Babylon the great
	The identity is the same THE GREAT CITY	
	Rev 17:18- note The woman is the great city	Rev 18:10- note Woe, woe, the great city
THE DESCRIPTION	The "clothing" is the same PURPLE & SCARLET	
	Rev 17:4- note the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and clothed in fine linen and precious stones and pearls	Rev 18:16- note Woe, woe, the great city, she who was purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls
	Both hold a CUP	
	Rev 17:4- note Having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations	Rev 18:6- note In the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her
	Relationship to kings' acts is the same COMMITTED IMMORALITY	

THE DEEDS	Rev 17:2- note With whom the kings of the earth committed of immorality	Rev 18:3- note And the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her
	Relationship to the nations is the same DRUNK WITH IMMORALITY	
	Rev 17:2- note Those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality	Rev 18:3- note For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality
	Relationship to believers is the same BLOOD	
THE DESTRUCTION	Rev 17:6- note And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints , and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus	Rev 18:24- note And in her was found the blood of...saints and of all who have been slain on the earth
	Means of destruction is the same FIRE	
	Rev 17:16- note These will hate the harlot... and will burn her up with fire	Rev 18:8- note She will be burned up with fire
	Source of destruction is the same GOD	
THE CONCLUSION	Rev 17:17- note For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose	Rev 18:5,8 God has remembered her iniquities...for the Lord God Who judges her is strong
	"Babylon" in Revelation 17 and 18 describes the same literal city	

Comment: Notice how the metaphor or symbol of a **woman**" is not left to your imagination but is specifically stated to be **"the great city"** in Rev 17:18-[note](#). The allegorical interpretation of this passage began in the second century AD and has been promulgated and passed down from one generation of commentators to another. The challenge and difficulty for the diligent student of Scripture to disregard what they have been taught regarding Revelation 17 and 18 and to objectively interpret the passages with a **normative, literal reading**, paying careful attention to the **context** and comparing **Scripture with Scripture** (Revelation 17, Revelation 18, Isaiah 13). When one is prayerfully allows the Spirit to illuminate the text using these simple guidelines, there is little doubt that these two chapters describe a **great literal city** of **Babylon** that will exist in the end times. This is the same **Babylon** which will finally and fully fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah 13 of a great city which God will make a **desolation** and from which God **will exterminate...sinners** (Isaiah 13:8)

Other Resources that Discuss the literal City of Babylon in the end times:

- [Watch the question/answer session I recorded on the Identity of Babylon Part 1](#)
- [What is the Identity of "Babylon" in Revelation 17-18?](#) Andy Woods (excellent)
- Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 - comparison of Scriptural similarities
- [The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 Pt 1- BSac 144:575 - Dr C. Dyer](#)
- [The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 Pt 2- BSac 144:576 - Dr C. Dyer](#)

Joel Rosenberg wrote the [following article in 2009](#)..

Largely overlooked by the Western news media...was an enormously significant story. The government of Iraq is moving forward with plans to protect the archaeological remains of the ancient City of Babylon, in

preparation for building a modern city of Babylon. The project, originally started by the late Saddam Hussein, is aimed eventually at attracting scores of "cultural tourists" from all over the world to see the glories of Mesopotamia's most famous city. What's more, the Obama Administration is contributing \$700,000 towards "The Future of Babylon Project," through the State Department's budget.

Officials hope Babylon can be revived and made ready for a rich future of tourism, with help from experts at the World Monuments Fund (WMF) and the U.S. embassy," reports the Reuters news agency. "'The Future of Babylon' project launched last month seeks to 'map the current conditions of Babylon and develop a master plan for its conservation, study and tourism,' the WMF says. 'We don't know how long it will take to reopen to tourists,' said Mariam Omran Musa, head of a government inspection team based at the site. 'It depends on funds. I hope that Babylon can be reborn in a better image.'

The Bible prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation that indicate the ancient city of Babylon in Iraq will, in fact, be rebuilt in the "last days" of history and become the wealthiest and most powerful city on the face of the planet....Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Abdul Ameer Allawi told me in 2006 at the peak of the insurgency...

Cultural, religious, archaeological, and biblical tourism is a big opportunity for Iraq. I think rebuilding Babylon is a wonderful idea, as long as it is not done at the expense of the antiquities themselves.

The rebuilding of Babylon (seems) like a far-fetched idea....But skeptics and cynics take note: now that the insurgency is dying down, the Shia-led government of Iraq is actually moving forward with this historic and prophetic project. They say Babylon will be "reborn." And they're right. It will be. (See related article by Joel Rosenberg - [Is Babylon once again rising from the ashes?](#))

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.:

- **Lift up:** Isa 5:26 11:12 18:3 Jer 50:2 51:27,28
- **Hill:** Jer 51:25)
- **Wave:** Isa 10:32 11:15
- **Enter:** Isa 45:1-3 Jer 51:58)

Remember that **Jehovah** is speaking in this section.

Lift up ([05375](#)) (**nasa'**) means to lift up literally or figuratively, to bear or carry (especially the guilt of sin - Ge 4:13, Lev 5:1, 17, Nu 5:31, Lev 16:22 scapegoat = "bear") and finally to take or to take away (as in forgiveness - Ex 34:7, Nu 14:18, Mic 7:18)

On the bare hill - A lofty, conspicuous spot which could easily be seen by the army.

Standard (**signal**) ([05251](#))(**nec/nes**) generally refers to a rallying point or standard the purpose of which was to draw people (soldiers) together for some common action for communication of important information (war). People would rally together around a **nec** for various purposes, one of the most important being the gathering of troops for war. We have already seen **nec** used in Isaiah 5:26 where it pictures God raising a standard among the nations, signaling Assyrian warriors to muster against sinful Israel. As in the present passage, the **standard** was usually raised on a mountain or other high place (Isa13:2; 18:3; 30:17).

Isaiah 11:10 (cp Isa 11:12) personifies **nec** describing Israel's Messianic King to be lifted up (compare Jn3:14; Php 2:9) so that all men might rally around Him.

Nec - 21v in the **NAS** - **NAS** = banner(2), distinguishing mark(1), sail(1), signal(4), standard(12), warning(1).
Ex 17:15; Nu 21:8, 9; 26:10; Ps 60:4; Isa 5:26; 11:10, 12; 13:2; 18:3; 30:17; 31:9; 33:23; 49:22; 62:10; Jer 4:6, 21; 50:2; 51:12, 27; Ezek 27:7.

Nobles - These are those in power who will be overtaken and destroyed in the Day of the LORD.

Isaiah 13:3 I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, to execute My anger.:

- **I have commanded:** Isa 23:11 44:27,28 45:4,5 Jer 50:21-46

- **Mighty:** Jer 51:20-24 Joe 3:11 Rev 17:12-18
- **My proudly:** Ezr 1:1-11 6:1-22 7:12-26 Ps 149:2,5-9 Rev 18:4-8,20-24 19:1-7

EL ELYON: THE MOST HIGH GOD SOVEREIGN OVER THE NATIONS

I have commanded - This pronoun is emphatic, indicating that it is Jehovah Who is speaking.

As we begin Isaiah 13-27 which deals primarily with specific judgments against the Gentile Nations, it behooves us to remember that the **Sovereign and Supreme God** is in complete control of the rise and fall of all nations (**America, are you listening? And beloved child of God, what is there in your life over which you think He has no control or even no interest? Remember He is near** [Heb 13:5, 6-note] **and He is in control and able to control = Omnipotent!**).

(Daniel speaking to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon) O king, and this is the decree of the Most High **See study of El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All**), which has come upon my lord the king: that you be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time (seven years) will pass over you, until (**When doing your inductive Bible study , always take note this important expression of time**) you recognize that

The MOST HIGH is Ruler over the realm of mankind,
and bestows it on whomever He wishes.
(Daniel 4:24, 25)

(Daniel continues) "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you, **until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes.**' (Daniel 4:31, 32)

(Listen to Daniel's prayer prompted by God's revelation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2) Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, (**Why?**) for (**term of explanation**) wisdom and power belong to Him. And it is He who changes the times and the epochs;

He removes kings and establishes kings;

He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. (Daniel 2:20, 21 22)

He (The **Sovereign, Omnipotent** God) made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined** (prostasso = issued an "official directive" or command testifying to God's providential care and supervision of history [All "history" is His-story!]. Prostasso is in the perfect tense = God issued this order at some point in time in the past and it stands or remains in place.) **their appointed times** ("Allotted periods", "**Epochs**" - See study of **kairos**), **and the boundaries of their habitation, (Why?)** that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope (pselaphao = feel around for something as those who is spiritually blind seek to know God through natural and moral revelation apart from special revelation [The Bible - the Word of God]. Pagans struggle to know God but conscience alone is not enough!) for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' (Acts 17:26, 27, 28)

I have commanded - The sovereign God issues this command underscoring the fact that He is in control of all the events on earth. How does this interact with **free will**? This is a mystery but both doctrines are true, whether I can understand them or not and even whether I believe them or not!

TRUE HOLY WAR ORDAINED BY THE HOLY ONE

Consecrated ([06942](#))([qadash](#)) means to set apart for a specific use. In the present context qadash has no moral connotation and thus does not refer to believers, for the Medo-Persians did not believe in Jehovah God. Nevertheless they were set apart by the Holy God to do His holy work and execute His good and acceptable and perfect will, much like an inanimate vessel might be set apart for some religious purpose.

My consecrated ones - In context this refers to the Medes (Isa 13:17), whom God ordained to overthrow Babylon in 539 BC (Da 5:30,31). While the Babylonians were feasting and mocking God, the Persians were entering the city through the channel of the Euphrates River, which they had diverted. As a result the Persian caught the Babylonians completely unprepared, for they were so vainly confident that their great walls could not be breached by any enemy. In a sense they were correct. The Persians didn't go over the walls but entered under the walls!

As the **ESV Study Bible** says "The enemies of Babylon do not consecrate themselves to God; he consecrates them to His own purpose. (cf. Isa 10:5–15; 45:1):"

My proudly exulting ones - Literally "My exulting ones of arrogance." As Motyer says "These warriors exult in their own self-confident arrogance but (unknown to themselves) they have been claimed by the Lord for his purposes."

I have even called My mighty warriors - God is sovereign, even though men are responsible. It is a mystery. The army referred to in these verses is clearly God's because He said He summoned His **warriors** to carry out His **anger** against Babylon; that is, they would do His bidding. This army was a great multitude.... like an amassing of entire nations. Coming for war they would assemble from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens. This is not a specific geographical description as much as a way of saying that his great army would include soldiers from many places. Though Isaiah was writing about the military strife in his day, a similar mustering of vast armies will occur just before the [millennial kingdom](#) (Rev. 17:12-16-[note](#)).

Mighty warriors ([01368](#))([gibbor](#) cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [[gibbor](#)] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8). Vine writes that "In the context of battle, the word is better understood to refer to the category of warriors. The [gibbor](#) is the proven warrior (eg "valiant warriors [[gibbor](#)]" Josh 1:14)."

To execute My anger - These consecrated ones are God's instrument in the day of vengeance and righteous wrath of the Holy God.

Anger (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0639](#)) [aph](#) from **anaph** = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2Sa 25:23) and anger. **Swanson** on why **aph** describes **anger** - anger, wrath, resentment, formally, nose, i.e., have a strong feeling of displeasure over a person or a situation, as a figurative extension of the nose as an area that can change color when blood rushes to it while one is angry.

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.:

- **Sound:** Isa 22:1-9 Jer 50:2,3,21-46 51:11,27,28 Eze 38:3-23 Joe 3:14 Zec 14:1-3,13,14 Rev 19:11-21
- **Like:** Joe 2:4-11 Rev 9:7-19
- **Lord:** Isa 10:5,6 45:1,2 Jer 50:14,15 51:6-25 Joe 2:1-11,25 Rev 18:8)

NATIONS GATHERED BY GOD FOR BATTLE

Though Isaiah was writing about the military action that would be carried out by the Medes against the Babylonians in his day, this passage looks forward to another mustering of vast armies that will occur just before the return of Christ to establish His millennial kingdom (Rev 16:12-16-[note](#)). In Rev 17:12ff-[note](#) we see a description of the 10 kings and beast (Antichrist) that will hate the harlot (the rebuilt city of Babylon) turning on her, making her desolate, eating her flesh and burning her up with fire.

A sound of tumult on the mountains - See Joel's similar description (Joel 2:2, 5) of the Day of the LORD.

Motyer on tumult on the mountains - **Mountains:** historically, Jerusalem often heard the sound of gathering forces on the hills around. This is the picture here: it will be pre-eminently the case on the Last Day (**Ed:** Aka "the Day of the LORD") (Ezek. 38:14-23).

Like that of many people - See terms of comparison = simile

Of nations gathered together - As discussed more fully below, this description is related to the specific time known as the [Day of the Lord](#) (Isaiah 13:6). This cannot refer only to the historic defeat of Babylon by the Medes, because this passage indicates more than one nation is gathered for battle. While one cannot be dogmatic about the "**gathering**" of the nations for battle, we know that

John describes the greatest gathering of the nations in the history of the world in the Revelation...

And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon (Armageddon). (Rev 16:16-click for notes and a picture of Megiddo)

Comment: Note that **Armageddon** is commonly referred to as a **battle**, but that is actually not an accurate designation. **Armageddon** is the place in Israel where the demon spirits will **gather** the nations of the world in preparation for the battle most likely in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (see Joel 3:14-commentary).

LORD of hosts - See study of Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of armies.

Muster (06485) (**paqad**) in this context means to draw up troops for marching or for battle. This verb includes the ideas of counting, numbering, listing, recording. **Muster** in English = the act of assembling troops for formal military inspection and preparation for duty (war).

The LORD of hosts is mustering the army for battle - Isaiah again emphasizes that even in the midst of the chaotic sounds of coming war, God is in total control and it is He Who is mustering the armies.

Army (06635) (**tsaba**) from tsaba = to go forth to war, to wage war, to serve) is a masculine noun meaning troops or army (2Ki 5:1) and so has to do with war or warfare in many of the OT passages. The TWOT says the root verb tsaba "has to do with fighting, e.g. Israel warring against Midian (Nu 31:7). It has also a wider use in the sense of rendering service." And so in a group of uses in Numbers (Nu 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 8:24-25) tsaba has to do with service related to the Tent of Meeting (or Tabernacle). So one might say tsaba is used in contexts of warfare or worship!

Tony Garland comments...

As has often been the case in the past, the nations will be led of God to participate in the campaign which leads to their ultimate demise. Believing themselves to be shrewd, they will be deceived by unclean spirits—all the more effective since they themselves are deceived—to walk straight into God's trap which He has prepared for them. In a similar way to how Cyrus and Gog, neither of whom knew God, were instruments of His will (Isa. 44:28; Eze. 38:16; 39:2), so too will the rebellious kings of the end be mere puppets in their own destruction....

In this passage set within the context of The Day of the Lord (Joel 2:2, 31), Joel indicates all nations will be gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (a compound from Hebrew Yahweh and shaphat, meaning "Jehovah has judged") where He will enter into judgment with them. **For what reason will God gather the nations at this time—yet future to our day?**

"On account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land." [emphasis added] This point is extremely important to understand: this passage is not talking about the Church! God is not talking about defending the faithful in general—in terms of some sort of "spiritual land" which the nations have trespassed! No, He is talking about His heritage Israel (cf. Jer. 50:11)!

Notice that there will already be a gathering of Israel back into the land, but God is furious with all nations on account of their opposition to Israel's God-given right to **His land!** We can hardly overemphasize the importance of understanding the issues surrounding possession of the land which God gave Israel. Our modern age is moving rapidly to embrace the mindset of Babylon of the end...Even evangelical Christians, who should know better, embrace such a view. Many stand opposed to Israel's struggle for her Promised Land. They see Israel's rejection of her Messiah, Jesus Christ, to warrant her implacable opposition by God and as justification for their own latent anti-Semitism. They believe all her promises have passed or been forfeited (**Ed**: To the "church") and the secular state she is now is to be opposed. But Almighty God says otherwise: "For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, by his God, the Lord of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel" (Jer. 51:5)....

The nations will assemble with their own agenda. Being ignorant of the Scriptures, and rebellious in any case, they will not be aware that they have already begun to drink from the cup of God's wrath. They are already intoxicated and on their way to fulfill their own destruction. ([A Testimony of Jesus Christ - The Preparation](#))

Isaiah 13:5 They are coming from a far country, from the farthest horizons, the LORD and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole land.:

- **from a far:** Isa 13:17 Jer 50:3,9 51:11,27,28 Mt 24:31
- **Instruments:** Jer 51:20-46)

NLT - They came from countries far away. They are the Lord's weapons; they carry his anger with them and will destroy the whole land.

THE NATIONS ARE GOD'S INSTRUMENTS OF INDIGNATION

They are coming from a far country - from a remote region.

LORD (03068) [Jehovah](#) is the self-existent One, "I Am."

His instruments of indignation - This once again emphasizes the fact that God is sovereign and in full control of the end time events associated with the [Day of the LORD](#). In full control and full of righteous wrath!

The whole land - This phrase takes the prophecy against literal ancient Babylon and expands it to include the **'whole earth.'** As discussed more fully below, Isaiah's prophecy is directed at historic Babylon but also at the future Babylon which the apostle John describes as a literal **"great city, Babylon"** (Rev 18:10-[note](#), cp Nebuchadnezzar's boast about ancient Babylon - Da 4:30-note).

To destroy the whole land - This description was not fulfilled when the Medes defeated Babylon, so it must describe a time yet future when Babylon will indeed be utterly, finally and forever destroyed. (cp the description of destruction in Isa 13:19, 20, 21, 22!)

ISAIAH 13 DR CHARLES DYER

From Chapter 5, page 119, in the book [The Road to Armageddon](#) ([borrow this book free on archive.org](#)) -
- the entire excellent article on Babylon from Genesis to Revelation begins on page 105 and goes through page 144. It is well worth your time if you want to understand Babylon in the Bible!

Charles Dyer comments ([page 119](#)) - Look at Isaiah 13:1. This is the nation that starts the list of judgment against the nations. "The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw." Babylon was a second-rate, minor, insignificant power in Isaiah's day. Assyria was the big kid on the block. Assyria was the nation that had threatened Judah. Assyria only makes number two on God's list. The first nation is Babylon.

God goes on and describes the destruction against Babylon. I want to look carefully at what He says. We won't read all of it, but let's pick up in verse 4, "Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens--the LORD and the weapons of His wrath to destroy the whole country." God announces, I am bringing nations together to destroy the nation of Babylon. I'm going to wipe out, not only the city of Babylon, but the whole country.

Now the questions we have to ask are "What destruction is Isaiah talking about?...in his day?...something future, but something long since passed? Or is he describing something that from our perspective (2022) is still future? The answer has to be found by looking carefully at the text. I notice in verse 6 that Isaiah starts giving a time frame **"Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty."** Isaiah sets the context of Babylon's destruction in the time he calls the day of the LORD. Now that can be any time God comes to settle accounts, when God intervenes to judge the unrighteous and to rescue the righteous. But does Isaiah have a specific day of the LORD in mind? He picks up his theme again in Isaiah 13:9-13....

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 will 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.

God says "I'm going to judge Babylon and it's going to be on the day of the LORD." What day of the LORD do you mean, Isaiah? Look for one where you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars darkened. Look for supernatural signs in the heavens, a time

when the moon won't give its light. Look for a time when I'm punishing not just Babylon, but, in Isaiah 13:11, "**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." Look for a time when humanity is going to be "**scarcer than pure gold**," tremendous loss of human life in this worldwide judgment. Look for a time when the heavens are going to shake and the earth itself is going to be shaken off its foundations.

Now if those images sound familiar, you can find them in Joel 2-3 in his description of the Day of the LORD, a day that ends with the coming of Jesus Christ to rule as king over Israel. Or, you may want to go to the book of Revelation, because in Revelation 6-19, these are the very images that are pictured just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In essence, Isaiah says God is going to judge Babylon, not just the city, but the whole country, and it's going to happen in the day of the LORD. You'll see supernatural signs in the heavens, destruction on earth, rapid loss of life, all of this as God comes to judge the world for its evil.

Isaiah goes on to describe an enemy coming in and even mentions the Medes in Isaiah 13:17, thought what he describes was never fulfilled when Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire attacked Babylon in 539 B.C. Cyrus didn't destroy anyone, he came in peace. But this group is coming, not caring for silver or gold, but to strike down and kill everyone they find.

And then in Isaiah 13:19, my favorite part of this passage, Isaiah writes, "**And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.**" Now, you have to understand that I love going to Israel. I tell my classes that it is God's will for them to go to Israel...I have thousands of slides from my many trips...but there is one place I have never gotten a single good picture...Sodom or Gomorrah. There's a reason for that. When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He destroyed them suddenly, completely, totally, absolutely, and then covered them with the southern third of the Dead Sea for good measure!

God says, "You'll know when I'm done with Babylon, because when I'm done it's going to be like Sodom and Gomorrah!" Now that paints a vivid picture in our minds, but God doesn't leave us there just wondering what He means. He adds on to that "**It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation.**" (Isaiah 13:20) Many cities were destroyed in the past, only to be rebuilt. Jerusalem was destroyed, but after 70 years people came back. Because the location didn't change, the water supply didn't change, the roads didn't change, and so cities, though they were destroyed, came back to life.

God says, however, when Babylon's destroyed, it's not going to be dwelt in again from generation to generation. Generations will not live there again. That may imply too much. Let's narrow it some more - "**Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there.**" (Isaiah 13:20) I love going to Israel because you can still see Bedouin living in tents the way Abraham did nearly 4000 years ago. They pitch their tents in an area, and they'll stay for weeks or months at a time in that area as their flocks graze the surrounding countryside. But eventually when the seasons change, or the grazing land is used up, they'll pack up their tents and move to another area.

God says when He's done with Babylon, it will look like Sodom and Gomorrah. No one will live there for generations, no one will even pitch a tent there for a short period of time. And then He says that may even imply too much, let's narrow it some more. "No shepherd will rest his flocks there." As the shepherds leave their camp, they keep moving farther and farther from their base. Eventually the flocks are grazing so far from the fold that they are unable to return home before the sun goes down. So the shepherd looks for a cave, a ruined building, a foundation, something where he can bed the flock down for the evening. The next morning they get up and move on. When Babylon's destroyed, God says, you'll know it! It'll look like Sodom and Gomorrah; no one will live there for generations; no one will pitch a tent for a short period of time; no one will even spend a single night! Could God say it any more directly that when Babylon is destroyed it's not going to be there anymore?

BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION WILL BRING ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

Now, beginning in Isaiah 14, God even adds one additional piece to the puzzle. When Babylon's destroyed that will be the time when God restores His people Israel. "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. 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." (Isaiah 14:1-2)

You'll know when Babylon's destroyed, because its destruction signals the restoration of Israel, not just back to the land as a small scattered group, but as a nation that ruling over those nations that once held them in captivity!

BABYLON'S FALL IS NOT YET FULFILLED

From the day Isaiah penned those words till today, none of this prophecy has ever been fulfilled. A hundred years after Isaiah wrote these words, Babylon was the greatest power on the face of the earth. Nebuchadnezzar was ruling there. Shortly afterward it fell to

Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire, but it wasn't destroyed, it was made one of the capitals for Medo-Persia. Daniel continued living there! Several hundred years later, Alexander the Great died in the city of Babylon while rebuilding it to make it the capital for the eastern portion of his empire. While writing about events that occurred just before the time of Christ, Josephus stated that there were 50,000 Jews still living there!

In Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost, some of the Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost were from Mesopotamia. These are descendants of those who had been taken into captivity in Babylon. The scene closes temporarily as the NT ends. But about the year 1000 a Jewish traveler, [Benjamin of Tudela](#) traveled to the Near East. He left a written account that was preserved, so we know where he visited. He records having visited Babylon. We know he did because he names another town he visited, Hilla, that is seven miles away. He also records that there were 7000 Jews still living in Babylon, and he worshipped at the Synagogue of Daniel, still on the site.

The veil drops again until the beginning of this century. The German archeologist, [Robert Koldewey](#), excavated Babylon and he records that inside the ancient walls were still three villages. He lived in one as he excavated. Babylon declined in importance, but it has never been destroyed the way God said it would be destroyed: in the day of the LORD, when God's judging the world for its sin, totally wiped out, supernatural signs in the heavens, destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah so no one will live there for generations, or for a few months, or for a single night. And it will be destroyed when God brings His people back to the land to rule over the nations. Babylon's destruction awaits events that are still future, events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty:

- **Wail:** Isa 14:31 23:1 52:5 65:14 Jer 25:34 49:3 51:8 Eze 21:12 30:2 Joe 1:5,11,13 Zep 1:14 Jas 5:1 Rev 18:10
- **Day of the LORD:** Isa 13:9 34:8 Eze 30:3 Joe 2:11,31 Am 5:18 Zep 1:7 2:2,3 Mal 4:5 1Th 5:2,3
- **As destruction:** Job 31:23 Joe 1:15)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Wail for the Day of the LORD is near - To wail (see also below) is to howl, to lament, to weep loudly, to mourn sorrowfully, to utter a prolonged high-pitched cry of grief or misery. Why? Because the day of God's judgment draws nigh. It is an awful day, a day when God pours out His righteous wrath without restraint. It will include a seven year time of Tribulation culminating in what Jesus termed the **Great Tribulation**.

Wail ([03213 - 771](#)) (**yalal**) is a verb that means to howl with loud crying and shrill shouting sounds of sorrow. To howl with a wailing tone. This verb is found only in the prophets and most often in the context of divine judgment, especially the coming **Day of the Lord**. Thus it is not surprising that this verb is often used as an expression of mourning, distress or dismay!

Yahal is frequently paired with the verb **za'aq** ([02199 - 771](#)) (Isa 14:31, Jer 25:34, 47:2, 48:20, 31, Ezek 21:12, Hos 7:14) which means "cry out" and denotes a cry for help out of deep distress or because of some unbearable circumstance;

Yalal is frequently translated in the Septuagint with the verb **hololuzo** (Isa 13:6, 14:31, 15:2, 3, 16:7, 23:1, 14, 52:5, 65:14, Jer 48:20, 31, Ezek 21:12, Hos 7:14, Amos 8:3, Zech 11:2), an onomatopoeic word that describes making a loud and inarticulate cry of either jubilation or terror, especially as a reaction to desperate circumstances. The lone NT use by James describes a vivid warning to the rich "Come now, you rich, **weep** (aorist imperative) and **howl** (hololuzo - imperative sense) for your miseries which are coming upon you." (James 5:1)

Webster says **howl** describes a long, loud, doleful cry uttered by an animal such as a dog or wolf. **Wail** describes a prolonged high-pitched cry of pain, grief, or anger.

Yalal - uses below in **red** = imperative or command. Yalal 32x in 29v

Isaiah 13:6 **Wail**, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Isaiah 14:31 **"Wail**, O gate; cry, O city; Melt away, O Philistia, all of you; For smoke comes from the north, And there is no straggler in his ranks.

Isaiah 15:2 They have gone up to the temple and to Dibon, even to the high places to weep. Moab**wails** over Nebo and Medeba; Everyone's head is bald and every beard is cut off (*cutting hair = sign of humiliation*).

3 In their streets they have girded themselves with sackcloth; On their housetops and in their squares

Everyone is **wailing**, dissolved in tears.

8 For the cry of distress has gone around the territory of Moab, Its **wail** goes as far as Eglaim and its **wailing** even to Beer-elim. (**Their punishment was deserved!** Recall that Moabites worshipped Chemosh and Baal Peor, to whom they offered human sacrifices and practiced a sexual cult!)

Isaiah 16:7 Therefore Moab will **wail**; everyone of Moab will **wail**. You will moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth as those who are utterly stricken.

Isaiah 23:1 The oracle concerning Tyre. **Wail**, O ships of Tarshish, For Tyre is destroyed, without house or harbor; It is reported to them from the land of Cyprus.

6 Pass over to Tarshish; **Wail**, O inhabitants of the coastland.

14 **Wail**, O ships of Tarshish, For your stronghold is destroyed.

Ryrie = One of the most famous cities of the ancient world. Her mariners were the explorers and merchants of the world - 1 Kings 10:11, 22)

Morris - Tyre was a great city of the Phoenicians, noted as the home port of a great fleet of merchant ships. Its decline and eventual destruction were foretold by both Isaiah and, much later, Ezekiel 26-28.

Criswell - Tyre, one of the most famous cities of the ancient world, was known for its mariners. It may symbolize the international trade and commerce whose leaders do not seek to serve God or humanity, but seek only the selfish accumulation of wealth.)

Isaiah 52:5 "Now therefore, what do I have here," declares the LORD, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again the LORD declares, "Those who rule over them **howl**, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.

Isaiah 65:14 "Behold, My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, But you will cry out with a heavy heart, And you will **wail** with a broken spirit.

Jeremiah 4:8 "For this, put on sackcloth, Lament and **wail**; For the fierce anger of the LORD Has not turned back from us."

Jeremiah 25:34 "**Wail**, you shepherds, and cry; And wallow in ashes, you masters of the flock; For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions have come, And you will fall like a choice vessel.

Jeremiah 47:2 Thus says the LORD: "Behold, waters are going to rise from the north And become an overflowing torrent, And overflow the land and all its fullness, The city and those who live in it; And the men will cry out, And every inhabitant of the land will **wail**.

Jeremiah 48:20 "Moab has been put to shame, for it has been shattered. **Wail** and cry out; Declare by the Arnon That Moab has been destroyed.

31 "Therefore I will **wail** for Moab, Even for all Moab will I cry out; I will moan for the men of Kir-heres.

39 "How shattered it is! How they have **wailed!** How Moab has turned his back-- he is ashamed! So Moab will become a laughingstock and an object of terror to all around him."

Jeremiah 49:3 "**Wail**, O Heshbon, for Ai has been destroyed! Cry out, O daughters of Rabbah, Gird yourselves with sackcloth and lament, And rush back and forth inside the walls; For Malcam will go into exile Together with his priests and his princes.

Jeremiah 51:8 Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; **Wail** over her! Bring balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed.

Comment - Cyrus did not destroy her suddenly! Jeremiah's prophecy in chap50,51 focuses on the suddenness of Babylon's destruction. However, this was not the case when Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians. Rather than destroying Babylon, Cyrus helped rebuild portions of the city that were in a state of decay. In fact the city was made a provincial capital in the Persian Empire. The actual destruction of the city was a gradual process over several centuries.

Ezekiel 21:12 "Cry out and **wail**, son of man; for it is against My people, it is against all the officials of Israel. They are delivered over to the sword with My people, therefore strike your thigh (= physical action = part of an expression of grief. cp Jer 31:19).

Ezekiel 30:2 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, **Wail**, 'Alas for the day!'

Comment: In Ezek 30:1-9 the DAY OF THE LORD has a DISTANT fulfillment, and in Ezek 30:10 on it has a NEAR fulfillment.

Hosea 7:14 And they do not cry to Me from their heart When they **wail** on their beds; For the sake of grain and new wine they assemble themselves, They turn away from Me.

Joel 1:5 Awake, drunkards, and weep; And **wail**, all you wine drinkers, On account of the sweet wine That is cut off from your mouth.

11 Be ashamed, O farmers, **Wail**, O vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field is destroyed.

13 Gird yourselves with sackcloth And lament, O priests; **Wail**, O ministers of the altar! Come, spend the night in sackcloth O ministers of my God, For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God.

Amos 8:3 "The songs of the palace will turn to **wailing** in that day," declares the Lord GOD. "Many will be the corpses; in every place they will cast them forth in silence."

Micah 1:8 Because of this I must lament and **wail**, I must go barefoot and naked; I must make a lament like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches.

Zephaniah 1:11 "**Wail**, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off.

Zechariah 11:2 **Wail**, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, Because the glorious trees have been destroyed; **Wail**, O oaks of Bashan, For the impenetrable forest has come down.

Related Resources:

- Day of the Lord
- Isaiah 2:11 Commentary

Is near - Beloved, let us seek to continually ponder this **time phrase**, so that we might live in the light of the nearness of the return of the LORD (**Second Coming**), and might make daily choices to discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:7, 8-note). Why? Because in the light of the "length" of eternity, the Day of the LORD is always near, and each passing day brings it even nearer! **Near** speaks of [Imminent/Imminency](#).

We see a parallel in Ezekiel although this passage has a near fulfillment in the Babylonian invasion of Egypt (Ezek 30:5), which is a foreshadowing of the final (eschatological) Day of the LORD when He comes to pour out His righteous wrath on all the godless Gentile nations...

"For the day is near, Even the **day of the LORD** is near ([qarob](#)); It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations. (Ezekiel 30:3)

Three times in Joel the Day of the LORD is described as being near...

Joel 1:15-note Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD is near**, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2:1-note Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the **day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near**,

Joel 3:14-note Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! **For the day of the LORD is near** in the valley of decision.

Other prophets also warn that **this dread Day is near**..

Obadiah 1:15 "For **the day of the LORD draws near** on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.

Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord GOD! For **the day of the LORD is near**, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests.

Zephaniah 1:14 Near is **the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly**; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. Amos 6:3

This time expression in Isaiah reminds us of John's (and his record of Jesus') words of the end times in the Revelation...

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is **near**. (Rev 1:3-[note](#))

(Jesus) 'I am coming quickly; **hold fast** (present imperative - Keep on holding fast - make the choice daily to hold fast. Enabled by grace and the indwelling Spirit, make this your lifestyle in a world that is rapidly going in the opposite direction!) what you have, in order that no one take your crown. (Rev 3:11-[note](#))

And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must (not "may" but must!) **shortly take place**. (Jesus now speaks) "And behold, **I am coming quickly**. Blessed is he who heeds (Beloved, we must not just *hear* with our ears, but *heed* with our hearts!) the words of the prophecy of this book." (Rev 22:6-[note](#), Rev 22:7-[note](#))

(Jesus) "Behold, **I am coming quickly** (Note how Jesus repeats this truth for emphasis to those who have ears to hear!), and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Rev 22:12-[note](#), Rev 22:13-[note](#))

Near (close, soon) ([07138](#))([qarob](#) from the verb [qarab](#) = to come near) is an adjective meaning near, close by, closely related. **Qarob** refers to nearness in time or space: something is about to happen, is near at hand, e.g., judgment, calamity (Dt. 32:35) or something that is not near at hand, referring to its prophetic fulfillment as in Balaam's prophecy "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob." (Nu 24:17).

In this passage **qarob** conveys the sense of [Imminent/Imminency](#).

A day of destruction - The Hebrew word for **destruction** *shod* conveys the primary sense of that which is destroyed by violence. Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom using this same verb in explaining God's reason for their destruction (Hos 7:13)

Destruction (devastation, violence)([07701](#))([shod](#) from **shadad** = to deal violently with, despoil, devastate, ruin) is a masculine noun meaning violence, destruction, desolation, robbery, spoil, wasting. The primary meaning of **shod** is violence or destruction and is used to describe an "act of violence or oppression." In Job the idea is not to fear coming violence - "And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes" (Job 5:21). **Shod** is used in Ps 12:5 to designate a reason for God's arising to protect the weak. Isaiah weeps over Israel (reminiscent of Jesus' words in Mt 23:37, Lk 13:34-[note](#)) - "Therefore I say, "Turn your eyes away from me, Let me weep bitterly, Do not try to comfort me concerning the **destruction** of the daughter of my people." (Isa. 22:4). **Shod** was also used by Jeremiah and Amos to describe violence and havoc as social sins (Jer 6:7; Amos 3:10). The primary meaning of destruction was used by Hosea and here by Joel to express God's reason for the coming Day of the LORD which will bring destruction on His Chosen People (Hos. 7:13 = "Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me! Destruction is theirs, for they have rebelled against Me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me.").

Oswalt rightly observes that "It is a day when human strength will be helpless, when creation itself will tremble, when the almost boundless capacity for human cruelty will be unleashed."

Motyer sums up the **Day of the LORD** - The Day' is the culmination and termination of history. Step by step Isaiah depicts its seven aspects: it is the Day when the Lord implements his wrath (Isa 11:2-3), marked by worldwide mutual destruction (Isa 11:4-5) from which there is no defense (Isa 11:6-8); it is cosmic in its effect (Isa 11:9-10), moral in its motivation (Isa 11:11); it reverses the work of creation (Isa 11:12-13); there is no escape, only horrific suffering (Isa 11:14-16).

It will come as destruction from the Almighty - There is no question of Who is bringing this time of great destruction on the world. Only God could deliver such a blow. The **Almighty** (Shaddai - see related study **EL Shaddai - God Almighty**) is the One Who initiates and carries out this devastating day.

Day of the LORD -

Is 2:11, 12, Is 2:20, 21, Is 13:6, 13:9, 34:8, 61:2 Jeremiah 30:7, 46:10 Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3 Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14 Amos 5:18, 20 Obadiah 1:15 Zeph 1:7,1:8,14, 15, 18, 2:2, 3 Zech 14:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 Malachi 3:2, 4:5

John MacArthur on the **Day of the Lord** in the book of Joel -

The theme of Joel is the **Day of the Lord**. It permeates all parts of Joel's message, making it the most sustained treatment in the entire OT (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 2:31; 3:14). The phrase is employed 19 times by 8 different OT authors (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6,9; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14; Amos 5:18 [2x], Amos

5:20; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7,14 [2x]; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5). **The phrase does not have reference to a chronological time period, but to a general period of wrath and judgment uniquely belonging to the Lord.** It is exclusively the day which unveils His character—mighty, powerful, and holy, thus terrifying His enemies. The Day of the Lord does not always refer to an eschatological event; on occasion it has a near historical fulfillment, as seen in Ezekiel 13:5, where it speaks of the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem. As is common in prophecy, the near fulfillment is an historic event upon which to comprehend the more distant, eschatological fulfillment.

The **Day of the Lord** is frequently associated with seismic disturbances (e.g., Joel 2:1–11; Joel 2:31; Joel 3:16), violent weather (Ezekiel 13:5ff.), clouds and thick darkness (e.g., Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:7ff.), cosmic upheaval (Joel 2:3,30), and as a “great and very terrible” (Joel 2:11) day that would “come as destruction from the Almighty” (Joel 1:15). The latter half of Joel depicts time subsequent to the **Day of the Lord** in terms of promise and hope. There will be a pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh, accompanied by prophetic utterances, dreams, visions (Joel 2:28,29), as well as the coming of Elijah, an epiphany bringing restoration and hope (Mal. 4:5,6). As a result of the **Day of the Lord** there will be physical blessings, fruitfulness, and prosperity (Joel 2:21ff.; Joel 3:16–21). It is a day when judgment is poured out on sinners that subsequently leads to blessings on the penitent, and reaffirmation of God’s covenant with His people. ([Introduction to Joel](#))

Day of the LORD in the NT - Acts 2:20 1Th 5:2 2Th 2:2,2:3,2:4 2Pe 3:10-note

The day of the Lord is a familiar Old Testament image for the ultimate day of God’s judgment, His final day in court when He settles the injustices of the world. From the above Scriptural references (and others) one can piece together the following portrait of the Day of the Lord.

Even a cursory study indicates that this day is not a reference to a single 24 day but to an extended period of time as illustrated in the diagram which will be explained below.

Reginald E. Showers - The **Day of the Lord** refers to God's special interventions into the course of world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is--the sovereign God of the universe. (Maranatha, Our Lord Come. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995, 38)

The **IVP Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms** defines the **Day of the LORD** as

A biblical phrase prevalent among OT prophets who pointed to a future event or era (**not necessarily a single twenty-four-hour day**) during which God would visit judgment on Israel or the world. The NT authors interpreted the phrase in a futuristic sense but saw in Jesus Christ the beginning of the fulfillment of the Day of the Lord. For believers in Christ the Day of the Lord is an anticipation of hope; for unbelievers it holds only judgment leading to damnation. (Grenz, S., et al. Page 34. Downers Grove, Ill. IVP)

Richard Mayhue in his article on the **Day of the Lord (DOL)** explains that...

The **DOL** is a biblical phrase used by God’s prophets to describe either the immediate future or the ultimate eschatological (**Ed**: eschatos = last - refers to prophesy) consummation. It is not a technical term in the sense that it always refers only to one event in God’s plan.

It may designate a divinely-sent locust plague (Joel 1:15) or the providential fall of Babylon (Isa 13:6) or of Jerusalem (Zeph 1:14, 15, 18; 2:1); and in one given context it may describe first a judgment and then a corresponding deliverance (compare with the above prophecies Joel 3:14, 18 and Zeph 3:8, 11, 16; cf. also Obad 15, 17; Zech 14:1, 9, 10, 11). (from Payne, The Imminent Appearing of Christ)

DOL is used to describe several events and is limited only by its mention in biblical revelation. Each appearance of **DOL** must be interpreted in its context to determine whether the prophet expected the immediate historical act of God or Yahweh’s ultimate eschatological visitation. (Ladd, The Presence of the Future, 74.) **DOL** is not bound to a definite time duration. It could last only for hours or it could continue for days. Only context can determine DOL longevity, and even then only general approximation can be made.

([The Prophet’s Watchword Day of the Lord -- By Richard L. Mayhue Grace Theological Journal 6:2 Fall 1985](#))

The **Day of the Lord** is so unique and significant that it is also referred to **that day**. As is often the case with Old Testament prophecy **that day** usually has a **two fold fulfillment, near and future**. For example in Isaiah **that day** is mentioned repeatedly, referring to a time of God's judgment, the near fulfillment usually (but read the context) predicting Babylon's coming conquest of Judah and the far future (but surely not far from where we are beloved, living in the 21st century!) similar to events before he second coming of Christ. If you are intrigued by "**that day**" I would encourage you to study the following 45 uses of the phrase **that day** in

Isaiah, taking care to read the verse in context so that you might interpret the passage correctly as a few of the passages do not appear to refer directly to the **day of the LORD**. Enjoy! ([Click](#) for the 45 uses of **that day** in Isaiah). Below is a "sampling" of uses of **that day** from Isaiah to encourage you to take some time and study this important time period of God's "calendar"...may this awesome truth not just inform you but transform your innermost being so that if you are not living expectantly, you might, like the saints of Thessalonica, begin to eagerly look forward to the return of God's Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who delivers us from **the wrath to come**. (in the "Day of the LORD")" (1Th 1:10-note)

Isaiah 2:11, 17, 20

11 The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in **that day**. 12 For the LORD of hosts will have **a day** of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is lifted up, that he may be abased.

17 And the pride of man will be humbled, and the loftiness of men will be abased, and the LORD alone will be exalted in **that day**.

20 In **that day** men will cast away to the moles and the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship

Isaiah 4:2

In **that day** the **Branch of the LORD** (the Messiah) will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel (the believing remnant of Jews - see below).

Isaiah 10:20

Now it will come about in **that day** that the **remnant of Israel** (click discussion of **remnant**), and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

As an aside it is worth noting that **Isaiah** provides more information on the future **Day of the Lord** and the Millennial Kingdom than any other OT prophet and many of his descriptions are not found anywhere else in Scripture (see note Millennium 3)

A TIMELINE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

Heaven & earth
fled away
(Rev 20:11-note)
||
v

Pre-Tribulation Rapture	The Tribulation 70th Week of Daniel (Da 9:27-note)	(2) Day of Lord 2Pe 3:10-note >	Great White < Throne
(1a) Day of the Lord begins >	Mid-Tribulation (1b) Day of Lord begins v		New Heaven New Earth (Rev 21:1-note)
	3.5 Years	3.5 Years	

When does the Day of the Lord begin?

You will read descriptions in some commentaries that state the **Day of the Lord** follows the **rapture** of the church (1a) ("pre-tribulation rapture"- see **discussion of when the rapture occurs**) (1Th 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18-see notes 1Th 4:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18), the event which most evangelicals feel immediately precedes the last seven years of Seventy Weeks of Daniel, and is popularly known as the **Tribulation**, although nowhere in Scripture is this seventieth week of 7 years specifically designated "the Tribulation" (let me know if you find a passage that contradicts this conclusion - remember that "the Great Tribulation" only refers to the last

three and one-half years of this seven year period). The alternative inception date is Mid-Tribulation (**1b**).

First, we must understand the basic timing of this last "Seven Year Period" (**Daniel's Seventieth Week**) which can be divided into two 3.5 year segments, a conclusion based upon study of Da 9:27 (see notes).

Daniel records the following prophecy he received from the angel Gabriel in answer to fervent prayer...

And **he** (the Antichrist) will make a firm covenant with **the many** (the Jews/Israel) for **one week** (one seven year period), but in **the middle of the week** (after 3.5 years) he will **put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering** (in the rebuilt Jewish temple) 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." (Da 9:27-note).

The Lord Jesus quoted from Daniel 9 as He explained the timing of the events immediately preceding His triumphant return because He wanted the Jews (and all mankind) living during the tumultuous time of Daniel's Seventieth Week to have an easily identifiable event that would indubitably signal the beginning of the the Great Tribulation which represents the final outpouring of God's wrath during the last 3.5 years of the Seventieth Week of Daniel..

Therefore when you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** (referring to the Antichrist or some desecrating action he makes) which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet (reference to Da 9:27-note, also in Daniel 11:31, 12:11), **standing in the holy place** (indicates the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt, cf Re 11:1, 2-see notes [Re 11:1](#); [11:2](#)) (let the reader understand)...there will be a **Great Tribulation**, (a specific 3.5 year period synonymous with the "Time of Jacob's Distress" in Jer 30:7 - click other synonyms) such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall...but immediately after **the tribulation** (the Great Tribulation) of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky (Sign = the Lord returning on the clouds), and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." (Matthew 25:15-31)

Now keeping in mind the timing of this dramatic event (the abomination of desolation) described by **Daniel** and **Jesus**, read Paul's second letter to the saints at Thessalonica where he addresses the false teaching that the persecution the Thessalonians were now experiencing was part of the great tribulation. He references the same crucial historical event as Daniel and Jesus in order to assure these fearful saints...

Now we request (plead, implore, beg of) you, brethren, with regard to the coming (**parousia**) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him (Paul links the coming with the gathering which is compatible with his description of the rapture in 1Th 4:13, 14-note, 1Th 4:15, 16-note, 1Th 4:17, 18-note), that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure (literally "mind") or be disturbed (frightened) (false teaching about the Rapture and the Day of the Lord appears to have had a devastating impact on the Thessalonian saints) either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord** has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy (a very specific presumably identifiable time of rebellion against God) comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** (the Antichrist) is **revealed** (apokalupto = literally has the veil removed exposing to open view what he had before hidden regarding his evil character. The aorist tense points to a definite time, a specific historical event), the son of destruction (ápoleia = ruin not annihilation), who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he **takes his seat in the temple of God** (which Jesus referred to as "standing in the holy place"), displaying himself as being God." (2Th 2:1, 2, 3, 4)

When does Paul state that the **Day of the Lord** will begin? First, he says **the apostasy** will occur. Then he states when and where **the man of lawlessness** will be revealed. Specifically he states that the revelation of the Antichrist must precede the **Day of the LORD**. Although many favor the Day of the Lord beginning at point (**1a**) in the above diagram (after the pre-tribulation rapture), when one compare Scripture with Scripture, there is certainly support for considering the beginning for the **Day of the Lord** at the midpoint of the 7 Year period of Daniel (**1b**).

Related Resources:

- More on the Day of the Lord
- Lecture on Revelation, part 4
- [The Day of the Lord by Jeff Miller](#)

- [The Day of the Lord by A C Gaebelein \(1907\)](#)
- [The Day of the Lord by Tony Garland](#)
- [When Does the Day of the Lord Dawn? by Tony Garland](#)
- [Day of the Lord charted with Other Prophetic Days - Clarence Larkin](#)

WHAT WILL THE DAY OF THE LORD LOOK LIKE?

Summarizing some of the descriptions in the OT references, we see that this Day is

coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it (Isaiah 13:9), "a day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes...a slaughter for the Lord GOD of hosts" (Jeremiah 46:10), "a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations" (Ezekiel 30:3), "near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15), "surely it is near" (Joel 2:1), "great and very awesome, and who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11), "the great and awesome day" (Joel 2:31), "near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14), "It will be darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18), "even gloom with no brightness in it" (Amos 5:20), "(a day when) your dealings will return on your own head" (Obadiah 1:15), "near and coming very quickly...in it the warrior cries out bitterly, a day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zephaniah 1:14,15), "the day of the LORD'S wrath and all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth" (Zephaniah 1:18), "the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zephaniah 2:2), "His coming...is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (Malachi 3:2), "the great and terrible day" (Malachi 4:5), "will come just like a thief in the night" (1Thessalonians 5:2), "it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter." (Zech 14:6, 7, 8)

Notice that the **Day of the Lord** is frequently associated with seismic disturbances (Joel 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11; 2:31; 3:16), violent weather (Ezekiel 13:5, 5, 7, 8), clouds and thick darkness (Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:7, 8, 9, 10), and cosmic upheaval (Joel 2:3,30). Joel tells us that as a result of the **Day of the Lord** there will also be physical blessings, fruitfulness, and prosperity (Joel 2:21, 22, 23, 24; 3:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21). In short the **Day of the Lord** results in judgment poured out upon sinners and blessings for repenters! This Day also brings about the fulfillment of all God's promises (especially to the promise of the Land - Ge 15:18) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this fulfillment being consummated in the Millennial Kingdom on earth. To do away with the "millennium" as many do is to make it impossible for God to fulfill His Covenant with the remnant of believing Israel.

The preceding Scriptures on the Day of the Lord are only a sampling of descriptions, beloved This Day will be so awful that men's hands will hang limp, they will writhe like women in pain, their faces will be red hot because of what is happening. This day is the day when the wrath of God inextricably exterminates sinners and sin forever from earth in preparation for the new heavens and new earth in the Day of God.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD?

The **Day of the Lord** is coming, and it will come suddenly and will be an awesome and terrible day. It is a day of gloom and of destruction from the Almighty. It is a day which includes Christ's Second Coming to defeat the Antichrist (Re 17:14-[note](#), Rev 19:11, 12, 13, 14,1 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 - see [notes Re 19:11ff](#)) and to reign and rule on earth for 1000 years (Millennial Reign) as King of kings and as Lord of lords (Re 20:4, 5, 6-see [notes Re 20:4; 5; 6](#)). And finally **Peter** tells us that it is the day in which the world as we know it will finally and irrevocably come to an end.

But the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (2Peter 3:10-note, cp Rev 20:11-[note](#) "no place was found for them")

On the basis of these awesome events **Peter** exhorts us...

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **looking** for (**prosdokao** in the **present tense** = continually as your lifestyle, with great anticipation and expectation) and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be

destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are **looking (prosdokao in the present tense)** for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you **look** for (**prosdokao in the present tense**) these things, **be diligent (spoudazo; aorist imperative = Command issued with a sense of urgency!)** to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless (2Pe 3:11, 12, 13-note; 2Pe 3:14-note)

Comment: Note Peter's emphasis on "looking!" Notice also that Peter clearly teaches the study of prophecy is not simply to satisfy our curiosity for the sensational but to radically impact our lifestyle as God's Spirit gives us hearts to see the things of eternal importance (2Co 4:18-note). Beloved, what (Who = Jesus) you are looking for will (should) affect what (Who) you are living for! Those who enjoy studying prophecy should (theoretically) be the most holy and godly among us! And if they are not, their purpose for studying prophecy is misguided!

Dear reader, if you are not a believer, let the doctrine of the **Day of the Lord** awaken in you a sense of urgency to

Seek the LORD while He may be found.

Call upon Him while He is near

(Isaiah 55:6).

And as Isaiah records elsewhere (in the King James translation):

Look unto me, and be ye saved,

All the ends of the earth

For I am God, and there is none else.

(Isaiah 45:22)

Seek Christ's righteousness through faith in His atoning sinless sacrifice. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be rescued from eternal loss and separation. There will be no excuses in the **Day of the Lord**. No second chances. No bribing the Righteous Judge.

SUMMARY OF DAY OF THE LORD IN ISAIAH

Mayhue has an excellent summary of the **Day of the Lord (DOL)** in Isaiah...

Isa 2:12 is the first mention of DOL in Isaiah's prophecy. This chapter emphasizes the future establishment of God's kingdom (Isa 2:2, 3, 4), the present sinful state of Israel (Isa 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9), and the future day of reckoning (Isa 2:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22). The prophet appears to look beyond the near to the far future in the judgment emphasis of Isa 2:10-22, just as he had looked to the eschatological kingdom in Isa 2:1-4. There are several indicators of millennial conditions in Isa 2:1-4 (cf. Rev 20:1-6). Mt. Zion will be the world capital and all the nations will come to it (Isa 2:1, 2) in order to seek God's word (Isa 2:3). God will judge between the nations and war will be no more (Is 2:4,5). This eschatological emphasis in Isa 2:2, 3, 4 makes it reasonable to conclude that eschatological judgment is in view in Is 2:10-22, rather than to God's chastisement of Judah by Assyria and Babylon.

DOL is described by Isaiah as a time of universal humiliation for all who are proud (Is 2:11, 12, 17). In contrast, the splendor of God's majesty (Is 2:10, 19, 21) will be displayed and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day (Is 2:11, 17). Isaiah's portrayals of DOL here should be interpreted as referring to that time immediately preceding the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. It is a day when God's majesty will be outwardly manifested (Is 2:10, 19, 21), and the population will be driven in terror to caves for protection (Is 2:21, cf. Re 6:16, 17).

The timing and terminology of Is 2:21 are strikingly similar to the description of the sixth seal in Re 6:16, 17. If these passages are correlated, it can be concluded that the sixth seal is a part of DOL and occurs at the end of the Tribulation. The correlation also confirms that Isa 2:12 refers to the far future. As will be noted later, Zec 14:1 and Mal 4:5 also emphasize only the far eschatological implications of DOL.

Isaiah 13 is the next chapter to be considered. It is an oracle concerning Babylon. Is 13:1-8 deals with God's use of Babylon as his instrument of indignation for the destruction of Israel (Is 13:5, 6). This reminds one of

Habakkuk's dismay that God would do such a thing (Hab 1:2, 3, 4). The DOL was near in the mind of Isaiah (Is 13:6), although it would not come for over one hundred years. It would be a day of destruction, terror, and pain (Is 13:8). There is little doubt that this refers to the near eschatological event fulfilled by Babylon from 605-586 B.C.

However, there is good reason to believe that Isa 13:9-16 speaks of DOL implications for the far future. The near emphasis returns in Isa 13:17-22 where the end of Babylon is described. That the far future is described in 13:9-16 is shown by the cosmic disturbances (Isa 13:10, 13 ; cf. Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12, 13; Joel 2:31) and the universal judgment of mankind (Isa 13:11 ; cf. 2:11, 12). Ladd accurately describes the interplay of the near and far views:

These two visitations, the near and the far, or, as we may for convenience call them, the historical and the eschatological, are not differentiated in time. In fact, sometimes the two blend together as though they were one day.

Isaiah 13 calls the day of the visitation of Babylon the Day of the Lord. The Lord is mustering a host for battle (Isa 13:4-6), he will stir up the Medes against Babylon (Isa 13:17). Therefore, men are to "**wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!**" (Isa 13:6). This historical Day of the Lord is painted against the backdrop of the eschatological Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord will bring disaster to the earth and a disruption of the heavenly order (Isa 13:9-13). Judgment will fall both upon the world of nature and upon men (Isa 13:7) when God punishes the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity (Isa 13:11).

Here is a picture of universal judgment. The Day of the Lord is the eschatological judgment of mankind; but the two are seen as though they were one day, one visitation of God.

Isa 13:6, 9 is therefore similar to other passages previously noted which portray the DOL in one context as both a **near historical** and a **far eschatological happening**. ([The Prophet's Watchword Day of the Lord -- By Richard L. Mayhue Grace Theological Journal 6:2 Fall 1985](#))

Isaiah 13:7 Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt.:

- **All hands:** Isa 10:3,4 37:27 51:20 Jer 50:43 Eze 7:17 21:7 Na 1:6
- **Every:** Isa 19:1 Ex 15:15 Na 2:10

EXAMPLES OF HOW DREADFUL WILL BE THE DAY OF THE LORD

All hands will fall limp - The **hands** emphasize the place where their human power resides. They will be demoralized from fear and astonishment at the divine judgments they are witnessing and experiencing! Before the unrestrained wrath of God men's hands will fall down utterly helpless, impotent and unable to resist the enemy. These descriptions paint a picture of destruction and terror which is almost unimaginable. Beloved, this should prompt in the heart of every believer a Spirit led boldness to share Christ with those in our sphere of influence, so that they might escape this dread day by placing their faith in "Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." (1Th 1:10-note)

Every man's heart will melt - Courage would vanish from their hearts (Isa 19:1; Ezek. 21:7; Nah. 2:10). In Shaddai's presence the mountains themselves dissolve (Ps 97:5; Isa 34:3; Mic 1:4) and the nations are powerless before Him (Nah 2:11; cf. Jud 15:14).

Motyer - Hands...heart: the organs respectively of personal action and reflection. The terror of the Day brings total personal paralysis. ([Vol. 20: Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press](#))

Isaiah 13:8 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.:

- **Pains:** Isa 21:3,4 26:17 Ps 48:5,6 Jer 30:6 50:43 Da 5:5,6 1Th 5:3
- **Faces aflame:** Joel 2:6 Na 2:10

TERROR IN THE TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD

Terrified...pains and anguish...writhe...astonishment...faces aflame - Observe how Isaiah piles up descriptions to try to convey the horror of the coming **Day of the LORD**.

Terrified (0926)(**bahal**) means dismayed, disturbed, terrified. Bahal can also mean to hasten (2 Chr 26:20, Eccl 8:3). **Bahal** usually means to tremble inwardly, to become agitated, to palpitate, to make alarmed.

In the first use in Ge 45:3, **bahal** describes the dismay (Lxx - tarasso) of Joseph's brothers when he revealed his true identity. Psalm 2:5 says God will "**terrify** them in His fury." (cf Ps 2:6). **Bahal** is used in the context of the terror of the Day of the LORD here in Isa 13:8 and in Zeph 1:18 where God says " will make a complete end, Indeed a **terrifying** one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth."

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **bahal** in Isaiah 13:8 with the verb **tarasso** which means to stir up, to trouble, to disturb with various emotions such as fear, to shake or agitate like water in a glass sharply jarred, to cause inward commotion, to take away his calmness of mind, to disturb one's equanimity (Mt 2:3)

Gilbrant writes that **bahal** "describes the result of some terrifying event, something which impacts the emotional and reasoning capacity of people, also causing physical manifestation. For instance, in Job 21:6, thinking about his situation causes Job to shake. It is an experience that also strikes people in a corporate sense. Abner's death in Hebron terrified all Israel (2 Sam. 4:1). (See also Jer. 51:32; Pss. 48:6; 90:7; Ex. 15:15. In contexts where the word describes the result or consequence, the causes vary. For example, one can be terrified over supernatural manifestations. In 1 Sam. 28:21, the word described Saul's reaction to the episode with the witch at Endor. Saul was disturbed at his situation (28:15), but he became even more so when Samuel informed him of God's judgment on him. At this point, the witch came and found Saul "greatly disturbed." This usage is found in Psalm 6, where the word is used both for the plight of the Psalmist and his enemies. In v. 3, the psalmist was in anguish because of the pain of his bones. He calls on God to avenge him before his enemies. He prayed (v. 10) that they would be terrified. God is another cause for terror. In quite a number of references, people were afraid of, or terrified by, God. God in his wrath terrified the nations (Ps. 2:5; Exo. 15:15). "Terror" seized a person when God turned away his face (Ps. 30:7; 90:7; 104:29). In Job, humans are terrified of being placed in the hands of an arbitrary God (Job 4:5; 21:6; 23:15). Further, God brings "terror" on people as punishment/judgment. This punishment comes upon individuals (Job 22:10) and groups (Ps. 6:10) who are usually Israel's enemies (though the noun form is used for God's "terror" on Israel in a few places, e.g., Jer. 15:8). This judgment on Babylon, when seen and heard by the prophet, caused him to be terrified. Bahal is used with some frequency for the day of Yahweh—it will be sudden, unexpected, and terrible (e.g., Isa. 13:8; Zeph. 1:18). Bahal is used to describe terror or fear which came between people as well. For instance, in Gen. 45:3 Joseph's brothers were terrified of him when they discovered his identity. The position of Joseph, along with what they had done to him, caused this great anguish. "Terror" occurred when people were faced with great political, ethical, or social conflict. For example, it is the case when the Israelites in war turned on the Benjamites in Judg. 20:41 (cf. also Ezra 4:4; 2 Chr. 32:18; 2 Sam. 4:1). The verb in the wisdom texts takes on additional meanings. One of these refers to action that should not be rash or hasty, i.e., action that should be preceded by careful and thoughtful reflection (Ecc. 5:1). Another meaning which takes on ethical overtones is in Ecc. 7:9, where it refers to a person who should hold his or her anger. ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

Bahal - 38x in 37v - dismayed(12), disturb(1), disturbed(2), eager(1), hastened(1), hastens(1), hastily(1), hasty(1), hurried(1), hurriedly(1), hurry(2), quickly(1), terrified(7), terrifies(1), terrify(3), terrifying(1), tremble(1).

Gen. 45:3; Exod. 15:15; Jdg. 20:41; 1 Sam. 28:21; 2 Sam. 4:1; 2 Chr. 26:20; 2 Chr. 32:18; 2 Chr. 35:21; Est. 2:9; Est. 6:14; Est. 8:14; Job 4:5; Job 21:6; Job 22:10; Job 23:15; Job 23:16; Ps. 2:5; Ps. 6:2; Ps. 6:3; Ps. 6:10; Ps. 30:7; Ps. 48:5; Ps. 83:15; Ps. 83:17; Ps. 90:7; Ps. 104:29; Prov. 20:21; Prov. 28:22; Eccl. 7:9; Eccl. 8:3; Isa. 13:8; Isa. 21:3; Jer. 51:32; Ezek. 7:27; Ezek. 26:18; Dan. 11:44; Zeph. 1:18

All men will tremble inwardly when confronted with the Day of the LORD, which bring something unexpected, threatening and disastrous! This will be the reaction of all those who live as if the Day of the LORD will never occur.

They will writhe like a woman in labor - Not a picture of fruitful labor pain but a picture of pain that leads to an inescapable outcome! The image of the woman in travail is used in Scripture to describe a time of judgment (Isa 21:3; 26:17; Jer 6:24; Micah 4:9–10; Mt. 24:8, where "sorrows" is "birth pains"; 1Th 5:3-note).(Isa. 21:3; 26:17; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 48:41; 49:22, 24; 50:43; Micah 4:9-10). Usually, it was the suffering of Israel, but here it pictured the misery of Babylon.

They will look at one another in astonishment be in consternation: be amazed, be astonished, marvel. The root meaning is "be astounded, dumbfounded, bewildered, " with an element of fear, whether because of an amazing or fearful sight or a terrifying sound. Frightening or bewildering events may cause people to look at each other in amazement (Ge 43:33)

The historic fulfillment of this prophecy against **Babylon** is recorded by Daniel during the reign of **Belshazzar**...

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together. (Da 5:5, 6-note)

Their faces aflame (Literally = their faces are faces of flames) - This Day will be so awful that men's faces will be flushed and red hot because of the events that occur in the **Day of the LORD**. They may also be flushed by the embarrassment at their sins against such a Holy God, although Jeremiah tells us hearts of men can become so callous that they even forget how to blush! (Jer 6:15, 8:12)

Isaiah 13:9 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.:

- **Cruel:** Isa 13:15-18 47:10-15 Jer 6:22,23 50:40-42 51:35-58 Na 1:2,6 Mal 4:1 Rev 17:16,17 18:8 19:17-21
- **He will:** Ps 104:35 Pr 2:22)

Behold (02009)(**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! . The idea is "listen closely" to the following description of the dreadful **day**. **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Day of the LORD - See description in Isaiah 13:6.

The day of the LORD is coming - The Greek translates coming with the verb *erchomai* in the **present tense**, which pictures this day as continually on its way (**See Imminency, Imminent**).

As **Motyer** says "at any moment the Day is already there, awaiting the Lord's command to dawn." Isaiah would not be a very popular evangelist in our modern era, a time when most shun and deprecate the preaching of the righteous wrath of God. It is interesting that the book of Romans follows the pattern of giving the "bad news" (Romans 1-3) before revealing the "good news." Is it wise to deviate from this Pauline pattern?

Cruel, with fury and burning anger - Notice how the **Day** itself is personified. Again Isaiah piles up synonymous descriptions of the Day of the LORD, as if the dread and horror of that day could not be adequately portrayed in words.

Desolation...exterminate - These are both severe words, the former describing the wasting effect on the land and the latter the extreme destruction of the people of the land. It is as if words cannot adequately describe the dreadful coming Day of the LORD.

Desolation (08047) (**shammah** from **shamem** = desolation caused by great disaster, usually result of divine judgment) This word stresses the horror caused by desolation of judgment. The **Lxx** translates **shammah** with **eremos** which means desolate, deserted, unsettled. A desert or wilderness that is barren, empty, wasted.

The Hebrew **shammah** conveys a similar picture to the Greek description (**eremos**) of a land of waste, which causes those to see it to be horrified and appalled by the extent of God's judgment.

Exterminate (08045)(**shamad**) always expresses complete "destruction" or "annihilation." This is what God had commanded Israel to do when they entered the Promised Land declaring "then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and **demolish** all their high places (SOMETHING ISRAEL NEVER REALLY OBEYED AND IT GOT THEM IN MUCH TROUBLE - IS THERE A SIN OR "IDOL" YOU ARE HESITATING IN DEMOLISHING? **BEWARE IT WILL SURELY ENSNARE YOU!** cf Dt 12:30)." (Nu 33:52)

The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. Used to describe the destruction of the idolatrous high places of Baal (Hos 10:8) and his images (2 Ki 10:28).

Here are other uses of **shamad** by the prophets - Isa. 10:7; Isa. 13:9; Isa. 14:23; Isa. 23:11; Isa. 26:14; Isa. 48:19; Jer. 48:8; Jer.

48:42; Lam. 3:66; Ezek. 14:9; Ezek. 25:7; Ezek. 32:12; Ezek. 34:16; Dan. 11:44; Hos. 10:8; Amos 2:9; Amos 9:8; Mic. 5:14; Hag. 2:22 ('I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations [IN THE DAY OF THE LORD]; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.');

It is worth noting that the last OT prophetic use of **shamad** is one of the greatest for the nation of Israel, the prophet **Zechariah** recording "And in that day (WHAT DAY - Read Zechariah 12:1-14+) I (JEHOVAH/YAHWEH HIMSELF) will set about to **destroy** (shamad) all (HOW MANY?) the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:9+) **Anti-Semitism** will be obliterated!

The **Lxx** translates shamad with **apollumi** which pertains to destruction but not annihilation. It basically has to do with that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose. That is the term Jesus used to speak of those who are thrown into hell (Mt 10:28). All people are created by God for His glory, but when they refuse to come to Him for salvation they lose their opportunity for redemption, for becoming what God intends for them to be. They are then fit only for condemnation and destruction.

He will exterminate its sinners from it - One express purpose of the **Day of the LORD** - extermination of sinners! Not a popular topic, even in the modern church! This description of the Day of the LORD supports the premise that this Day has been fulfilled in history but is yet future. The only day that could possibly fulfill this literally is the Second Coming of Jesus when sinners are in essence "exterminated".

In this case the prophet moves forward to the Babylon which is the final evil world city to be destroyed with all its inhabitants (see Revelation 17,18). So this has a partial fulfillment when Messiah return's in Rev 19:11 and a final fulfillment when "the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be burned up". (2Pe 3:10) (Rev 20:11 "from Whose presence earth & heaven fled away and no place was found for them"). This OT prophecy helps define the timing of the Day of the LORD as going up to the end of the Messianic Age, the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth.

Oswalt on "**sinners**" (see related word [chattat/chattath](#)) - The word conveys the idea of an archer who misses the target. So it is with sin, whether conscious or unconscious. It is to miss the goal God has envisioned for us. The inevitable result is devastation and destruction.

Even **Edward Young** who is not always literal (or futuristic) in his interpretation of Isaiah's prophecies agrees that. "Isaiah speaks of the destruction of sinners from the earth; he uses language that seems to transcend a mere reference to Babylon. Over Babylon the judgment pours out, for it will also pour out over all the earth. The language, therefore, is also to be understood of the final judgment. Day of wrath and anguish! In that day who can stand?"

Isaiah 13:10 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.:

- Isa 5:30 24:21,23 Eze 32:7,8 Joel 2:10, Joel 2:31 Joel 3:15 Am 8:9,10 Zep 1:15,16 Mt 24:29 Mk 13:24 Lk 21:25 Rev 6:12-14 8:12

PHYSICAL DARKNESS A PICTURE OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

Stars...constellations...sun...moon - The alterations in the heavenlies emphasize the dreadful, fearful character of the Day of the LORD and support the premise that the Day Isaiah is describing is yet future. It is interesting that these signs should accompany divine judgment for darkness also fell upon the land for 3 hours during the time God's wrath fell on His own Son (Mt 27:45, Mk 15:33, Lk 23:44).

Darkness is a repeated description of the Day of the Lord - . Amos 5:18; Joel 2:2, 31; 3:15; Ezek. 32:7; Mic. 3:6. Cf. also Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25; Rev. 8:12. Don't read this too fast! Just imagine the fear and panic that the world will experience when it is plunged into terrible darkness when the heavenly bodies cease to shine! And what a fitting metaphor, for the world without Jesus, the Light of the world (Jn 8:12, 12:46, 1Jn 1:5, Ps 139:11, 12, 2Co 4:6-note), lies in the grip of spiritual darkness (Acts 28:16, Mt 4:16, Mt 8:12, 22:13 Lk 1:79 Jn 1:5, 12:35, Col 1:13-note, 1Th 5:4, 5-note, 1Pe 2:9-note, 1Jn 2:8, 9, 10, 11, Jude 1:13). And furthermore, this temporal worldly darkness sinners will experience is only a "preview" or "foretaste" of an even more horrible darkness that awaits all who refuse the kindness of the Lord (Ro 2:4-note) and His gracious offer of redemption in Christ (Jn 3:19, 20).

Joel describes similar cosmic chaos in the Day of the LORD...

Joel 2:10-note Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

Joel 2:31-note "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Joel 3:15-note The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

Young - The first work of creation was the introduction of light. But now that light will vanish, and darkness will stand forth as a characteristic of the day of Yahweh. The stars had been created to give light, but they are now to withhold it. With them their constellations, such as Orion and other brilliant constellations, also refuse to shed their light. Even more, the sun in particular, which is the great light to rule the day, when it breaks forth from the darkness of night at morning time, will itself be darkened. Both halves of the day are therefore dark. The judgment is universal. No sun; and even the pale light of the moon is lost. Over all is darkness, deep, profound, still.

Oswalt adds that...

There is something entirely fitting about this, for evil always flourishes in the night-time hours (John 3:19, 20). Thus, if evil prefers darkness, darkness it shall have. Moreover, God is light (1 John 1:5; Ps. 139:11, 12), and the heavenly bodies are but reflections of him. (In Gen. 1:14, 15, they are called "light-bearers.") Thus, when God has withdrawn his blessing from the world, it is appropriate that the "lights" go out (cf. Matt. 27:45, 46).

There is probably another implication of these statements about the heavenly bodies. As noted in the comments on ch. 2, the ultimate expression of human pride is idolatry, the sin of making deity in the human image. The central figures in the pantheons of the idolatrous cults were the heavenly bodies: sun, moon, and stars. These bodies were endowed with human traits but were vested with superhuman power which could be manipulated by human beings through magic. Thus, their worship was an attempt to project humanity upon the stars in order to make humanity master of its own destiny (Isa 24:21; 34:4, 5; Jer. 7:18; 8:2; 44:17, 18, 19; Ezek. 8:16, 17, 18). It is in that context that Isaiah announces the extinguishing of the heavenly lights in God's great day. There is no universal power in the stars that human beings can capture for themselves. The stars are the obedient reflectors of a Light which lies beyond them (Isa 40:26).

Jesus describes this aspect of the **Day of the Lord** declaring...

But immediately after the tribulation of those days (Mt 24:21) THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and *the* powers of the heavens will be shaken and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. (Mt 24:29, 30, cp Rev 6:12-[note](#), Rev 8:12-[note](#))

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** says

The statements in 13:10 about the heavenly bodies (**stars...sun ...moon**) no longer functioning *may figuratively* describe the total turnaround of the political structure of the Near East. [Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

Comment: Italics mine. My comment on the commentary. Why take this figuratively when the plain [literal] sense makes good sense in light of Mt 24:29 (see the importance of **Compare Scripture with Scripture**) which perfectly parallels Isaiah's describes in Isa13:11? **The Bible Knowledge Commentary** is normally a very conservative and literal resource but comments such as this underscore the importance for every Christian to be equipped to carry out their own **inductive Bible study**, so that they might be able to discover truth for themselves and be able to discern questionable comments in even highly respected commentaries (cp Acts 17:11-note).

Henry Morris comments on Isaiah 13:10 that "This prophecy of fearful signs in the heavens (Matthew 24:29-note), with the darkening of the sun (Revelation 6:12), is to be fulfilled in the future days of tribulation judgment on the earth. As often the case in these prophecies of the Old Testament, the vision blends both precursive and ultimate judgments together. (Defender's Study Bible)

Isaiah 13:11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. I will also put an end to the arrogance

- **punish:** Isa 14:21 24:4-6 Jer 51:34-38 Rev 12:9,10 18:2,3
- **arrogance:** Isa 2:17 5:15 14:12-16 Jer 50:29-32 Da 5:22,23

GLOBAL PUNISHMENT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

The **Psalmist** emphasizes that the LORD exerts His sovereign sway over the entire world...

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty (Hebrew = malkut = royalty, reign, dominion, kingdom) rules (masal = reigns, exerts dominion) over all. (Ps 103:19)

Thus I will punish (Remember that Jehovah is speaking) **the world** (earth) **for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity** - Jehovah's declaration of a **global judgment** leaves no doubt that the **Day of the LORD** involves more than the defeat of Babylon by the Medes in 539BC.

As an aside, it is good for all of us to remember (in light of passages such as this one) that God promises vindication for all unjust treatment! If you have been mistreated or wronged or maligned (and who hasn't?), take heart from this passage and *defer taking your own vengeance for the wrong committed against you*. One aspect of the Day of the Lord is that "all books will be balanced", a truth which should comfort the afflicted and afflict the "comfortable!" The day of vengeance is coming, for the non-lying God says...

VENGEANCE IS MINE. I WILL REPAY

(cp Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note, cp Is 33:1)

Arrogance of the proud...haughtiness - Hubris (pride) is something that calls forth God's intense displeasure!

Arrogance ([01347](#)) (**ga'on** from root meaning "to rise") describes arrogance as overbearing conceit or the boastful assertion of more than one has a right to (Used again in Isa 13:19, 14:11).

The **Lxx** translates **ga'on** with **huperephanos** (from **huper** = over, above, + **phaino** = shine) is the haughty person pictured with his head held high above others. This man who because of his feeling of personal superiority is puffed up with a high opinion of self, and regards others with contempt, as if they were unworthy. The noun **huperephania** is usually translated pride which is one of those sins which Jesus says proceeds out of a man's heart (Mark 7.22). The same sin of pride that led to Israel's judgment (Isa 5:21; 9:9) will cause Babylon's downfall (Isa 47:5,7,8; Rev 18:7).

Proud ([02086](#)) (**zed**) conveys the basic idea of pride, presumptuous attitude or a sense of self-importance, often exaggerated to defiance and rebelliousness (Pr 11:2, Jer 49:16; 50:31, 32; Eze 7:10)

Motyer - It is not only at the Last Day but also in every interim experience of divine anger that **pride** is a killer, leaving utter ruination and emptiness in its wake. (Ibid)

Warren Wiersbe comments that "it is clear that Isaiah's prophecy describes something more significant than the ups and downs of an ancient city. The prophets often began a message by focusing on local events, but then enlarged their vision to reveal something greater. Isaiah saw in the fall of Babylon a picture of "the day of the Lord" (Isa 13:6, 9, 13), that time when God will pour out His wrath on the whole world (Isa 13:11). The image of the woman in travail is used in Scripture to describe a time of judgment (Isa 13:8; 21:3; 26:17; Jer. 6:24; Micah 4:9, 10; Matt. 24:8, where "sorrows" is "birthpains"; 1Th 5:3). Isaiah looked beyond that day to the day when the Babylonian world system would be destroyed (Revelation 17-18). (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Comforted. An Old Testament Study. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

Isaiah 13:12 I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir:

- Isa 13:15-18 4:1 24:6 Ps 137:9

I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold - Jehovah is still speaking. Because of God's visitation human mortality will be extremely high, but not complete. God will spare a faithful precious and exceedingly honored remnant!

[Ophir](#) - This is a town probably located on the southwestern coast of Arabia (cf. Job 22:24; 28:16).

The picture is that of almost complete annihilation of mankind...when could this occur? The book of the Revelation describes such an extreme loss of human life and supports the premise that Isaiah is describing another future aspect (widespread death of mankind - see Rev 9:15-[note](#), Rev 9:18-[note](#), Rev 9:20-[note](#)) of the **Day of the LORD**.

Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will 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.:

- **I will make:** Joel 3:16 Hag 2:6,7,21,22 Mt 24:29 Heb 12:26,27 Rev 6:13,14
- **earth:** Jer 4:23,24 Mt 24:35 2Pe 3:10 Rev 20:1
- **Anger:** Ps 110:5,6 La 1:12 Na 1:4-6)

THE HEAVENS WILL TREMBLE

I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken - Isaiah 24:18; Joel 2:10; 3:16; Haggai 2:6-7, 21-22. Isa 34:4; 51:6; Hag 2:6. God is in control of the universe! This passage also indicates that our finite human sins will one day have cosmic implications. **Think about this truth the next time you are considering carrying out some willful sin! (Instead consider Ro 13:14-note)**

Joel describes a similar heavenly reaction in the Day of the LORD...

The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. (Joel 3:16-commentary)

Fury of the LORD...the day of His burning anger - In Isaiah 13:9 we read a parallel description of the Day of the LORD as **cruel, with fury and burning anger**. The fulfillment of God's wrath is described by John in the Revelation, specifically in Revelation 6-19 as well as in 2Pe 3:10, indicating that the Day of LORD spans an extended time (although some association this Day only with the time of the "Tribulation.")

The day of His burning anger - This is the [Day of the LORD](#).

In the **Revelation of Jesus Christ**, the apostle John records the heavens trembling and the earth shaking...

And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake (cp Rev 8:5-[note](#), Rev 11:13-[note](#), Rev 16:18-[note](#)); and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair (cp Isa 24:23, Mt 24:29), and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth (cp Rev 8:10, 11-[note](#), Rev 8:12-[note](#)), as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places (cp Rev 16:20-[note](#)). 15 And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:12-17-[notes](#))

Isaiah 13:14 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.

- Isa 17:13 1Ki 22:17,36
- **They will each turn:** Isa 47:15 Jer 50:16 51:9 Rev 18:9,10

Isaiah 13:14-18 focuses on the savagery that will be manifest in a world that has rejected God and is experiencing His Day of wrath. This recalls the words of our Lord Jesus in His Olivet Discourse:

Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. 14 "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the

nations, and then the end will come. (Mt 24:12-14-[note](#)).

Like a hunted gazelle...like sheep - See **terms of comparison - simile**. Notice the "pun", sheep (unbelieving) without a Shepherd (the Good Shepherd) will be easily dispersed and lost (eternally) in the day of God's visitation.

The exact meaning of this passage is uncertain but it could describe "a mass exit from Babylon, foreigners returning to their own lands." (MacDonald)

Like the flight of spooked animal, so too will be the flight of the fear filled inhabitants when their great city is attacked. They will realize it was not an impenetrable fortress and they will return to seek refuge in their places of origin, with their own people.

Motyer describes "three facets of the **Day**: no protection (14), no escape (15), no mercy (16). They gathered in arrogant triumphalism (3–5), now they have everything to flee from (14) and nowhere to flee to (15). Humankind without God is without safety and without home. (Ibid)

MacArthur proposes that "Humans are frightening to the shy gazelle, but indispensable to the helpless sheep. The Babylonians will find the Lord as their enemy and lose Him as their shepherd. All they can do is flee the land." (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#) page 956)

Isaiah 13:15 Anyone who is found will be thrust through, and anyone who is captured will fall by the sword

- Isa 14:19-22 47:9-14 Jer 50:27,35-42 51:3

Anyone...thrust through...fall by sword - A veritable massacre is the Day of the LORD and not a day of mercy. That day has passed, and all that remains for those who have rejected God's longsuffering and patience is His unhindered wrath. **Dear reader, if you are skeptical about these prophecies and continue to disbelieve God's offer of salvation, may God grant you grace to take heed and accept the acceptable time for this day of grace will not last forever** - 2Co 6:1,2, cp Ps 32:6, Ps 95:8, Isa 55:6, 7, Jn 12:35, 36. **Read Jesus' warning in Luke 13:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30-note.** (See also these notes)

Captured ([05595](#))(**saphah**) means to scrape or sweep away, to destroy, to perish, to be captured. The first four uses are in the context of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah - what an interesting picture of Jehovah "sweeping away" sinners, in effect "cleaning house!"

Genesis 18:23 Abraham came near and said, "Will You indeed **sweep away** the righteous with the wicked?"

Genesis 18:24 "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed **sweep it away** and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?"

Genesis 19:15 When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be **swept away** in the punishment of the city."

Genesis 19:17 (When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be **swept away**."

Saphah described the fate of those in the rebellion of Korah when Moses "spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin."(Nu 16:26)

Patterson - The basic image of the root seems to be that of sweeping—both the process of heaping things together and of sweeping them away...The root is usually used in a hostile sense, particularly in contexts of judgment. David spent much of his life being swept away before his enemies, later, facing God's judgment for sin, he avoids the choice of being swept away before his enemies (1 Chron. 21:12-13). The judgment of God against sin is the subject of several contexts. Lot and his family were warned so that they would not be consumed with Sodom (Genesis 19:15ff.). The prophets repeatedly warned apostate Israel that God would heap misfortunes upon them (e.g. Isaiah 7:20). Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:4) stated that man's sin was so serious that even the natural world was affected by it. God's judgment should occasion prayer and intercession. Abraham pleaded with his heavenly visitors for the life of the righteous in Sodom (Genesis 18:23f.). The Psalmist, concerned that God's will and reputation be evidenced in his life, prayed for his enemies to be swept away (Psalm 40:14). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Gilbrant - The verb sâphâh means "to sweep away" or, in the Niphal, "to be swept away." A similar verb in Arabic means "to sweep away dust." In Middle Hebrew, the verb means "to carry off," and in Syriac it means "to collect." Sâphâh first occurs in the account of Abraham pleading with God on behalf of the righteous people living in Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of these few godly men, Abraham begged God not to "sweep away" the notoriously evil cities (Gen. 18:23f). Though God ultimately destroyed the cities, angels warned Lot to take his righteous family and quickly leave Sodom, lest they be swept away when God's wrath was poured

down (Gen. 19:15). A similar situation arose when Moses warned the Israelite community to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram because they were about to be swept away due to their rebellion against Moses' leadership (Num. 16:25-35). Also, David foretold Abishai that Saul's end would come when the Lord caused him to be swept away and destroyed (1 Sam. 26:10). Numbers 32:14 depicts a different nuance, in that Israel was "sweeping up," or increasing, the anger of the Lord through their sin. For example, as a flame grows in response to fanning, the Lord's anger mounted in response to Israel's disobedience. Sāphāh is also used in an illustration of the result of the stubborn attitude of the Israelites toward God: dry land would replace the good land because of Israel's idolatrous disobedience (Deut. 29:19). Isaiah 30:1 is often translated "to add" sin to sin, taking the verb form there to be from yāsaph (HED #3362), rather than sāphāh.

Saphah - 18x in 18v - add(2), captured(1), destroy(2), heap(1), perish(2), remove(1), snatched away(1), sweep away(2), swept away(6).

Gen. 18:23; Gen. 18:24; Gen. 19:15; Gen. 19:17; Num. 16:26; Num. 32:14; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 32:23; 1 Sam. 12:25; 1 Sam. 26:10; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Chr. 21:12; Ps. 40:14; Prov. 13:23; Isa. 7:20; Isa. 13:15; Isa. 30:1; Jer. 12:4

Isaiah 13:16 Their little ones also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.:

- **Little ones:** Ps 137:8,9 Ho 10:14 Na 3:10
- **Their:** La 5:11 Zec 14:2

THE BRUTALITY OF WAR

Dashed...plundered...ravished - Apt descriptions of the horrible conditions in the dreadful Day of the LORD. So called "civilized" nations are still barbarians at heart, if their heart has never been "circumcised" by grace through faith in Christ (**See Excursus on Circumcision Of the Heart**). Out of their evil hearts issue despicable deeds which know no bounds or mercy!

Little ones...wives - Even women and children will not be spared in the Day of the LORD.

Ravished ([07693](#))(shagal) in context means violated or raped.

Isaiah 13:17 Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold:

- **I am going to stir up:** Isa 13:3-5 21:2 41:25 Jer 50:9 51:11,27,28 Da 5:28-31
- **Will not value:** Pr 6:34,35)

THE LORD IS THE "EXECUTIVE MANAGER" OF WORLD HISTORY

Behold (hinneh) is inserted to get our attention.

I am going to stir up the Medes against them - The verb "stir up" is in the causative with God as its subject and we see the active involvement of God in history. He is not aloof or passive. He is not simply a spectator. He is in complete charge, manipulating his plan. All his actions are purposeful. Events do not happen by chance.

This emphasis is clearly discernable in the OT passages which use the verb **stir up** -- Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, was stirred up by the Lord against the tribes in the Transjordan area (1Chr 5:26). God aroused the Babylonians against Jerusalem (Ezek 23:22). Then God stirred up the Medes against Babylon (Isa 13:17; Jer 50:9; Jer 51:11). It was the Lord who incited Cyrus to allow the Jewish exiles to return to Judah (2Chr 36:22; Ezra 1:1) and who in turn urged the exiles to return (Joel 3:7). When apathy had overtaken the returned exiles, the Lord agitated Zerubbabel and Joshua through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to carry the construction of the second temple to its completion (Hag 1:14).

Motyer adds an important note - In all this, of course, the Lord is no puppet master making automata jump to his bidding (cf. Isa 10:5-15). People are simply being themselves (Titus 3:3-note). Isa 14:26 notes that the guiding power in history is the 'stretching out

of his hand'. Yet in so many ways the Day is the withdrawing of his hand as he judgmentally leaves sinners, unrestrained, to implement all the savagery of the fallen nature. The more people turn their backs on God, determined to 'be themselves', to be masters of 'their own world', the less human they become, therefore the less humane. When the Day comes, sin will take centre stage as the total and savage destroyer it has always been, and those who did not want God will get what they wanted: they will be given up (Ro 1:24-note, Ro 1:26-note, Ro 1:28-note) to be themselves. (Ibid)

Medes (see note) - Iran will be used to judge Babylon. Da 5:30, 31 is the "near" fulfillment of this prophecy and a foreshadowing of the fall of Babylon in Revelation 17, 18/

Who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold - These soldiers will not be deterred from their task of destruction. They cannot be bribed or bought off! They are motivated to carry out their merciless conquest! This picture was historically fulfilled with the fall of Babylon to the Medes, but will be repeated in the horrible conditions of war associated with the future Day of the LORD.

Isaiah 13:18 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.: (

- **Mow down:** Isa 13:16 2Ki 8:12 Ho 13:16 Na 2:1 3:10
- **eye:** 2Ch 36:17 Eze 9:5,6,10

Bows - The Medes were men of the bow.

Mow down (term of comparison)...not even have compassion...nor will their eye pity - Isaiah piles up vivid descriptions of the savagery of the armies in the future Day of the LORD, even as seen in the armies of the Medes when they conquered Babylon in 539BC.

Motyer - They have no concern for life (**young men**), no restraint of pity (**infants**), no thought for the future (**children**)—nothing but the fulfilment of their own imperialism! (Ibid)

Isaiah 13:19 And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.:

- **Babylon:** Isa 14:4-6,12-15 Jer 51:41 Da 2:37,38 4:30
- **When God overthrew:** Ge 19:24 Dt 29:23 Jer 49:18 50:40 Zep 2:9

HOW THE MIGHTY CITY HAS FALLEN!

Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride - Notice how quickly the passage moves from the transient beauty and lofty pride of men to the low, abysmal, eternal fate of Sodom and Gomorrah! And so it is with the pride of men - God allows a brief day in the "sun" but an eternity in darkness! As I heard someone say

This life is as close to heaven as an unbeliever will ever get and as close to hell as a believer will ever come!
And all God's children cry "Hallelujah!"

Daniel agrees with the preeminence of Babylon above all other human kingdoms of the earth declaring to Nebuchadnezzar...

You, O king, are the king of kings (The best men can offer - cp Rev 19:16-note, the best God provides), to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. (Da 2:37, 38-note)

Sodom and Gomorrah (terms of comparison) - This suggests a near and far fulfillment. Babylon was first defeated by the Medes (Isaiah 13:17) around 539 B.C. (Daniel 5:30,31), some 175 years after Isaiah's prophecy. However, Babylon continued as an important city until well after the time of Christ.

Motyer - Having announced and described the Day of the Lord, Isaiah turns to the foreseen fall of Babylon. It is typical of the Old Testament to see coming calamity against the backdrop of ultimate calamity. (Ibid)

It is passages like Isaiah 13:19 which present problems for those commentators like **Matthew Henry** which see all the prophecies in Isaiah 13 as past history. Henry wrote...

Babylon...should be wholly destroyed. None shall dwell there. It shall be a haunt for wild beasts. All this is fulfilled. (**ED: NO THAT IS NOT TRUE!**)

To the contrary these prophecies (and similar prophecies by Jeremiah) have not been fulfilled!

(1). Capture of the city by the Medes (Isa 13:17) did not result in a destruction similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 19:24, 25, 26, 27, 28)

(2). The city was not uninhabited forever (Isa. 13:20, 21, 22. Babylon was first defeated by the Medes (Isaiah 13:17) around 539 B.C. (Daniel 5:30,31), some 175 years after Isaiah's prophecy. However, Babylon continued as a city until well after the time of Christ.

(3). The destruction was not accomplished by a nation from the north—Medo-Persia was to the east—(Jer. 50:3);

(4). The destruction of Babylon did not result in Israel or more than a remnant of Judah seeking the Lord or returning to Zion (Jer. 50:4, 5);

(5). The destruction of Babylon did not involve the breaking of the walls and burning of the gates (Jer. 51:58).

Isaiah 13:20 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.:

- Isa 14:23 Jer 50:3,13,21,39,45 51:25,29,43,62-64 Rev 18:21-23

BABYLON WILL NEVER BE INHABITED AGAIN

It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation - Babylon has been inhabited since ancient times. To be sure, it has not been a major city for centuries. Suffice it to say, this prophecy has yet to be fulfilled and will not be fulfilled until the end times city of Babylon is rebuilt and then destroyed (See Rev 18:8-23-[see commentary](#), especially Rev 18:8, Rev 18:21, 22, 23).

MacArthur makes the point that "Though nothing like its glorious past, the site of Babylon **has never been void of inhabitants**. A city or town of one type or another has always existed there, so this prophecy must point toward a yet future desolation." (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#) page 956)

See Dr Charles Dyer's excellent analysis of Babylon -

- [The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 - Part 1](#); - 13 pages
- [The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 - Part 2](#) - 18 pages
- [Revelation - Part 4 - Lecture 7](#)

Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there- This indicates Babylon will be so destroyed that it will be unfit for any human habitation. There are still tents and flocks in the area of modern day Babylon, so this prophecy has not been fulfilled. And here is the point -- when will it be fulfilled? The answer is when the 7th Bowl is poured out on (rebuilt) Babylon in Rev 16:19+.

Dr Andy Woods adds "Isaiah says something extremely interesting in verse 20. Look at Isaiah 13:20. It says, "It" Babylon, "will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation;" watch this now, "Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there," I mean the fall is going to be so cataclysmic and final that the Arabs will not pitch their tent there. We have a problem because there's a picture of Arabs pitching their tent in Babylon today, taken from a picture around 1899-1908. What am I getting at? I'm getting at a very simple point that **the prophecies of Isaiah have never been fulfilled in human history**. And so if you don't have a destruction of literal Babylon in the future you have no place in history for Isaiah's prophecies to be fulfilled. We know that God says what He means and He means what He says. God cannot lie! And if God's Word means anything Babylon has to be rebuilt for the simple purpose of it being destroyed the way Isaiah predicts in bowl judgment number seven.

[\(Source - see more information on Babylon\)](#)

Oswalt writes that "The point is that humanity cannot sustain itself by itself. It cannot expect in its own strength to produce more and more of everything until it fills the earth. There has come the day, again and again, in war, in famine, or in pestilence when a self-sufficient portion of humanity has been brought face to face with its insufficiency. Thus far, in his mercy, God has allowed the torch to be passed to other civilizations, but as we move more and more toward a global society, Babylon's burden becomes more and more the word addressed to the entire earth. God's glory will fill the earth, not humanity's. If we will not learn that voluntarily, we must learn it involuntarily.

Isaiah 13:21 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.

- Isa 34:11-15 Rev 18:2

Related Passage:

Revelation 18:2+ And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a **prison** ([phulake](#)) of every unclean spirit, and a **prison** ([phulake](#)) of every unclean and hateful bird.

COMMENT - In context Rev 18:1-3 is a prophecy BEFORE the fall which was summarized in Rev 16:19. Recall that Revelation 17-18 are added to expand on the details of Babylon's fall when the 7th Bowl is poured out. That said, the words "**Fallen, fallen**" are what is referred to as a **prophetic aorist**, describing the event as so certain to occur that it is spoken of in the past tense. The same rule applies to the verb "has become," which describes the "fallout" (so to speak) of Babylon's fall. In short, it will then be a prison for demons and unclean spirits, and presumably this imprisonment will last for the duration of the 1000 year Messianic Kingdom which begins immediately after the fall of Babylon. Demons imprisoned for 1000 years would correlate perfectly with Satan himself being bound for 1000 years and at the end released from **prison** (the same Greek word [phulake](#) used in Rev 18:2 of the prison of the demons). The fate of the demons imprisoned is not clearly stated but presumably they will also be cast into the Lake of Fire like their leader at the end of the 1000 years in Rev 20:10.

THE FALL OF BABYLON WILL LEAVE IT DESERTED OF MEN

Babylon will be a dismal, desolate, deserted place inhabited by animals that gravitate toward dark and lonely settings!

Owls - Various English versions translate as "owls" (e.g., NAB, NASB), "wild dogs" (NCV); "jackals" (NIV); "howling creatures" (NRSV, NLT).

Ostriches - Unclean birds which is fitting given Babylon's uncleanness (Rev 18:2+).

Shaggy goats - This same Hebrew word is translated "goat demons" in Lev 17:7. The KJV translates this as [satyrs](#). A satyr is "Mentioned in Greek mythology as a creature composed of a man and a goat, supposed to inhabit wild and desolate regions." (E B Dictionary)

Isaiah 13:22 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.

- **Fortified towers:** Isa 35:7
- **Her fateful time:** Dt 32:35 Jer 51:33 Eze 7:7-10 Hab 2:3 2Pe 2:3 3:9,10

FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF UTTER DESOLATION OF BABYLON

Motyer - The absence of human inhabitant (Isa 13:20) and the replacement of humankind by beasts (Isa 13:21–22) emphasize the finality of the overthrow. (Ibid)

Note the irony - Babylon which was once filled with the noise of godless humanity bustling carelessly around will one day be filled with the howls of hyenas! The once mighty city is silent except for the cries of night dwellers!

Her fateful time - "not a calendar date but a season appropriate to an event. Assyria destroyed Babylon in 689BC (see Isa 21) but it recovered; likewise it was intact after Cyrus captured it (539BC) but its continued nuisance-value provoked Darius Hystapes to desolate it in 518BC, and so it has remained." (Motyer)

ESV Study Bible - This eerie scene contrasts with the "splendor and pomp" of Isa. 13:19 and the messianic paradise of Isaiah 11:6-8 (cf. similar imagery in 34:11-15; Jer. 50:39; 51:37; Zeph. 2:14-15; Rev. 18:2).